



**2**  
CONGRESS TRYING TO DO POLITICS OVER CONSECRATION CEREMONY: BJP



**11**  
SRI LANKA PRESIDENT SAYS PEACEFUL SOLUTION NEEDED FOR GAZA-ISRAEL CONFLICT



**16**  
LALREMSIAMI SHARES ON INDIA WOMEN'S HOCKEY TEAM PREPARATIONS

## NIA SWOOPS DOWN ON BKI, BISHNOI GANG

Cases relate to terrorist-gangster network in the country

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday seized several illegal arms and ammunition, along with incriminating documents, digital devices and cash, in a massive multi-state crackdown in three cases relating to conspiracies and activities of the banned Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) and the Lawrence Bishnoi Crime Syndicate, among others.

As per NIA officials, a total of 32 locations in the States of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi, as well as the UT of Chandigarh, were raided today by NIA teams as part of the mega operation that began early this morning.

The seizures in the searches included 2 pistols, 2 magazines and ammunition,

**SEIZURE**

- PISTOLS - 2
- MAGAZINES - 2
- CASH - RS 4.54 LAKH
- DIGITAL DEVICES - MANY

**32** locations in Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and UP were raided

Networks include smuggling and induction of terrorist hardware, such as arms & ammunition, explosives, IEDs, across the borders. Terror hardware is being used by outfits and criminal syndicates

along with cash amounting to Rs 4.60 lakhs, besides documents and digital devices.

The three cases in which the NIA swooped down today relate to the terror activities being carried out by the BKI, a banned terrorist organisation, and the terrorist-gangster networks operating in the country.

Such activities include smuggling and induction of

terrorist hardware, such as arms & ammunition, explosives, IEDs etc., across the borders. The terror hardware is being used by operatives/members of terror outfits and Organized Criminal Syndicates for carrying out bomb explosions, targeted killings, extortions, terror funding of terror outfits, etc. in various parts of the country.

Today's crackdown in-

cluded raids at 16 locations in case RC-21/2023/NIA/DLI, related to the activities of the Chiefs/members of BKI. NIA, which had registered the case suo moto on 10th July 2023, has identified Harwinder Singh @ Rinda and Lakhbir Singh Sandhu @ Landa as among the key conspirators involved in hatching terror conspiracies as well as smuggling of arms

■ P5

## 'Northern border stable, but sensitive'

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

The Chief of Army Staff, General Manoj Pande, said on Thursday that the security situation on the northern border is stable but sensitive. The Army Chief was speaking at the Annual Press conference ahead of Army Day on January 15.

"The situation on the northern border is stable but sensitive. We continue to talk to find a solution to address and balance issues between the two sides. Operational preparedness is very high, and deployment is both robust, and balanced..." Chief of Army Staff, Manoj Pande said.

"As far as the situation in JK is concerned, the ceasefire understanding along the LoC continues to hold. Even though we see infiltration attempts, which we have been able to thwart... We have a strong anti-drone mechanism in place to stop the use of drones to smuggle

weapons and narcotics.... The area of Rajouri Poonch has seen increased terrorist activities. Support infrastructure for proxy tandems in the Rajouri Poonch sector from across the border continues..." General Manoj

strategic competition." said General Manoj Pande.

He also affirmed that security forces are fully aligned to ensure a stable and secure environment for nation. "...Our nation is on the rise firmly on the path of



We continue to talk to find a solution to address and balance issues between the two sides. Operational preparedness is very high, and deployment is robust

**Manoj Pande**  
Chief of Army Staff

Pande added.

General Manoj Pande also highlighted that disruptive technologies have become the new arena of strategic competition.

"National interests remain paramount and the relevance of hard powers has been established... Disruptive technologies have become the new arena of

progress in the economic sphere. We are fully aligned to ensure a stable and secure environment, both internal and external, to help our country progress..."

Speaking about the security situation in North-East India, the chief of Army Staff said, "...The Northeast has witnessed positive de-

## BUDGET ON FEB 1, HOUSE SESSION FROM JANUARY 31



**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

The Budget session of Parliament, the last session before the general elections expected in April-May, will begin on January 31 and is likely to continue till February 9, sources said.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present the interim budget on February 1, they said.

The session will begin with President Droupadi Murmu's address to the joint sitting of the two Houses of Parliament

The interim budget typically takes care of the fiscal needs of the intervening period till a government is formed after the Lok Sabha polls.

## TOP OF THE DAY

### MAMATA JUNKS 'ONE NATION, ONE ELECTION' PLANS



KOLKATA: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee wrote to the high-level committee on 'One Nation, One Election' on Thursday, saying that she does not agree with the concept of simultaneous polls as the Indian Constitution does not follow the concept.

"Does the Indian Constitution follow the concept of 'One Nation, One Election'? I am afraid, it does not. Our Constitution conceives of the Indian nation in a federal manner. Therefore, the Indian nation has been given a Union Government and several State Governments. If the framers of the Indian Constitution did not mention the concept of 'One Nation, One Election', how have you arrived at the concept of 'One Nation, One Election'?" the Trinamool Congress supremo said in her letter. Speaking at a press conference in Kolkata, the TMC chief said that though it might be beneficial for various political parties if elections in States and the Lok Sabha are held simultaneously, she doubts its outcome. "If there is election at one time, it is beneficial for us because we have to work only once.

## Much progress in FTA talks as Rajnath Singh tours UK

**ABHINANDAN MISHRA**  
NEW DELHI

The much awaited Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and the United Kingdom is likely to be concluded 'soon', official sources aware of the matter have said.

The observations come after defence minister Rajnath Singh, who is on a two days visit to the Kingdom, met Prime Minister Rishi Sunak at his 10 Downing

**UK'S TRADE STATUS WITH INDIA**

- 12th largest trading partner of India
- 2.1% is its share of India's trade
- 38b pounds-value of trade with India as of 2023
- 16b pounds-exports to India from the UK

Street, London residence. Sources told the Daily Guardian that 'positive' de-

velopments have emerged in the meeting between the two leaders.

It is pertinent to mention that the 14th round of dis-

■ P5

## CONGRESS LIKELY TO SETTLE FOR SIX LOK SABHA SEATS IN WEST BENGAL

**SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE**  
KOLKATA

Eager to keep the Trinamool Congress on its side in the I.N.D.I.A. bloc, the central leadership of the Congress has indicated to Mamata Banerjee that it is ready to settle for contesting six Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal, party sources said, even though conflicting signals from the different parties continued to confound political pundits.

It is learnt that the Congress

Velesendi it is learnt that the Congress has set a deadline of 10 days for the Trinamool Congress to convey its decision, indicating that the party wants the agreement to be finalised by January 20

has set a deadline of 10 days for the Trinamool Congress to convey its decision, indicating that the party wants the agreement to be finalised by January 20.

The West Bengal unit of the Congress Party, led by its senior leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, has staked claim to at least 10 seats despite having misgivings about the merits of having an electoral tie-up with the Trinamool Congress given the grave corruption charges against the leaders of the party.

Sources said that Sonia Gandhi has written to Banerjee, asking her to take a call on a seat-sharing agreement over six parliamentary constituen-

■ P5

## INDORE CLEANEST CITY FOR SEVENTH CONSECUTIVE TIME

**TDG NETWORK**  
INDORE

Indore, a city in Madhya Pradesh, has continued its journey of being the cleanest city in India by clinching the top spot for the seventh time in a row in the Swachh Survekshan 2023.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav received the award from President of India Droupadi Murmu at the Swachh Survekshan Award 2023 ceremony held in New Delhi on Thursday.

The CM office wrote on X, "Indore became the cleanest city of the country for the seventh consecutive time. CM Yadav received the award from President Droupadi Murmu at the Swachh Survekshan Award-2023 ceremony held in New Delhi. MP Cabinet minister Kailash Vijayvargiya and Indore Mayor Pushyamitra Bhargav were also present on the occasion."

CM Yadav also extended congratulations on the occasion and appealed to the people that their passion for cleanliness should never di-

### TOP 10 CLEANEST CITIES IN INDIA

- 1 Indore & Surat
- 2 NA
- 3 Navi Mumbai
- 4 Visakhapatnam
- 5 Bhopal
- 6 Vijayawada
- 7 NDMC
- 8 Tirupati
- 9 Greater Hyderabad
- 10 Pune



minish. "Our Indore is on the seventh heaven of cleanliness. The people of Indore have once again proved that cleanliness has not only become their habit, but also the cleanliness is in their thinking now. On this biggest achievement of cleanliness, I congratulate all the people of the state and the entire team engaged in cleanliness work.

## NAYANTHARA'S 'ANNAPOORANI' PULLED DOWN FROM NETFLIX POST POLICE CASE

**LATHA SRINIVASAN**  
CHENNAI

On Thursday, Jawan actor Nayanthara's film 'Annapoorani' was taken off from Netflix just two weeks after its OTT release. A major controversy erupted around when on January 6, Ramesh Solanki, a Hindu activist and founder of Hindu IT Cell, filed an FIR in Mumbai against numerous stakeholders, including actors Nayanthara and Jai, director Nilesh Krishnaa, producers from Zee Studios, and Monika Shergill, Netflix's head in India.

According to the complaint filed by

Solanki, the movie allegedly hurts religious sentiments and he specifies a scene where a Hindu priest's daughter is seen offering namaz to cook chicken biryani. The complaint further states that some statements made by a character named Farhan in the film promotes 'Love Jihad' as Farhan says Lord Ram and Sita were meat-eaters and urges the

Hindu priest's daughter to eat meat. These statements about Lord Ram and Sita were condemned by many people on social media and the controversy snowballed.

Condemning the film, Solanki wrote on his profile on X (formerly Twitter), "At a time when the whole world is rejoicing in anticipation of the Pran Pratishtha of Bhagwan Shri Ram Mandir, this anti-Hindu film Annapoorani has been released on Netflix, produced by Zee Studios, Naad Studios and Tri-

■ P5

## 'GIFT City gateway for developed nation tag'

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

The government is positioning the GIFT City as the gateway for financial and investment hub, besides offering a platform for green credits and building diverse fintech laboratory to achieve the target of India's economy becoming \$30 trillion by 2047. Outlining this vision on

Thursday at the 10th Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2024, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman highlighted the growing presence of operations at the International Financial Services Centres (IFSC) and the three exchanges including the International Bullion Exchange, 25 banks, including 9 foreign banks, 26 aircraft lesser, 80 fund managers, 50 professional service

providers and 40 fintech entities in the GIFT City.

Sitharaman also said that the direct listing of stocks at the IFSC in GIFT City would happen soon to enable Indian companies to access global funds easily. "We are going through the process in a very systematic manner and I'm confident it will happen at the earliest," Sitharaman said.

The idea of GIFT City was



Direct listing of stocks at the IFSC in GIFT City would happen soon

**Nirmala Sitharaman**  
Finance Minister

conceptualised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi way back in 2007 as Chief Minister of Gujarat and it has since expanded into a major international financial hub. "The GIFT City should be the place for finance and technology related entrepreneurs. We aim to build a diverse FinTech laboratory for the world and address the three broad

■ P5



# CONGRESS TRYING TO DO POLITICS OVER CONSECRATION CEREMONY: BJP

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The ruling BJP has Thursday slammed Congress for declining the invitation to attend the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony of Ram Lalla in Ayodhya on January 22.

BJP spokesperson Nalin Kohli slammed the grand old party for declining the invitation to attend the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony of Ram Lalla in Ayodhya and questioned the Congress for trying to do politics over the grand event in the holy city. "If they don't wish to be there, then why drag the RSS and the BJP, and why are they trying to do politics over Lord Ram Temple's consecration?" lashed out at the BJP leader. Kohli said, "It is for the Congress party's top leadership to decide whether they would like to be present on January 22 for the consecration of Lord Ram and the grand temple opening in Ayodhya." The BJP spokesperson also



criticised Congress for denying the very existence of Lord Ram. "It should come as no surprise because the Congress party when in government, had denied the very existence of Lord Ram in an affidavit that they filed before the honourable Supreme Court," he said.

Kohli took on Congress for blaming the BJP and the RSS and for dragging them over their refusal to attend the "Pran Pratishtha" of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya on January 22.

"However, what one notes is that they are trying to

blame the BJP and the RSS. If they don't wish to be there, then why drag the RSS and the BJP, and why are they trying to do politics over Lord Ram Temple's consecration?" added Kohli. "Secondly, one sees that within the Congress party, different leaders in the states are saying they wish to be there for the pran pratishtha ceremony," he said. "This perhaps reflects the internal situation in the Congress party and the different views that exist about Lord Ram's temple in Ayodhya," said the BJP leader.

## CONGRESS WILL CONTINUE TO BE JUDGED 'ANTI-HINDU': ASSAM CM

**GUWAHATI:** Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma Thursday said that the Congress was given an opportunity to "reduce its sin", but with the party declining the invitation to the consecration ceremony of the Ayodhya Ram temple history will continue to judge it as "anti-Hindu". The Congress has all along fought against the Hindu community and did not deserve the invitation for its views on the Ram temple since the beginning, he said. "This tradition (opposing the Hindu community) was started by Pandit (Jawaharlal) Nehru when he boycotted the Somnath Temple function in (May 1951). The same tradition is continuing with the present generation of the Congress... What Pandit Nehru did with the Somnath Temple, the Congress leadership is doing with the Ram Temple. "Congress will continue to be considered an anti-Hindu party for years and decades to come. I feel pity and sad for them as one does not have to be anti-Muslim to respect the Hindu civilisation," Sarma, a prominent leader of the BJP in the north east, said at a press conference here.

Meanwhile, Union Minister Pralhad Joshi on Thursday also came down heavily on Congress, saying that the top brass of the grand old party has declined the invitation to attend the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony of Ram Lalla in Ayodhya only for the "sake of appeasement."

Pralhad Joshi said that the Congress Party has reached the 'heights of appeasement'. Reacting to the issue, BJP MP Ravi Shankar Prasad said that the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony of Lord Ram is a matter of joy for the whole nation. "It is very unfortunate, painful and shameful.

# Religious Event At Ayodhya Turned Into BJP Event: Siddaramaiah

TDG NETWORK  
BENGALURU

It is a rightful decision of AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge, our senior leader Sonia Gandhi, and the leader of the opposition in Lok Sabha, Adhir Chowdhury, to not participate in the Ram Lalla installation ceremony in Ayodhya, and I support this decision, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah told media persons in Bengaluru.

"This religious event, which should transcend caste, religion, and party lines and be conducted with devotion and respect, has been turned into a party event by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and leaders of the Sangh Parivar, showing disrespect to Lord Rama and the 140 crore people of our country. A religious ceremony that should have been conducted with reverence has been converted into a political campaign, a betrayal to all Hindus," he said.

The BJP and RSS leaders, who frequently lecture on Hindu culture, traditions,



and values, are silent on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's act of inaugurating the incomplete Ram Temple. This silence exposes their hypocritical version of Hindutva, said the CM.

Since the beginning of the Ram Janmabhoomi dispute, the Congress party has steadfastly maintained its position. We fully supported the construction of the Ram Temple, consistent with our respect for the court's verdict. There is no dispute about this from our side. The Muslim community has also shown their commitment to the judiciary by accepting the court's decision, he further contended.

However, organizations like the BJP, RSS, and Vishwa Hindu Parishad, which initially argued that the Ram Janmabhoomi issue was a matter of faith and not for the court to decide, promptly

accepted the Supreme Court's verdict in their favor, showing the leaders' hypocritical behaviour he said.

"The statement by the secretary of the Ram Mandir Trust that Shaiva and Shaktas have no rights in the Ram Temple has stirred controversy. If true, it is an insult to all Shaiva devotees. The use of the Ram Temple for political gain, as criticized by four Shankaracharyas who have boycotted the installation ceremony, has turned a unifying event into one that divides Hindus, which is unfortunate" he said.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is nearing a decade in office, lacks the confidence to win elections by showcasing his achievements. He has rushed to inaugurate the incomplete Ram Temple during the election period to stir up Hindutva sentiment and overshadow his failures" he said. Over the last 30-35 years, the political exploitation by the BJP and Sangh Parivar in the name of Lord Ram has been closely observed by the country's people.

# SPIRITUAL LEADERS EXPRESS DIVERSE VIEWS

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

In the midst of preparations for the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony of Ayodhya's Ram Mandir, various spiritual leaders have voiced their perspectives on the event, highlighting differing stances and beliefs. Swami Nishchalanand Saraswati, the Shankaracharya of Puri Govardhan Peeth, arrived at Howrah station on Thursday, emphasising the importance of adhering to scriptural guidelines for the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony. He expressed concerns about maintaining Lord Ram's honour and insisted that the worship should align with traditional practices. "It should be done accord-

## JAGADGURU BHARATHITHIRTA DID NOT OPPOSE PRAN PRATISHTHA, SRINGERI SHARADA PEETH CLARIFIES

**CHIKMAGALUR:** In response to recent reports suggesting opposition from four Sankara Mutts, Shree Sringeri Sarada Peeth has issued a clarification regarding its stance on the Pranpratishtha programme of Ram Lalla in the Ayodhya Ram Mandir. On January 8, Administrative Officer Gourishankar, representing Sringeri Mutt, addressed the media, emphasizing the significance of the matter for all theistic individuals. The statement sought to dispel misinformation circulating on social media platforms, particularly on the alleged opposition by Sringeri Sharadapith Sri Sri Bharathithirtha Mahaswami. The clarification refuted claims made by some religion haters who utilized the Sringeri Sharadapith's image to imply opposition to the Pranpratishtha programme. The Administrative Officer dismissed these assertions as false propaganda by individuals with anti-religious sentiments. The media statement underscored the importance of the upcoming Prana Pratishtha Mahotsav, marking the completion of the grand temple for Sri Ramachandra in Ayodhya after a nearly five-hundred-year struggle.

ing to scriptural guidelines, and the worship should be conducted in accordance to the belief that Ram is not secular. According to scripture, Pran Pr and worship programmes should be conducted; otherwise, the deity's radiance diminishes, and demonic entities enter, causing havoc" Swami Nishchalanand Saraswati said. Declining the invitation, Swami Nishchalanand stood firm in his decision not to attend, citing it as a matter of principle. "I received an invitation, and with a smile, the person said I can bring someone along. I am not upset. It's just my policy and principle, otherwise I keep going to Ayodhya" he said.

# Health facilities in Ayodhya reviewed for 'Pran Pratishtha' of Ram Lalla

TDG NETWORK  
AYODHYA (UTTAR PRADESH)

Secretary of Health Ministry, Apurva Chandra, visited Ayodhya on Wednesday to assess the preparations regarding health facilities for the 'Pran Pratishtha' of the Ram Temple. During his visit, Chandra inspected the Ram Hospital. Chandra revealed that in addition to the existing health infrastructure, doctors from volunteer

institutes would also be arriving in Ayodhya. "One of the reasons for my visit was to assess healthcare facilities here.

I visited Ram Hospital and will review the amenities at the Medical College as well. Some doctors from our volunteer institute will be coming here and impart training to the staff for a week. Several media persons will also be here from across the country. Hence, similar arrangements have

to be made at the media centre as well," Chandra said. Preparations are underway in full swing for the Ram Temple 'Pran Pratishtha' on January 22, which will draw dignitaries and people from all walks of life. The Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust has decided to enthroned Ram Lalla at the sanctum-sanctorum of the Ram Temple at noon on January 22. Vedic rituals for the Pran Pratishtha ceremony of

Ram Lalla in Ayodhya will begin on January 16, a week before the main ceremony. A priest from Varanasi, Lakshmi Kant Dixit, will perform the main rituals of the Pran-Pratishtha ceremony of Ram Lalla on January 22. From January 14 to January 22, Ayodhya will mark the Amrit Mahotsav. Ayodhya, the birthplace of Lord Rama, holds great spiritual, historical, and cultural significance for the people of India.

# BENGAL BJP DRAWS POLICE SCRUTINY OVER PROTEST AGAINST ATTACKS ON ED

SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE  
SANDESHKHALI (WEST BENGAL)

Six days after an Enforcement Directorate raiding team and its escorting CRPF jawans were beaten up by supporters of a Trinamool Congress leader in Sandeshkhali in West Bengal while the police was nowhere to be found, the police today pulled out all stops to prevent the Bharatiya Janata Party from holding its scheduled gherao of the local police station.

On January 5, a raiding party of the ED had gone to raid the house of a district Trinamool Congress leader, Sheikh Shahjahan, in Sandeshkhali in connection with alleged irregularities in the state's ration system when its members were beaten up by a mob of 1,000 people and forced to retreat. Sheikh Shahjahan has not been seen



since then.

On Thursday, a procession of BJP supporters, led by state president Sukanta Majumdar, was prevented from reaching the local Nyazat police station to record its protest against police inaction and for its failure to arrest Sheikh Shahjahan. The State police enforced prohibitory orders under Section 144 to prevent the BJP supporters from reaching Nyazat police station.

Sukanta Majumdar alleged that the State police which remained inactive

when ED officials were being attacked, had set up "three layers of barricades" to prevent BJP supporters from going ahead with their plan to gherao the police station. "Is this Kashmir that the police are stopping members of the world's largest political party from carrying out its scheduled programme?" he asked. He also alleged that the policewomen were deployed to stop the BJP supporters, so that the latter could be booked under non-bailable sections for alleged molestation.

"This is all being done on the orders of Mamata Banerjee. Sheikh Shahjahan is being sheltered by the Trinamool Congress' top leadership because he shared his ill-gotten gains with the Food Minister Jyotipriya Mallick who, in turn, passed it on to his seniors in the party," Majumdar alleged.

TDG NETWORK  
ITANAGAR

Dubbing the proposed 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra' by Congress, as 'Bharat Todo Anyay Yatra', BJP president J P Nadda on Thursday questioned the role of the grand old party in uniting the country.

The Congress is known for its "divide and rule" politics and had done everything to divide the country and now organising a march to hide its misdeeds, Nadda said while addressing party workers during the state executive meeting here.

The yatra, to be led by Rahul Gandhi, will commence from Imphal on January



14 and culminate in Mumbai on March 20. The Arunachal Pradesh leg of the march is scheduled for January 20.

"I urge you all to understand the Congress well. It is not the 'Bharat Jodo Nyaya Yatra' but the 'Bharat Todo Anyay Yatra' that this so-called INDI Alliance

is on. When did the Congress Party unite India? It never did. The Congress has always worked for breaking India, destroying India," the BJP chief claimed.

Nadda alleged that the Congress is only interested in "vote bank" politics and never thought beyond voters and politics.

"The culture of politics in the country has been changed by the BJP, while (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi has transformed the dynamics of politics to nationalism. Congress does rajneeti, but under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Modi, we do rashtra-neeti. Our vision is to leave no one behind," Nadda said.

# PM MODI PRESENTS 'CHADAR' AT KHWAJA DARGAH URS

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday handed over a 'Chadar' which will be offered on the 812th Urs of sufi saint Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti at the Ajmer Sharif Dargah.

The chadar was presented to Bharatiya Janata Party Minority Morcha national president Jamaal Siddiqui at the Prime Minister's residence in the national capital.

Soon after meeting, PM Modi took to social media platform, X, and said, "Met a Muslim community delegation. During our interaction, I presented the sacred Chadar, which will be placed during the Urs of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti at the esteemed Ajmer Sharif Dargah."

The delegation will visit Ajmer and offer the chadar on behalf of PM Modi. The Urs festival is an annual festival held at Ajmer in Rajasthan which commemorates the death anniversary of Sufi



PM Modi gifts sacred Chadar to a Muslim delegation for placement during Khwaja Chishti's Urs at Ajmer Sharif Dargah in New Delhi.

- PM Modi hands sacred Chadar for Khwaja Chishti's 812th Urs.
- BJP's Siddiqui accepts Chadar on behalf of Muslim community.
- Siddiqui sees Chadar as symbolizing peace and Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb.
- PM's gesture encourages unity among Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians.

saint Moinuddin Chishti.

Siddiqui, after coming out of the Prime Minister's residence, said, "This Chadar is a symbol of peace, harmony and Viksit Bharat. The Prime

Minister, while maintaining the Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb, has presented this Chadar as a tribute to the Dargah of Khwaja Garib Nawaz."

The BJP leader said that

# NITISH KUMAR CONFIDENT AMIDST SEAT-SHARING TALKS WITHIN I.N.D.I.A. BLOC

TDG NETWORK  
PATNA

Bihar Chief Minister and Janata Dal-United (JDU) national president Nitish Kumar expressed confidence on Thursday that ongoing seat-sharing discussions within the INDIA alliance were progressing well. Assuring reporters, Kumar stated, "Everything will be done on time, don't worry." The remarks come amid reports of challenges in reaching a consensus on seat-sharing among INDIA alliance members for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, despite multiple



rounds of talks in Delhi and other locations.

Kumar's statement is perceived as a positive signal, indicating a potential resolution to the deadlock over seat-sharing in Bihar. Insider sources reveal that the alliance is engaged in intensive deliberations, with the JDU maintaining a firm stance

on its seat-sharing expectations, presenting a challenge for the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and Congress. In the midst of these discussions, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has declared its intention to contest on three seats.

The JDU claims a prior understanding with the RJD, as all parties were previously allied. Specifically, the JDU seeks 16 seats, leaving the remaining 24 for other alliance partners.

Responding to questions about the ongoing seat-sharing talks for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections sched-

uled for April-May, Nitish Kumar assured that everything would be finalized on time. The statement comes as members of the INDIA bloc engage in daily discussions in Delhi to address seat-sharing concerns.

Recent meetings involving leaders from Shiv Sena (UBT), NCP (Sharad Pawar), and Congress have taken place in Delhi, with discussions extending to Maharashtra's seat-sharing arrangements. Congress is conducting cluster-wise meetings to deliberate on candidates for the impending elections.



**TWEET OF THE DAY**

President of India  
@rasbtrapatibbn



Speaking at the Swachh Survekshan awards event in New Delhi, President Droupadi Murmu said that if we deeply understand the concept of value from waste, it becomes clear that everything is valuable and nothing is waste.

Narendra Modi  
@narendramodi



Met a Muslim community delegation. During our interaction, I presented the sacred Chadar, which will be placed during the Urs of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti at the esteemed Ajmer Sharif Dargah.

Congress  
@INCIndia



'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra' is going to start from Manipur to end the increasing injustice and inequality in the country. You can also join us in this fight for social, economic and political justice by becoming a 'Nyay Yodha'. To become a justice warrior, give a missed call to +91 9891802024 and raise your voice against injustice.

Mallikarjun Kharge  
@kcharge



"The most important task for our strength and strength is to establish unity among the people" - Lal Bahadur Shastri We remember the unprecedented contribution of our idol, former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri ji. From land reforms to laying the foundation of milk and green revolution, from abolishing the third class in railways to providing seats for women in buses, from the 1965 war to serving the country with his Gandhian ideas - he has done his unique work. Showed devotion to duty. Shastri ji's high thoughts and moral values are a source of inspiration for all of us. His simple life is exemplary.

Jagat Prakash Nadda  
@JPNadda



Hon. PM Shri @narendramodi Ji has changed the definition 'last village' is now known as 'first village'.

# AAP, CONGRESS TO DISCUSS SEAT SHARING FOR LOK SABHA POLLS TODAY

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

Leaders of I.N.D.I.A bloc parties Congress and AAP will hold further discussions on Friday on seat-sharing in Delhi and in states for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, sources said.

The discussions will take place at a meeting at the residence of senior Congress leader Mukul Wasnik, a source in the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) said.

The leaders of the parties had met last week at Wasnik's residence on the seat-sharing issue but declined having any substantial talks. The meeting had lasted for nearly two and a half hours.

The I.N.D.I.A bloc has been formed by opposition



parties to take on the BJP-led NDA in the Lok Sabha elections.

On Tuesday, senior AAP leader and the party's Delhi unit convener Gopal Rai had said that his party has stated its stand to contest the polls in five states, including Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Goa, and Delhi in alliance with the Congress.

He had said that an official stand on the alliance

was needed to be put forth by both the sides.

The sources claimed that the AAP wishes to contest on four of the seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi and has an alliance with the Congress in states also.

The Congress is willing to contest Lok Sabha polls in the North East Delhi, Chandani Chowk and New Delhi parliamentary constituencies, they said. The

- I.N.D.I.A bloc has been formed to take on the BJP-led NDA in the LS polls
- Congress, AAP plan to continue discussions regarding seat-sharing

formal discussion on seat sharing will be held in the second meeting between the two parties on Friday, said the source in the AAP.

In the previous meeting with Congress leaders, AAP was represented by its national general secretary (organisation) Sandeep Pathak and ministers Atishi and Saurabh Bhardwaj.

The sources said AAP's Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha who was absent in the first meeting will take part in the talks on Friday.

# COURT EMPHASISES NEED TO EDUCATE SOCIETY ON GENDER DETERMINATION

**ASHISH SINHA**  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday observed that parents who give their daughters-in-law a hard time for not being able to fulfil their desire of "preserving their family tree", need to be educated that it is their son and not the wife whose chromosomes will decide the child's gender.

The court was dealing with a case of dowry death of a woman after being allegedly harassed by her husband and in-laws for bringing insufficient dowry and giving birth to two

daughters. It said that in contemporary times, the idea of a woman's worth being tied to material considerations contradicts the principles of equality and dignity.

"The persistent prevalence of regressive mindsets and instances exemplified by cases involving insatiable demands for dowry underscores a broader societal concern. It highlights the challenges faced by married women, whose intrinsic value and dignity should not be contingent upon their parents' ability to meet the insatiable financial demands from

their in-laws," the bench said. Furthermore, it stated that these are disturbing circumstances wherein parents wish for the well-being of their daughter and her comfort after she leaves her paternal house and tries to settle in the matrimonial home but instead of providing her love and support, the new bride is met with unrelenting greed and harassment from in-laws family.

According to the court, the trauma is often multiplied becoming a lifelong ordeal when the victim of a dowry-related offence gives up her life due to con-

stant torture and harassment, especially when the two daughters she has given birth to and loved also become a ground to harass and traumatise her as if she is solely responsible for the child's gender.

"Surprisingly, the genetic science in this regard is ignored according to which, the genetic determination of gender of the unborn child when the child is conceived, involves the combination of X and Y chromosomes, with females possessing two X chromosomes (XX) and males having one X and one Y chromosome (XY)."

# EARTHQUAKE TREMORS FELT IN DELHI-NCR

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

Delhi and its neighbouring areas, including Noida, Ghaziabad, Faridabad, and Gurugram, on Thursday afternoon encountered seismic tremors. The National

Center for Seismology, the Government of India's nodal agency for earthquake monitoring, reported that the epicenter of the tremors was located in Afghanistan.

Tremors were experienced in Chandigarh, Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana, Punjab,

and various other northern parts of India.

The earthquake induced fear among the populace, leading to reports of furniture shaking in Delhi and the National Capital Region. In response to the panic, numerous individu-

als reportedly hurried out of their homes and workplaces.

As of now, there are no reports of casualties or property damage.

Magnitude 6.0 earthquake hits Afghanistan, tremors felt in Kashmir as well.

# DELHI POLICE ARRESTS YOUTH WITH ARMS AND AMMUNITION

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police arrested a youth from under the ITO Bridge with 45 live cartridges on the intervening night of January 9-10, officials said on Thursday.

According to Delhi Police officials, the recovery was

made during an intensive picket check in view of Republic Day preparations.

The accused, identified as Ehit Sham-ul (22), was coming from Uttar Pradesh's Pilibhit district. The police officials further said that the accused could not produce any valid documents for seized items," the

police added. "A car was stopped, and police personnel searched the vehicle and its driver/owner. At the moment, one small packet was recovered from the possession of the driver, and on opening the packet, 45 live cartridges (9mm) were recovered," the police said. A First Information Report

(FIR) under appropriate sections of the Arms Act, including 2/24 u/s 25, has been registered against the accused. The Delhi Police have stepped up anti-sabotage checks, verification drives, and patrolling in the national capital ahead of Republic Day to thwart any untoward incidents.

# NDMC climbs two ranks, secures 7th position in Swachh Survekshan

**TIKAM SHARMA**  
NEW DELHI

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) achieved a national ranking of 7 in the Swachh Survekshan report released by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs on Thursday.

The Swachhta Awards were presented by the Hon'ble President of India, Droupadi Murmu, and the Hon'ble Minister of MOUTH, Hardeep Singh Puri, at the ceremony attended by various urban development ministers, mayors, mission directors, municipal commissioners, and city officials from states and union territories across the country.

In the city report card released under the Swachh Survekshan, the council received a score of 99

"Awards and ranking recognition are a result of the collaborative efforts and hard work of NDMC."

- Chairperson

percent for door-to-door waste collection, 87 percent for source segregation, 100 percent for waste generation versus processing, and remediation of dumpsites, as well as cleanliness of water bodies, public toilets, and 93 percent for the cleanliness of residential and market areas.

NDMC Chairperson Amit Yadav credited the Swachhta awards and ranking to the hard work of all NDMC teams. Yadav mentioned that the council has moved up

two ranks since last year, from number 9 to number 7. He emphasized the need to continue with dedication and focus to improve and provide the best all-round services to New Delhi. Looking ahead, he expressed the goal of striving to be among the top three cities next year. In a tweet on X, formerly known as Twitter, NDMC celebrated the achievement, stating, "Proud moment! NDMC secured rank 7 in the All India Clean City category. Moved 2 ranks up from rank 9 to rank 7. NDMC also got a 5-star garbage-free city and the cleanest city within Union Territory in the Swachh Survekshan 2023 award. Next year, NDMC will strive to be in the top three cities."

# AIIMS takes steps to address bed availability, patient comfort

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

In line with its commitment to providing healthcare services to patients and attendants, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Delhi announced a series of proactive measures to ensure the availability and efficient utilisation of Vishram Sadan beds.

With over 1,500 beds across various facilities, the institute offers comfortable accommodations with essential amenities such as hygiene, meals, and more as of now.

However, sources suggest that approximately 50 per

Requests have been sent to governors and chief ministers of neighbouring states for land allocation for extra Vishram Sadans-officials.

cent of these beds remain unoccupied, despite reports suggesting otherwise.

In response to these observations, M Srinivas, AIIMS Director, undertook rounds of the surrounding areas and engaged with individuals reportedly lying in the open at night.

The findings revealed that some were not active pa-

tients under treatment at AIIMS but rather individuals allegedly taking advantage of free food donations and overnight accommodations.

To address this issue, AIIMS New Delhi is implementing measures, including appropriate signage highlighting the availability of Vishram Sadan beds to be displayed at key locations. Patients and attendants will be actively guided to these accommodations.

A real-time dashboard displaying the availability of Vishram Sadan beds will be operational by February 29, 2024.

# DELHI BJP SLAMS AAP OVER CITY'S 90TH RANK IN SWACHH BHARAT SURVEY

**TIKAM SHARMA**  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) slammed the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), led by Arvind Kejriwal, for inadequate sanitation services in Delhi, citing the national capital's 90th rank in the Swachh Bharat Survey. Delhi BJP Chief expressed disappointment, stating, "Under Arvind Kejriwal's regime, Delhi's sanitation services have deteriorated to the worst level."

During the MCD election, CM Arvind Kejriwal had pledged additional resources for Delhi's sanitation under AAP's rule. However, after one year, Delhiites feel deceived.

Virendra Sachdeva, Delhi BJP President, regretted that the AAP had promised to clean three landfill sites within a year but failed to deliver, with the landfill sites remaining unchanged since January 2023.

The Swachh Bharat Survey results, released today, deeply disappointed Delhiites as the

national capital ranked 90th among participating cities. In the cleaning of residential and market areas, MCD scored poorly at 59%, indicating that only 59% of garbage is cleared from the streets.

The survey also revealed that waste and garbage collection is conducted in only 71% of Delhi, leaving 29% of residents compelled to dispose of waste on open roads.

Delhi BJP President Sachdeva highlighted the figures of door-to-door waste collection, explaining the prevalence of garbage heaps on city roads and complaints from RWAs about zero sanitation in back lanes.

He further criticized the unhygienic state of most MCD-maintained public toilets in the city and announced an upcoming Filthy Public Toilet Campaign on social media with public participation. Sachdeva attributed the deteriorated sanitation standards in Delhi to the corruption of AAP councillors, pledging to expose it soon.

# ABVP PLANS YOUTHFUL FESTIVITIES IN DELHI CAMPUSES

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) is set to organise a series of events from January 12 to January 30 in educational institutions affiliated with DU, JMI, JNU, etc., in Delhi. These activities, fall-

ing under the umbrella of 'Youth Week,' will encompass seminars, sports events, quizzes, and paying tribute to Swami Vivekananda across various educational institutions.

Ashutosh Singh, National Media Convener of ABVP, stated that the objective of

these programs is to spread the teachings of Swami Vivekananda among the youth. The ABVP units in different educational institutions will be responsible for organizing and facilitating engaging debates, quizzes, and other competitions during the 'Youth Week.'

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF  
**DR T S SETHURATHNAM**

With profound sorrow and grief we announce demise of  
**Dr T S Sethurathnam**  
who left for his heavenly abode  
on Wednesday, 10th January 2024

Prayer meet will be held on  
**Sunday, 14th Jan 2024** at  
**Chinmaya Mission Auditorium,**  
Lodhi Road  
**From 11:00 am to 12:00 pm**

WITH ETERNAL LOVE AND MEMORIES

Wife Mrs Shakuntala Sethurathnam  
Son Dr S Ravi and Mrs Bhuvana Ravi - Daughter-in-Law  
Son T S Vasudevan and Mrs Shobhana Vasudevan - Daughter-in-Law  
Grandchildren Abhishek Ravi, Akshay Ravi and Chinmay Vasudevan



TOP OF THE DAY

GOLD PRICE STABLE AT RS 63,150 PER 10 GRAMS

NEW DELHI: Gold prices remained flat at Rs 63,150 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday, according to HDFC Securities. Silver was also flat at Rs 76,300 per kilogram. HDFC Securities' senior analyst of commodities Saumil Gandhi said, spot gold prices (24 carats) in the Delhi markets are trading flat at Rs 63,150/10 grams, unchanged from the previous close. Meanwhile, in the futures trade, February contract of gold rose Rs 164 to Rs 62,160 per 10 grams on the MCX. Also, March contract of silver climbed Rs 120 to Rs 72,089 per kg on the bourse. In the overseas markets, gold is trading marginally higher at USD 2,031 per ounce, while silver is down at USD 22.97 per ounce. Going forward, traders anticipate that gold prices are likely to trade in a choppy range before the outcome of the US Consumer Price Index (CPI) data which will be released later on Thursday, Gandhi added.

NEW YEAR'S FIRST CRUISE ARRIVES

MANGALURU: The first cruise ship of the new year, 'M S Riviera' arrived at New Mangalore Port (NMP), the port authorities said. This is the fourth cruise vessel docking at the port here during the current season. The Marshall Islands-flagged ship docked along berth No. 04, with 980 passengers and crew members. The vessel arrived enroute from the ports of Dubai, Mumbai and Mormugao. The overall length of the ship is 239 metres with a carrying capacity of 66,172 Gross tonnage and a draft of 7.60 metre.

PATNAIK UNVEILS LOGO FOR ODIA CONFERENCE

BHUBANESWAR: Hopeful for the resounding success of the inaugural World Odia Language Conference, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik unveiled the logo of the 'Biswa Odia Bhasa Sammilani' on Thursday with the tagline 'Language is the Future'. The conference is scheduled to take place from February 3 to 5. "I hope that this conference will provide a good platform for the exchange of views among intellectuals, researchers, scholars, and students," Patnaik said in a statement. Noting that Odisha was the first state in the country formed on linguistic basis, Patnaik emphasised that the Odia language has gained the status of one of the classical languages, enriching the glory of the state and the language itself.

MISSIONARY DAY CELEBRATED ACROSS MIZORAM

AIZAWL: Christian-dominated Mizoram on Thursday celebrated 'Missionary Day' with special prayers and worship services being held in churches across the state. All government offices, educational institutions and some business establishments were closed as the government declared a public holiday to mark the sanctity of the day. Special prayer and worship services were held in local churches, especially in those belonging to the Baptist Church of Mizoram (BCM) and Presbyterian Church.

SANGH PARIVAR SLANDERING DRAVIDIAN MOVEMENT: UDHAYANIDHI STALIN

LATHA SRINIVASAN  
CHENNAI

On January 10, Minister for Sports Development and Youth Welfare, Udhayanidhi Stalin, participated in the DMK's NRI wing meeting. Speaking at the event, Udhayanidhi said, "Youngsters today are largely dependent on social media to understand Tamil Nadu's politics. On social media, supporters of the Sangh Parivar are consistently slandering the Dravidian Movement. But it is not just the supporters of the fascist BJP [who are slandering the Dravidian Movement]. It is being done in the name of caste and religion, and sometimes even by those who claim to speak for Tamil identity. No matter how many masks they wear, we don't

- Udhayanidhi Stalin voices concerns about social media's impact on Tamil Nadu politics.
- Releases nine books countering misinformation on the Dravidian Movement.
- Commends DMK's NRI wing, specifically praising the Aayalaka team.
- Acknowledges Aayalaka team's global presence in 37 countries.



need those to thwart their plans. Periyar's face, Anna's written words and Kalaighnar's speeches are enough." He also said that nine books had been released on the Dravidian movement to counter misinformation. "On behalf of the youth wing, we have released 9 books about the Dravidian

Movement. Please read them and gift them to people," said the DMK leader. Lauding the efforts of the DMK's NRI wing, the Sports Minister wrote on his social media handle on X (formerly Twitter), "In this special event held at Rayappettai in #Chepauk-Triplicane block, we highlighted and addressed the

humanitarian work of the Aayalaka team, which supports the rescue of Tamils who are suffering in foreign countries and bring them home. In particular, we appreciated the comrades of the Ayalak team who are fighting the slanders spread abroad against the Dravidian movement under the guise of religion-caste-language." "May the work of the Aayalaka team, which has formed an organization in 37 countries in three years - become the hope of Tamils living abroad!" he added. In the last few days, the Sports Minister has not just been busy with the upcoming Khelo India games but also distributing the recently announced Pongal gift by DMK leader and TN CM MK Stalin in his Chepauk Triplicane constituency.

Mehbooba Mufti accuses ED of election-related interference

TDG NETWORK  
SRINAGAR

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Thursday said the central investigation agencies are being used to harass the opposition leaders ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, adding the Enforcement Directorate has "become a part of the election process". "Whenever there is a state election or parliamentary election, the ED starts summoning the opposition leaders. So, there is no surprise in it," she told reporters after a medical check-up at a private hospital here. The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said, who met with an accident in Anantnag district earlier in the day, was reacting to the summons issued to National



Conference president Farooq Abdullah by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). "We don't know how many more leaders will be summoned. This is just a link in the chain of the upcoming elections. This is a means to harass the opposition parties, be it the ED, the NIA or the CBI," she added. The ED had summoned Abdullah for questioning on Thursday in connection with a money laundering case in the Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA).

Chennai court to frame charges against Senthil Balaji on Jan 22

ASHISH SINHA  
NEW DELHI

A Chennai Sessions Court on Thursday stated that charges would be framed against Tamil Nadu Minister V Senthil Balaji on January 22, 2024. Balaji, who was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) last year in connection with a money laundering case, appeared before Principal Sessions Judge S Alli through video-conferencing from the Central Prison. The judge extended his remand until January 22 and directed the framing of charges. In her order, Judge Alli stated, "Accused produced through video conference. Heard the Special PP under



section 226 Cr.P.C. Charge framing by January 22, 2024. Petition filed under section 91 (2) Cr.P.C. Check and call by then. Remand extended till then. Accused to be produced in person." During the hearing, Special Public Prosecutor N Ramesh, representing the prosecution, opened the case under section 226 Cr.P.C. He outlined the charges against Balaji and

K Annamalai highlights DMK's failure in fulfilling Krishnagiri poll promises

LATHA SRINIVASAN  
CHENNAI



Tamil Nadu BJP leader K Annamalai attacked the ruling DMK government on its poll promises and achievements so far. He is on his 'En Mann, En Makkal padayatra and while in Uthangarai (Krishnagiri district), he said the potential of the area had not been tapped. "CM MK Stalin says 90% of poll promises have been fulfilled, but in reality, it's only less than 20% of promises that have been kept. For instance, he spoke about setting up of a mango pulp factory in Krishnagiri district, and upgradation of facilities in Uthangarai government hospital. This has not been done," he said addressing a public meeting. The saffron leader also touched upon the government-run liquor shops in the state and how the BJP will ensure their closure. This has been an important issue especially with women voters'

who outnumber male voters in this state. Even after the BJP had submitted a white paper about opening toddy shops in Tamil Nadu to the Governor RN Ravi, the state government had not taken any steps to do so, he alleged. "If BJP comes to power in Tamil Nadu, TASMACK shops will be closed in three years in a phased manner and toddy shops will be opened. Uthangarai region has the potential to procure and sell palm-related products with value addition," Annamalai added. While at Krishnagiri, the

BJP leader wrote on X (formerly twitter), "Pilferage-free deliverance of our social welfare measures & reaching out to the intended beneficiary is the success of our Hon PM Thiru @narendramodi avl's corruption-free governance." He said that the district had received 27, 213 concrete houses and over 2.45 lakh people received individual toilets in their homes in the last nine years of the Modi government. He reiterated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave more importance to Tamil than Hindi.

MADRAS HC DISMISSES OPS' APPEAL IN AIADMK SYMBOL ROW

LATHA SRINIVASAN  
CHENNAI



On Thursday, the Madras High Court dismissed an appeal filed by All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) leader O Panneerselvam (OPS), who has been expelled from the party. OPS had filed an appeal against a single judge order which restrained him from using the AIADMK flag, party symbol and the official letterhead. A division bench comprising Justices R Mahadevan and Mohammed Shaffiq dismissed OPS' appeal noting that there existed no grounds for interfering with the single judge's order of November 2023. In November 2023, AIADMK General Secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami (EPS), had filed a civil suit seeking an injunction restraining OPS from using the party flag, symbol and letterhead as he had been expelled from the AIADMK. On November 7, a single judge division bench, comprising Justice N Sathish Kumar, had granted this interim injunction and OPS subsequently filed an appeal. OPS had stated in November that OPS had been expelled from the party and his continued use of the AIADMK symbol, flag and letterhead, was confusing

the voters. He added that the Election Commission recognized them under clause 15 of the election symbols (reservation and allotments) order, 1968. Since OPS had been expelled from the party, he had no legal rights to use them, was EPS' contention. EPS won a big battle against OPS in early 2023 when the Election Commission of India (EC) recognised him as general secretary of the AIADMK. The dual leadership held between EPS and OPS was abolished and EPS became the sole leader of the party. The EC also allotted the two-leaves symbol to AIADMK and stated that all AIADMK candidates were free to use it. At the time, EPS stated, "This journey has been rough for me. It was full of thorns. So many tests and betrayals. But we have now overcome all the problems created by traitors. The struggle to protect AIADMK's 1.5 crore cadre went up to the Supreme Court and we won. Now, our victory is that the ECI has recognised us."

ASSAM TO IMPLEMENT UCC AFTER UTTARAKHAND, GUJARAT: CM SARMA

TDG NETWORK  
GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced on Thursday the intention to implement a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in the state, with plans to introduce a bill in the assembly later this year. Sarma specified that the UCC would initially be implemented by the governments of Uttarakhand and Gujarat, with Assam following suit, incorporating new elements to create an "Assam model." He assured

that the tribal community in Assam would be exempted from the UCC. Sarma explained that he is anticipating the UCC bill from Uttarakhand, and once available, Assam will introduce a similar legislation. However, he emphasized the incorporation of innovative aspects, particularly addressing issues such as child marriages and polygamy. Notably, the tribal community in Assam will be excluded from the UCC provisions. The Chief Minister ex-



pressed his commitment to the implementation of the UCC, outlining that public consultations on the bill could occur within the next two to three months. Following this, the bill is expected to be introduced in

the Assam assembly. Sarma acknowledged that the timeline would be contingent on the developments in Uttarakhand and Gujarat, but he affirmed Assam's determination to be the third state to implement the UCC. A Uniform Civil Code is conceptualized as a unified set of laws governing personal matters such as marriage, divorce, adoption, inheritance, and succession, applicable to all citizens irrespective of their religious affiliations. It seeks to replace

the existing diverse personal laws that vary based on religious practices. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has previously expressed strong support for the Uniform Civil Code, hinting at its prioritization by the Union government ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The move aligns with the broader objective of creating a common legal framework for personal matters across diverse religious communities in India.

ED alleges Rabri Devi & daughters' ties in Land-for-Jobs sale deeds

ASHISH SINHA  
NEW DELHI

Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Enforcement Directorate (ED) have alleged that the sale deed of lands given in lieu of jobs in railways in the land-for-jobs case were issued in the name of Rabri Devi, former CM of Bihar and wife of former Union railways minister Lalu Prasad and their two daughters Misa Bharti and Hema Yadav. Four parcels of land which were allegedly issued at the orders of Lalu Prasad have been identified by the agencies wherein two of them are in the name of Rabri Devi. The other two are each in the name of their daughters, Misa Bharti and Hema Yadav. It was reported that two parcels of land issued in favour of Rabri Devi are lo-



were issued in the name of two companies including M/s AK Infosystems Private Limited whose erstwhile promoter Amit Katyal was arrested by the ED last November. The said company had received a land parcel from the candidate's relative who was allegedly selected as Group-D substitute in the Indian Railways at the behest of the then Union Railways Minister, Lalu Prasad. Nonetheless, AK Infosystem was later handed out to the family members of Lalu Prasad in 2014 by Katyal without any monetary benefits as confirmed by the people. According to the ED, the "proceeds of crime" were allegedly utilised to purchase a property in New Friends Colony, New Delhi, which was bought in the name of another company M/s AB Exports Ltd.

calculated in village Mahuabagh while another located in village Kaudia was given to Misa Bharti. Both the parcels of land fall in Patna. However, a portion of two industrial plots located in Ghaziabad are proceeds of the crime which were later purchased by Hema Yadav. The ED said this in a chargesheet filed on Tuesday in the land-for-jobs case naming Rabri Devi, Misa Bharti and others. Additionally, similar sale deeds

BRS unveils initiatives for worker welfare

TDG NETWORK  
TELANGANA

In a strategic move, the BRS, led by former Finance Minister T Harish Rao, unveils plans to establish legal cells in Hyderabad and district offices, aiming to shield party workers from potential legal challenges. Simultaneously, the party creates a trust dedicated to the welfare of Karayakartas (party workers), offering support to their families. Organisational reinforcement is on the agenda, with the formation of mandal and district committees to enhance efficiency. Reflecting on recent electoral outcomes, KTR emphasizes the need for a campaign-centric approach over adminis-

trative work. Despite efforts like granting Podu titles and advocating for local tribal reservations, the party faces challenges in garnering support from Girijans. In a personal interaction, Kasoju Shankaramma, mother of Telangana martyr Srikanth Chary, invites BRS working president KT Rama Rao to her granddaughter's birthday celebrations, highlighting a poignant connection between party leadership and the community. The gesture is further underscored as Shankaramma shares a meal with KTR, Harish Rao, Kadiyam Srihari, and other leaders. The BRS navigates a dynamic political landscape, focusing on adaptability and community-centric politics.

SC extends Nawab Malik's bail in money laundering case by 6 months

ASHISH SINHA  
NEW DELHI



The Supreme Court on Thursday extended by six months the interim bail of former Maharashtra minister and NCP (National Congress Party) leader Nawab Malik in a money laundering case. A bench comprising Justices Bela M Trivedi and Pankaj Mithal extended the medical bail previously awarded to Malik, as the Enforcement Directorate's Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, expressed no objection to the extension. Last year on October 12, the apex court had already extended Malik's interim bail by three months in the same case. Malik had approached the Supreme Court challenging the Bombay High Court's decision on July 13, 2023, which had denied him bail on medical grounds in

connection with the Enforcement Directorate's ongoing investigation. Highlighting Malik's health condition, the Supreme Court had earlier acknowledged his kidney ailment, emphasizing that there was no improvement since August 11 of the previous year when he was initially granted a two-month interim bail. The Enforcement Directorate had arrested Malik in February 2022, linking him to the activities of fugitive gangster Dawood Ibrahim and his associates.



# GUJARAT AN OPPORTUNITY HUB IN SPACE SECTOR GLOBALLY: CM PATEL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has designated Ahmedabad as the headquarters for the Indian National Space

ABHIJIT BHATT  
GANDHINAGAR

Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel has stated that Gujarat has become an opportunity hub for stakeholders in the space sector, both nationally and globally. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has designated Ahmedabad as the headquarters for the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Center (IN-SPACE). This organization operates as a single-window, independent, and autonomous nodal agency, significantly boosting the private space sector economy.

Addressing the International Space Conference during the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2024, Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel mentioned the signing of an MoU between the state government and IN-SPACE to establish a space manufacturing cluster in Sanand. Additionally, a Technical Support and Incubation Center will be operationalized at IN-SPACE's headquarters in Bhopal. The Institute will offer incentives and technical guidance to

## EXPERTS SHARE PERSPECTIVES ON ROLE OF SPACE IN FOSTERING THE ECONOMIC GROWTH

At the International Space Conference held during the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit-2024, experts convened to discuss the pivotal role of space in India's economic landscape. Dr. Vinod Kumar, the Director of IN-SPACE, Ahmedabad, delivered an in-depth presentation highlighting the significant contributions of the space sector to the nation's economy and growth. Emphasizing India's progress in areas such as the blue economy, green economy, digital economy, and the achievement of sustainable development goals, he underscored the strategic advancements in the space sector. Notably, there has been a notable surge in the number of space startups in India, indicating a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem. AVM Rajeev Ranjan expressed that the space sector is undergoing a transformative era, with increased involvement of the private sector in India.

facilitate the establishment of various manufacturing industries aligned with space technology.

He further stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has provided the country with a policy of 'Space for Humankind' rather than a race of 'Humans in Space.' Under the Prime Minister's leadership, India is progressing to secure its leading position in the space sector with ISRO being a crucial and largest contributor to India's space endeavors.

During this occasion, the Chief Minister highlighted the success of ISRO's Chandrayaan and Aditya L-1 missions, along with upcoming missions like Gaganyaan and the Indian Space Station, referred to as "Bhartiya Antariksha Station."

The Chief Minister emphasized that owing to ISRO's operations, space-related MSMEs have functioned as supply chain partners. Given the growth in the space sector, it has become imperative to enhance the participation

of private players, fostering the development of dedicated industries and startups.

He added that in 2020, the Union Cabinet, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, made a historic decision to open the space sector for private sector players in India. As a result, India has now joined the ranks of other countries worldwide, moving forward in the field of space exploration.

The Chief Minister emphasized that space is a profound and dynamic science with immense potential for continuous innovation. He urged industrialists, investors, and space science experts at the seminar to contribute to developing the space ecosystem in Gujarat. Confident in the state's ability to contribute significantly to the futuristic space sector under the Prime Minister's guidance, he expressed this vision.

ISRO Chairman S. Somnath highlighted that progress in the space sector aims for the long-term prosperity of the nation. He stressed the importance of increasing the country's prosperity through space.

# 'GUJARAT HAS MADE SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF EV CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE'

ABHIJIT BHATT  
GANDHINAGAR

During the 10th edition of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit, Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel addressed industry leaders and stakeholders in the electric vehicle sector, including entrepreneurs and innovators, at the 'Electric Vehicle Manufacturing - Charging Ahead to 2047' Seminar. The Chief Minister's speech at the seminar showcased Gujarat's commitment to the development and growth of the electric vehicle industry, emphasizing the importance of a robust charging infrastructure for the sector's success.

Bhupendra Patel said that "the Gujarat government is proactively working to attract investors for electric vehicle manufacturing by encouraging research and development." The government is also ensuring a robust infrastructure of charging and maintenance to facilitate the growth of the electric vehicle sector. The success of electric vehicles depends on a strong network of charging stations, and Gujarat has made significant investments in the development of the charging infrastructure. The state has attracted substantial investment in the development of charging stations, contributing



to the overall success of electric vehicles.

During his address, Bhupendra Patel mentioned that the state government has provided a seamless platform for the establishment of production units in special investment regions like Mandal-Becharaji and Dholera.

This initiative aims to encourage entrepreneurs and industrialists to set up industrial production units in these regions, contributing to the growth of the electric vehicle industry. The seamless platform is designed to simplify the process and provide a conducive environment for businesses to thrive in these special investment regions.

The Chief Minister stated that the state government

has designed an Electric Vehicle (EV) policy to create a favourable ecosystem for people to adopt electric vehicles and to promote the overall development of the industry. The government has set the target of preparing an eco-friendly ecosystem for the entire electric vehicle value chain.

Additionally, in the public transportation sector, the government has already adopted electric vehicles, and approximately 500 electric buses are currently operational in public transportation. As a result of the collective efforts made by the state government, there has been a significant growth in the adoption and sales of electric vehicles over the last five years.

The Chief Minister an-

nounced that to actualize global green mobility, the automotive industry is also transforming towards green mobility.

The automotive industry is actively participating in the transformation of green mobility by understanding the necessity of manufacturing for green growth. Significant research and development efforts have been undertaken in the country and in Gujarat to make electric vehicles accessible, affordable, and efficient. The focus on research and development is aimed at contributing to the development of electric vehicles that are accessible, affordable, and energy-efficient, aligning with the vision of promoting green mobility in the state and the country.

# NIA SWOOPS DOWN ON BKI, BISHNOI GANG

CONTINUED FROM P1 and ammunition into Punjab. They have also been sending funds to their associates through various MTSS Channels for carrying out terrorist acts, as per NIA investigations.

A total of seven locations were raided in case RC-39/2022/NIA/DLI, registered by NIA against the Organized Crime Syndicate being run on the directions of Lawrence Bishnoi and his associates, including Goldy Brar, under UA(P)A.

The Syndicate has spread its mafia style criminal networks in several States of the country, as well as abroad, in active conspiracy with Harwinder Singh @ Rinda, a 'designated Individual terrorist'.

These networks have been involved in many sensational crimes, such as the murders of popular Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala as well as religious and social leaders like Pardeep Kumar, besides large-scale extortions from businessmen and professionals.

The third case in which nine raids were conducted on Thursday relates to various proscribed terrorist organizations / criminal gangs based in India and abroad, which have been involved in hatching terror & criminal conspiracies in various parts of the country.

The searches were part of NIA's continuous crackdown on terrorist outfits and individual terrorists engaged in carrying out criminal/terrorist activities in India, as well as their support networks.

# Nayanthara's 'Annapoorani' pulled down from Netflix post police case

CONTINUED FROM P1 dent Arts."

Zee Studios, one of the co-producers of Annapoorani, subsequently issued an apology letter to the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. It further clarified that Annapoorani was not intended to hurt the sentiments of Hindus and Brahmins. "We have no intentions as co-producers of the film to hurt the religious sentiments of Hindus and Brahmins community and would like to hereby apologise for the inconvenience caused and hurt caused to the sentiments of the

respective communities. (sic)," wrote Zee Studios.

The co-producer stated it would collaborate with Trident Arts and Netflix to 'remove the film from the platform until edited'. On January 10, Netflix took down the film from its OTT platform in compliance with this.

Annapoorani narrates the story of the daughter of a Hindu Brahmin priest and how she becomes a chef which is her passion. The conundrum between her orthodox upbringing and her passion for cooking is the crux of the story.

CONTINUED FROM P1 cies in which the party fancies its chances.

These six seats are Berhampore, which is represented by its members Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, Malda (South) which is held by Abu Hashem Khan Chaudhury who is the younger brother of the late Congressman strongman Ghani Khan Chaudhury, and Murshidabad, Darjeeling, Raiganj and Purulia.

Political observers are of the opinion that such a proposal from Sonia Gandhi's side also points to Congress' eagerness to enter into an alliance with the Trinamool Congress and rule out any speculations that it may also tie up with the Left in Bengal. This also showed that the Congress is convinced that the Trinamool Congress will be a better ally in its fight to dislodge the BJP from the Centre.

However, even as the Congress high command is fa-



ilitating the seat-sharing agreement, the State unit of the party is going hammer and tongs at the Trinamool Congress.

West Bengal Pradesh Congress spokesperson Soumya Aich Roy said that the state unit of Congress has no intention of entering into an alliance with Trinamool Congress which is allegedly neck-deep in corruption.

Trinamool Congress spokesperson Kunal Ghosh, reacting to the demand of the state Congress unit to leave them 10 seats, said it was like a "child's whim". He said that

children often ask for many more chocolates or biscuits than they can possibly eat and maintained that the Congress was behaving in a similar manner.

In such a situation, it is learnt that the Congress' Bengal observer for the Lok Sabha polls, Ghulam Ahmad Mir is coming down to West Bengal on January 15 to discuss the seat-sharing issue with the state Congress unit.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is also expected to reach North Bengal from Assam on January 27 as part of his Nyay Yatra.

# INDORE CLEANEST CITY FOR SEVENTH CONSECUTIVE TIME

CONTINUED FROM P1 I appeal that your passion for cleanliness should never diminish," the CM said.

"Madhya Pradesh is always committed to fulfil the pledge taken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to realise Mahatma Gandhi's dream of a clean India", he added.

Meanwhile, the sanitation workers in Indore also started celebrations in the Mu-

nicipal Corporation office in the city. An LED screen was also placed on the premises of the Municipal Corporation office to watch the live telecast of this award ceremony.

As soon as the name of Indore was announced, the sanitation workers jumped up with joy and started dancing by beating the drums.

This time Indore has shared the title of cleanest

city with Surat, a city in Gujarat.

The official account of Swachh Bharat Mission wrote on X, "India declares it's cleanest cities! Congratulations to both Indore and Surat for clinching the top spot as India's Cleanest City. Your unwavering commitment to swachhata is simply outstanding. Keep dazzling and setting the bar high." (ANI)

# GROSS DIRECT TAX MOP-UP GROW 16.77 %

CONTINUED FROM P1

lakh crore which is 19.41 per cent higher than the net collections for the corresponding period of last year. This collection is 80.61 per cent of the total Budget estimates of direct taxes for FY 2023-24. The net corporate Income Tax (CIT) grew at 12.37 per cent and Net Personal Income Tax (PIT) grows 27.26 per cent y-o-y respectively.

The ministry issued re-

funds worth Rs 2.48 lakh crore during 1 April, 2023 to 10 January, 2024. The growth rate for CIT in terms of gross revenue collections stands at 8.32 per cent while that for PIT in terms of gross revenue collections is 26.11 per cent (PIT only)/ 26.11 per cent (PIT including STT). After adjustment of refunds, the net growth in CIT collections is 12.37 per cent and that in PIT collections is 27.26 per cent. (PIT only)/ 27.22% (PIT including STT).

# 'GIFT City gateway for developed nation tag'

CONTINUED FROM P1 needs - Indian fintech firms wanting to go global should be here, foreign fintech firms who want to come to India and Indian fintech firms aiming to grow their business and who would want to work within

a regulatory sandbox.

The Finance Minister further said India should aim to become manufacturing hub for shipping and there are 8 ship leasing entities working in IFSC that would enable access to global finance. Retail participation in stock markets in India is

another distinct feature of the financial sector reforms initiated by the government.

Sitharaman noted, pointing out that the fusion of technology and financial world in the GIFT City offers advantages to India's entrepreneurs in accessing global finance.

both countries and increases the trade between both the countries'. Soon after, the 13th round of negotiations for the proposed pact was held between September 18 and December 15.

The negotiations between the two countries to sign the FTA had started on 17 January 2022 with an initial deadline of October 2022.

India is the UK's 12th largest trading partner accounting for 2.1% of total UK trade. As per the latest data released by the UK's Department for Business and Trade, the total value of trade in goods and services between the UK and India was £38.3 billion at the end of 2023, an increase of 24.1% or £7.4 billion from the end of 2022.

Of this £38.3 billion, the total UK exports to India amounted to £16.0 billion (an increase of 24.2% or £3.1 billion from the end of 2022) while the total UK imports from India amounted to £22.3 billion (an increase of 23.9% or £4.3 billion from the end of 2022).

# 'Northern border stable, but sensitive'

CONTINUED FROM P1 velopments in the last year because of the proactive policies of the government. The violence parameters have overall come down. Manipur witnessed violence in May last year, but with the combined efforts by the state administration, Army and Assam Rifles, they have been able to stabilise the situation. We are working to normalise the situation and ensure stability..."

General Manoj Pande also said that the Army has inducted better vehicles, drones and counter-drone systems.

"As part of emergency provisions, we have been able to induct some new technologies and address domains of warfare. We have inducted better vehicles, drones and counter-drone systems. We have terrain-specific electronic warfare systems..." General Manoj Pande said.

"We have restructured our artillery unit. We also have restructured units of electron-

ic warfare and electronic intelligence. We have started the process of reducing animals in our animal transport units and they are being replaced by drones...We have made a plan and optimise our strength by significant numbers and by 2027 we will achieve an optimisation of 1 lakh numbers. We have given the proposal to the government," he added.

Speaking about Agniveers recruitment General Manoj Pande said, "The first two batches of Agniveers are now fully deployed in field units and the feedback is very exciting and positive... 120 women officers who have been given permanent commission and are in command roles are deployed in field areas, and they are doing a good job there."

"...We also have moved from the current conduct of our competitive and promotion exams to fully online mode and by the end of this year, all our promotion exams will be held entirely online..." CoAS General Manoj Pande concluded.

also met UK's Foreign Minister Lord David Cameron. It is pertinent to mention that both India and Britain will see general elections this year and hence both the parties are trying to resolve the differences and arrive at a consensus keeping in view the economic benefits that the FTA will provide for voters in both the countries.

The issues that remain to be resolved revolve around goods, services, and investment and duty cuts on electric vehicles, whiskey,

# MUCH PROGRESS IN FTA TALKS AS RAJNATH SINGH TOURS UK

CONTINUED FROM P1 cushions

to resolve the difference over FTA finalization between Indian and UK officials, which is likely to be the final such exercise, is underway in Delhi since Wednesday.

Rajnath Singh visit to U.K is the first by an India Defence Minister in 22 years which underscores the gravity of the talks that have likely taken place between the leaders from these two nations. Apart from Sunak and other leaders, Singh

and the movement of professionals, something that is being resisted from the Indian stakeholders.

If the FTA is agreed upon, this will be India's first FTA with a member of the G-7 club.

Sunak, when he had visited Delhi for the G-20 meet, had met Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 9 September and had a detailed discussion where he emphasized how 'excited he was to deliver a landmark trade deal which benefits businesses and workers in

both countries and increases the trade between both the countries'.

Soon after, the 13th round of negotiations for the proposed pact was held between September 18 and December 15.

The negotiations between the two countries to sign the FTA had started on 17 January 2022 with an initial deadline of October 2022.

India is the UK's 12th largest trading partner accounting for 2.1% of total UK trade. As per the latest data released by the UK's

Department for Business and Trade, the total value of trade in goods and services between the UK and India was £38.3 billion at the end of 2023, an increase of 24.1% or £7.4 billion from the end of 2022.

Of this £38.3 billion, the total UK exports to India amounted to £16.0 billion (an increase of 24.2% or £3.1 billion from the end of 2022) while the total UK imports from India amounted to £22.3 billion (an increase of 23.9% or £4.3 billion from the end of 2022).

Of this £38.3 billion, the total UK exports to India amounted to £16.0 billion (an increase of 24.2% or £3.1 billion from the end of 2022) while the total UK imports from India amounted to £22.3 billion (an increase of 23.9% or £4.3 billion from the end of 2022).



## ASSESSING ANUPRIYA PATEL'S PERFORMANCE AS MIRZAPUR'S MP

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

A ground-level survey of the Gorakhpur Parliamentary constituency was conducted by India News to analyse the performance of Ravi Kishan, the Member of Parliament from Gorakhpur, and gather voters' feedback about him.

Mirzapur stands as a distinctive parliamentary constituency in Uttar Pradesh, maintaining a perennial presence in the news headlines. Positioned in the northern expanse of the state, it spans across the Sant Ravidas Nagar-Varanasi region, adding to its geographical and cultural significance.

Its boundaries extend towards Chandauli in the east, Sonbhadra in the south, and Prayagraj in the northwest, creating a diverse and vibrant constituency. Presently, the Sone Lal party is represented by Anupriya Patel, adding a dynamic dimension to the political landscape of Mirzapur.

Dasayu Sundari Phoolan Devi played a pivotal role in shaping the political trajectory of Mirzapur. Phoolan Devi, representing the Samajwadi Party, served as a Member of Parliament from this constituency twice. Delving into the parliamentary history of Mirzapur, which commenced in 1957, the region has witnessed 18 Lok Sabha elections since then.

Mirzapur, as a parliamentary constituency, holds considerable significance in terms of tourism. Every year, thousands of visitors are drawn to the region due to its natural beauty and religious ambience. In addition to the renowned Vindhyachal Dham, the area boasts attractions such as Sita Kund, Lal Bhairav Temple, Chunar

Fort, and Tanda Waterfall.

This Lok Sabha constituency comprises five legislative assembly seats. Mirzapur has around 20 lakh voters, and during elections, promises of development are made, but voting patterns often sway towards caste equations. In this Lok Sabha seat, Kurmi voters are the most numerous, and the candidate who secures their votes tends to become the Member of Parliament. Development is more visible in urban areas than in rural regions.

Despite claims of development by every Member of Parliament, the local population often lives without essential facilities. The upcoming 2024 general elections are crucial for Mirzapur. Before casting their votes, the people of Mirzapur are likely to evaluate Anupriya Patel's work through a critical lens. Let's see what Anupriya Patel's report card reveals - Pass or Fail.

The performance of Member of Parliament Anupriya Patel in Parliament is as follows: her attendance is approximately 96%, and about 12% of the questions posed in Parliament have been directed towards her. In terms of utilizing MP funds, she has spent around 75%, and her special contributions are at approximately 60%. Based on these parliamentary activities, Anupriya Patel receives a score of 0.60 out of 1, which is considered better than average.

The ground-level survey conducted with six questions for the Mirzapur Lok Sabha constituency's public has provided open and honest responses. The majority of the people believe that the MP's work is commendable, focusing on local development. While the satisfaction with the MP's performance



### HISTORY OF MIRZAPUR SEAT

Year	Member of Parliament	Party
2004	Narendra Kushwaha	BSP
2009	Bal Kumar Patel	SP
2014	Anupriya S. Patel	Apna Dal (S)
2019	Anupriya S. Patel	Apna Dal (S)

### ASSEMBLY SEATS (05)

Chhanbey	Chunar
Mirzapur	Marihan
Majhawan	

is high, there is a desire for increased local engagement.

Most respondents express a leaning towards supporting the NDA in voting, and both the Modi and Yogi governments receive praise for their performance. Considering development criteria in the area, MP Anupriya Patel is awarded a remarkable ranking of 7 with a score of 4.76, indicating excellence. The ground-level responses yield an overall outstanding approval of 68%.

In the India News survey, similar questions were posed to the Mirzapur Lok Sabha residents. The public grants the MP a ranking of 1, but the score is 0.65, indicating a comparatively lower satisfaction level on the ground. When questioned about the MP's performance, locals highlight positive development but assert that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has contributed more than

the MP. Consequently, the MP's ground performance is perceived at around 65%, falling below the average mark.

Analyzing parliamentary performance involves understanding the MP's accomplishments both on the ground and according to the India News survey. However, in the present age, social media plays a pivotal role. Similar questions from the India News survey were posed to the people of Mirzapur across various social media platforms, and the survey results indicate a remarkable score of 0.80 on a scale of 1, reflecting the approval of 80% of social media users.

Combining all these factors, MP Anupriya Patel achieves an outstanding score of 6.81 out of 10, marking a clear verdict of 'PASS' for her performance. The ground-level responses



and the India News survey collectively contribute to a positive assessment, affirming the public's satisfaction with their representative in the Mirzapur Lok Sabha constituency.

After 6 months, Member of Parliament Anupriya Patel's report card still has passing marks. This time, the marks are higher than the ones six months ago. However, at that time, we had two criteria, whereas now, we create the report card based on four criteria.

So, after talking to thousands of people in the Mirzapur Lok Sabha constituency, these interesting figures have reached the viewers through India News. After speaking with people from all walks of life, including women, men,

### VOTER DEMOGRAPHICS

Kurmi	24%
Bind	10%
Brahmin	11%
Maurya	09%
Kshatriya	4%
Vaishya	10%
Harijan	18%
Kol	6%
Yadav	3%
Other	05%

### ISSUES

- Extreme unemployment
- Closure of brass industries
- Pathetic state of roads
- Large-scale migration
- Rampant crime
- Poverty-backwardness
- Illegal mining
- Deforestation

farmers, labourers, students, and businessmen, this intriguing figure has come to light. In it, Member of Parliament Anupriya Patel is passing for the Mirzapur Lok Sabha seat.

In conclusion, Mirzapur emerges as a distinctive parliamentary constituency in Uttar Pradesh, capturing attention consistently through its political and cultural significance. Anupriya Patel, the current representative from the Sone Lal party, adds dynamism to Mirzapur's political landscape. The historical context, marked by Dasayu Sundari Phoolan Devi's impactful role and the region's parliamentary journey since 1957, underscores its political legacy.

Anupriya Patel's parliamentary performance, reflected in her report card, showcases a commendable

### MP REPORT CARD (GROUND)

1- Are you satisfied with the work done by your Member of Parliament and would you like to re-elect them?	
Yes	67.75%
No	29.56%
Don't know	2.69%

2- Should your MP be more active for the development of the constituency?	
Yes	94.08%
No	4.64%
Don't know	1.28%

3- In the 2024 general elections, for which party would you like to vote?	
N.D.A	58.89%
I.N.D.I.A	3.21%
Other party	10.92%
NOTA	3.21%
Don't know	23.77%

4- On what basis will you vote in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections?	
Performance of Modi government	54.39%
Unemployment and inflation	24.55%
Caste	0.89%
None of these	12.46%
Don't know	7.71%

5- Have you benefited from the central government's schemes?	
Yes	47.18%
No	52.82%
Don't know	0.00%

6- Which scheme has benefited you?	
Free rations	22.23%
Jan Dhan Yojana	0.51%
Home and toilet construction	5.39%
Ayushman Bharat	3.59%
Ujjwala Yojana	3.08%
Other schemes	4.75%
All of these	7.96%
None	52.49%

score of 6.81 out of 10. While parliamentary activities demonstrate an above-average performance, ground-level responses and social media approval contribute to a positive public perception.

The ground-level survey, India News survey, and social media feedback collectively affirm Anupriya Patel's 'PASS' verdict, indicating satisfaction among Mirzapur's residents.

## AYODHYA AIRPORT FORESEES 100 PLANES FOR PRAN PRATISHTHA MAHOTSAV

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

On Thursday, Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath received the boarding pass for the first tri-weekly flights between Ahmedabad and Ayodhya.

As preparations intensify for the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony of the Ram Temple, the Chief Minister anticipates approximately 100 chartered planes to land at Ayodhya Airport on January 22, 2024.

"Around 100 chartered planes will land at the Ayodhya airport on 22nd January to attend the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony of the Ram Temple. This will also show the path of checking the potential of the Ayodhya airport," said Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath.

In recent years, the Indian aviation sector has experienced a surge in investments, tapping into its expansive yet underutilized air transport network. A wave of low-cost carriers has made a significant entrance into the Indian market, contributing to both economic growth and a flourishing tourism industry. Iconic destinations such as Mumbai, Kolkata, Goa, Kerala, Delhi, Chennai, and Bangalore have reaped the benefits of this aviation boom.

Adding to the momentum, Uttar Pradesh has become a noteworthy player, witnessing a substantial increase in air travel enthusiasts. The

state, once home to three international airports, celebrated the inauguration of its fourth on December 22 with the opening of Ayodhya Airport. This development marks a significant stride in enhancing connectivity and accessibility, adding a new chapter to Uttar Pradesh's aviation landscape.

"I am grateful to PM Narendra Modi for giving the fourth international airport to Uttar Pradesh. The Ayodhya airport was inaugurated on December 30th," the Uttar Pradesh CM added.

Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, Union Minister VK Singh, and other senior officials launched the first tri-weekly flights on Thursday between Ahmedabad and Ayodhya.

Expressing happiness over the launch of the new air service between Ayodhya and Ahmedabad, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that with this flight service, Ayodhya, the city of Lord Shri Ram, has been directly connected to Ahmedabad by air service. Ahmedabad is the second-connected place from Ayodhya after Delhi.

After the commencement of flight services to Mumbai on January 15, Mumbai will become the third connected destination. Apart from this, another flight to Delhi is starting on January 16, 2024. The Chief Minister described better air services as a bigger boost to tourism



Indigo air service started between Ayodhya and Ahmedabad on Thursday

and business activities.

Discussing the improvement of air services in the state, the Chief Minister said that in 2016-17, the number of air passengers in the state was 59.97 lakh, which increased to 96.02 lakh in the financial year 2022-23.

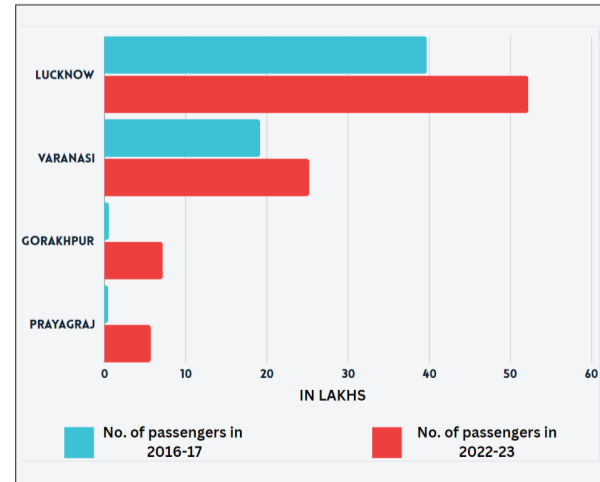
In the last three years, an increase of 29.46 per cent has been recorded in the number of air passengers in the state.

He said that in the years 2016-17, the number of passengers at Lucknow airport was 39.68 lakh, in Varanasi 19.16 lakh, in Gorakhpur 54 thousand and Prayagraj 45 thousand. Whereas in the year 2022-23, the number of passengers increased to 52.20 lakh at Lucknow Airport, 25.21 lakh at Varanasi,

7.18 lakh at Gorakhpur, and 5.71 lakh at Prayagraj.

The Chief Minister said that the Prime Minister's vision is that even an ordinary citizen should travel by plane, and even a person wearing slippers should avail of the benefits of air service. Therefore, as per the vision of the Prime Minister, the government has provided better connectivity by road, rail and air.

The Chief Minister said that the state government provided 821 acres of land for Ayodhya International Airport and the Union Civil Aviation Ministry prepared the world-class airport promptly. Referring to the presence of Indio Airlines in Uttar Pradesh, the Chief Minister said that IndiGo



Increase in number of passengers in recent years

is providing flight facilities from eight cities in Uttar Pradesh: Lucknow, Gorakhpur, Varanasi, Kanpur, Agra, Prayagraj, Bareilly and Ayodhya.

CM Yogi Adityanath said

that flights from Lucknow Airport started in 2009. Currently, 84 flights are available daily to 13 connected national destinations.

Similarly, Varanasi Air-

AIRPORT	FLIGHTS	DESTINATIONS
Lucknow	84	13
Varanasi	34	6
Gorakhpur	6	4
Prayagraj	11	10
Agra	6	6
Kanpur	6	3
Bareilly	3	3

port has 34 flights to six connected national destinations; Gorakhpur Airport has six flights to four connected national destinations; Prayagraj Airport has 11 flights to 10 connected national destinations; and Agra Airport has six connected national destinations.

06 flights are available daily from Kanpur Airport; 03 flights from Kanpur Airport to 03 connected national destinations; and 03 flights from Bareilly Airport to 03 connected national destinations are available daily.

Meanwhile, Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said that the Pran Pratishtha of Shri Ram Lalla in Ayodhya on January 22 is greatly awaited not only by 140 crore Indians but also in foreign countries.

Expressing happiness over the timeliness of various development projects, including Ayodhya Airport, Jyotiraditya Scindia

said, "Where Ram's name is mentioned, all work gets completed there. He said that this airport could be built in just 20 months with the cooperation of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The construction of the airport in such a short period is a record."

The Union Minister said that in Uttar Pradesh, which had 700 aircraft per week in 2014, today it has increased 137 times to 1654 air movements per week. Very soon, air service is going to start in Aligarh, Azamgarh, Chitrakoot, and Shravasti."

As Ayodhya Airport takes its place on the global map, the state's commitment to accessibility, tourism, and economic growth shines brightly. The surge in air travel enthusiasts and the upcoming 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony exemplify Uttar Pradesh's unwavering march towards inclusive and sustainable development.



## JHARKHAND CONGRESS ACCUSES BJP OF SOWING POLITICAL UNREST IN NON-BJP STATES

TDG NETWORK  
RANCHI

Jharkhand Congress in-charge Ghulam Ahmad Mir on Thursday accused the BJP of trying to create political uncertainty in non-BJP-ruled states by using central agencies. Mir alleged that central agencies are making similar attempts in Jharkhand and trying to instill a sense of political uncertainty among people. "But, people of Jharkhand understand the meaning of all these attempts," he said.

Talking to reporters here, he alleged that the BJP tried to destabilise elected governments in states where it has been rejected by the people. The AICC general secretary was here to review the preparations for Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo



**Unemployment is at extreme level in the country. Crores of youths are jobless. Modi government had promised to provide two crore jobs every year. But, what happened after 10 years, the unemployment rate is highest in the country.**

- Jharkhand Congress in-charge Ghulam Ahmad Mir



Jharkhand Congress in-charge Ghulam Ahmad Mir

Thakur had said the yatra is expected to enter Jharkhand between February 2 and 5.

"Unemployment is at extreme level in the country. Crores of youths are jobless. Modi government had promised to provide two crore jobs every year. But, what happened after 10 years, the unemployment rate is highest in the country," Mir alleged.

Similarly, prices of even basic commodities such as rice, pulses and flour is skyrocketing. "Women are facing problems even to run their kitchen due to price rise," he said.

He alleged that atrocities on women have increased, farmers are not getting adequate MSP for their crops and discrimination is being created among downtrodden people.

Nyay Yatra, which is beginning from Manipur on January 14. The 6,713-km yatra from Manipur to Mumbai is set to start on January 14. It will pass through 110 districts in 15 states, covering 100 Lok Sabha seats and 337 assembly segments.

In Jharkhand, it will cover 804-km in 13 districts in eight days, Mir said.

"The exact date of entry of Nyay Yatra to Jharkhand will be finalised in a day or two," he said.

On January 7, Jharkhand Congress president Rajesh

## ADHIR RANJAN WRITES TO RAILWAY MINISTER, SEEKS REDUCTION IN PANDEMIC FARES

TDG NETWORK  
KOLKATA

West Bengal Congress President and Congress leader in the Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, has written a letter to Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav, urging an immediate review of the increased fares for passengers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Expressing astonishment, Chowdhury highlighted that despite a threefold surge in rail fares for travelers nationwide during the pandemic, special trains operating as dedicated services have not witnessed any reduction or



alteration in their fares.

In the letter dated November 9, 2023, Chowdhury emphasized the need for prompt action to roll back the fare hike on trains op-

erating in the Howrah Division. He referenced a previous discussion and stressed the urgency of revising the fares to pre-pandemic levels. The Congress leader

pointed out that no action has been taken so far to address the increased fares, burdening economically challenged travelers with exorbitant costs for their train journeys.

Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury reiterated his plea for immediate intervention to normalize the rental charges for passenger trains in the Howrah Division, providing relief to the financially strained commuters.

The letter emphasized the necessity of swift action to rectify the situation and ensure equitable access to rail travel for all sections of society.

## KARNATAKA HC ORDERS STATUS REPORT ON PENDING CRIMINAL CASES AGAINST LEGISLATORS

ASHISH SINHA  
NEW DELHI

The Karnataka High Court directed the Registrar of the Court to file a report on the status of pending criminal cases against current and former legis-

lators within three weeks. A division bench of Chief Justice Prasanna B Varale and Justice Krishna S Dixit gave the direction after hearing the petition on its own. After the Supreme Court's direction on all High Courts to monitor

and supervise the pending criminal cases against MPs and MLAs, the petition was initiated.

Senior advocate Aditya Sondhi, the amicus curiae appointed by the court for this petition, submitted that information from a

huge chunk of cases has to be compiled from the special courts and sought time. Further, upon recording the submission, the Registrar was directed to submit the information by the next date of hearing.

## AMU MINORITY STATUS: AMU CONTINUES TO BE INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE THEN HOW DOES MINORITY STATUS MATTER?, SC

ASHISH SINHA  
NEW DELHI

The seven-judge constitution bench of the Top court headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud on Thursday said How does it matter for people whether the Aligarh Muslim University is a minority institution or not when it has continued to be an institute of national importance without the minority tag. The Supreme Court said as

it underlined that the intent of Article 30 of the Constitution is not to "ghettoise the minority". Article 30 deals with the right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions. The bench, also comprising Justices Sanjiv Khanna, Surya Kant, J B Pardiwala, Dipankar Datta, Manoj Misra and Satish Chandra Sharma also observed that "Without the minority tag, the institution has continued to be an in-

stitution of national importance. How does it matter for the people whether it is a minority institution or not? It is only the brand name, AMU," A five-judge constitution bench of the Apex court had in S Azeem Basha versus Union of India case in 1967 held that since AMU was a central university, it cannot be considered a minority institution.

The issue of AMU's minority status has been caught in a

protracted legal wrangle for the last several decades.

The issue of AMU's minority status has been entangled in legal complexities for decades, with historical judgments and legislative amendments shaping its status. The Supreme Court, led by a seven-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud, initiated hearings on the matter, with proceedings set to continue on Tuesday.

## KARNATAKA GEARS UP FOR CONGRESS' YUVA NIDHI UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT LAUNCH

TDG NETWORK  
BENGALURU

Shivamogga is decked up for the launch of the Congress government's fifth poll guarantee 'Yuva Nidhi' scheme on January 12, which offers unemployment assistance to graduates and diploma holders who passed in the academic year 2022-23. The government has promised to give Rs 3,000 per month to degree holders and Rs 1,500 per month to diploma holders who were unable to get a job in the past six months and are not pursuing their higher studies. The assistance will be paid for two years.



Congress government's fifth poll guarantee 'Yuva Nidhi' scheme launch

The event will be held on the birth anniversary of youth icon Swami Vivekananda on January 12 at Shivamogga. A massive stage has been erected and seating arrangements have been made for over 85,000 people to attend the event, the organisers said.

The 'Yuva Nidhi' scheme

will be launched in the presence of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, Skill Development Minister Dr Sharanaprakash Patil, ministers including Madhu Bangarappa, Dr M C Sudhakar, legislators, officials and other dignitaries.

### YUVA NIDHI SCHEME PROCESS & BENEFITS

Sharanaprakash Patil, whose department is implementing the Yuva Nidhi scheme, said in a statement that the scheme is applicable only to those graduates and diploma holders whose domicile is Karnataka. Only those applicants who have obtained degree/diploma in 2023 and faced unemployment even after 180 days of completion of their education are eligible for the benefit under the scheme.

## No Coercive action against ED officers': Calcutta HC on Sandeshkhali raid

ASHISH SINHA  
NEW DELHI

The Calcutta High Court on Thursday directed that no coercive steps can be taken against Enforcement Directorate (ED) officers in relation to an FIR filed against them following the Sandeshkhali raid.

A bench of Justice Jay Sengupta verbally directed that, in connection with the FIR against ED officials involved in the search of Sheikh's premises in Sandeshkhali, no coercive actions should

### WHAT IS THE CASE OF SANDESKHALI RAID ?

The alleged scam involving the Food and Supplies Department of the Government of West Bengal resulted in the arrest of State's Minister Jyoti Priya Mallick on October 27, 2023. The ED's press statement said: "The investigation carried out so far indicates that the magnitude of the scam is enormous, and the proceeds of crime received and further transferred and layered by one suspected person itself are suspected to be at-least to the tune of 9,000-10,000 crore and out of that, 2,000 crore were also suspected to be transferred to Dubai either directly or through Bangladesh."

be taken. The ED has reported that during an operation at Sandeshkhali in North 24 Parganas district on January 5, three of its officers sus-

tained injuries, and their belongings were forcibly taken in an attack.

The assault transpired when the officers were

conducting a raid at the residence of Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader Shajahan Sheikh, probing alleged irregularities in the state's ration system. During the court proceedings, the ED's legal representative informed the court that they have become aware of four cases registered in connection with the incident. He specified that one case was filed by the ED regarding the attack on its officials, while another was lodged against the ED officers themselves.

## GADKARI: GOVERNMENT AIMS TO PROPEL INDIA AS GLOBAL AUTO MANUFACTURING HUB

TDG NETWORK  
GANDHINAGAR

The government's mission is to make India the number one automobile manufacturing hub in the world and make the auto sector a Rs 25 lakh crore industry, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said on Thursday. Addressing a seminar at the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit here, the minister asked auto manufacturers to invest in clean technologies, especially in electric vehicles, otherwise, they will "miss the bus".

Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a USD 5 trillion economy and a self-reliant India, Gadkari said, "We are looking at the auto sector to become a Rs 25 lakh crore industry."

He further said, "We have to become the number one.



Union Minister Nitin Gadkari

Our mission, our target is to make the Indian automobile industry in the world the number one manufacturing hub."

Gadkari reminded the audience that when he took charge as minister, India's automobile sector was seventh in the world.

"It is a great pride and pleasure for me that under the leadership of PM Modi, we have achieved a very respectable feat. Now we have surpassed Japan and our number is third in

the world." There is a huge potential in the auto sector as demand is not just in the domestic market but also in international markets, the minister said.

The size of the industry is Rs 12.5 lakh crore at present. "This is the industry which has Rs 4 lakh crore from exports and this is the industry which has already created 4 crore jobs. This is the industry which is giving the maximum revenue as part of GST to state governments and the Central government," he said.

On electrification, he said sales of electric vehicles (EVs) have increased multi-fold in India in the past few years and those who have made investments in the technology are benefiting while others who are late

are struggling. "Invest (in EVs) otherwise you will miss the bus," he added.

Speaking at the event, Union Heavy Industries Minister Mahendra Nath Pandey said the government has taken up several measures, including the FAME scheme, PLIs for auto and Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) battery, to promote electric vehicles and their manufacturing in India.

He said the production of ACC battery in India under the PLI scheme is expected to start by around February. When asked about the extension of the FAME scheme on the sidelines of the event, Pandey did not comment specifically, but such proposals are under the government's consideration.

## CEO SUCHANA SETH MESSAGED HUSBAND BEFORE TRAGIC KILLING OF SON

TDG NETWORK  
BENGALURU

New details have surfaced in the harrowing case of a four-year-old's alleged murder by his mother in Bengaluru. Suchana Seth stands accused of committing the crime in a Goa hotel room, supposedly driven by a bitter custody battle with her estranged husband, Venkat Raman.

Police reveal that before the incident, on January 6, she had messaged Raman, inviting him to meet their child the following day. However, unbeknownst to him, she and the child were already in Goa at the time.

According to sources, Raman responded to her message, reached the designated meeting place, and waited for two hours. Despite attempts to contact Suchana, he received no response.



Subsequently, frustrated, Raman departed for Indonesia on the same day. Investigations later uncovered that Suchana had allegedly killed her son on January 8, concealing the body in a bag. The post-mortem findings suggested the child

was smothered, either with a cloth or a pillow.

Despite the gravity of the situation, Suchana has reportedly displayed no remorse during the ongoing investigation. The 39-year-old was apprehended in Chitradurga, Karnataka,

on the day of the crime and subsequently transported to Goa on Tuesday for further legal proceedings. The case highlights the tragic consequences of a tumultuous custody dispute and the emotional toll it can take on those involved.

## Navy proactively deploying fleet to keep pirates at bay: Navy chief

TDG NETWORK  
HYDERABAD

Amid the recent spate of attacks on Indian merchant ships in the Arabian Sea, the Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral R Hari Kumar, on Wednesday said the Indian Navy was proactively deploying its fleet to keep pirates at bay.

Addressing media persons after unveiling the first indigenously manufactured Drishti 10 Starliner Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) in Hyderabad on Wednesday, the Navy chief said, "Over the past 42 days, as many as 35 such attacks (approximately) have taken place, primarily targeting Israeli-owned vessels. However, no India-flagged vessel has been attacked so far."

"We are now, very proactively, deploying our units there to ensure that the pirates are kept at bay. If you look at the last 40-42 days, about 35 such attacks have taken place, largely on Israeli-owned shipping assets. No India-flagged vessel has been attacked so far," the chief of the Naval Staff said.

The Navy chief added that there have only been two incidents, so far, which prompted the marine warriors to conduct anti-piracy operations.

"Both incidents involved non-Indian-flagged vessels. In the second incident, an Indian crew was aboard the vessel, prompting the Navy to respond," he added.

"Anti-piracy operations were conducted in the wake

of only two such incidents. In both cases, the vessels were not India-flagged. However, in the second incident, there were Indian crew members on board the ship because of which we had to respond. We got the necessary consent from the owners of the vessel and rescued the distressed crew," the chief of Naval Staff said.

"We have not yet been able to identify from where all these attacks are being directed. We have collected debris of drones collected from three ships and are analysing it," the Navy chief said.

Recently, the Indian Navy's marine commandos rescued 21 crew members, including 15 Indians, from the hijacked Liberian-flagged vessel MV Lila Norfolk on January 6,

2024. The crew members were rescued in a swift operation in the North Arabian Sea after armed pirates attempted to hijack the vessel.

In a statement posted on X, the Indian Navy on Friday stated, "Indian Navy's Swift Response to the Hijacking Attempt of MV Lila Norfolk in the North Arabian Sea. All 21 crew members (including 15 Indians) onboard were safely evacuated from the citadel.

Sanitisation by MARCOs has confirmed the absence of the hijackers."

The attempt at hijacking by the pirates was probably abandoned with the forceful warning by the Indian Navy, MPA of interception by an Indian Naval warship, the statement read.



# The Victory of India

Formation of Union Territory of J&K has not only seen development but also evoked patriotism and restored confidence in Constitution of India

## OPINION

R. K. PACHNANDA



The Hon'ble Supreme Court, in its historic judgement, unananimously upheld the 2019 revocation of Article 370 of the Constitution. The Supreme Court held that Article 370 was a temporary provision and a feature of asymmetric federalism and not sovereignty. This was, indeed, a victory for India and Indians since the abrogation of Article 370 and the formation of two Union Territories of J & K and Ladakh, by a determined and patriotic Modi Government, has been the most momentous achievement of a united India since Independence.

The Home Minister had made a statement, in 2019, in Parliament that 41500 people were killed in J & K since 1989. Terrorism had devastated the region leading to untold misery. Invisible enemies fighting unholy proxy wars, had threatened our democracy, to no end. After the abrogation of

Article 370 and 35A, on the great day of August 5, 2019, PM Modi gave full priority on development for the people, and the two newly created Union Territories and the people have witnessed a spate of unhindered development as never before. This is evident by the initiatives of the government accelerating development, building infrastructure, reinforcing governance, generating employment, broadening social inclusion and promoting growth.

Long years of unrest had adversely affected the State's democratic institutions, particularly those at the grass roots level. The absence of elected local bodies not only deprived the people of the power to take their own decisions regarding development and other issues impacting their day to day lives, but also adversely impacted the flow of resources from the Central and the State Government to rural and urban local self-governing institutions. Immediately after the formation of the UT & J&K, Panchayati Raj institutions were established and made functional and Rs. 366 crore was released directly to 4483 Panchayats, which money was always diverted earlier to vested pockets. Work on the 2206 languishing projects was promptly started.

Similarly, after the new UT of J & K came into being, there was a creation of 45000 employment opportunities, vigorous road construction works, flood management and water supply projects, initiation and acceleration of several power generation and transmission projects, enabling achievement of 100 percent household electrification, process of setting up of over 330 schools and colleges and a university, improved medical infrastructure, beginning of a light rail and public transport system, welfare measures for all including housing, disposal of outcome based grievances, implementation of women and child welfare schemes, scholarships for the deserving, support to farmers, orchardists and unorganized workers, expansion of tourism facilities, sports infrastructure and border area development. These and many more, have germinated and blossomed, after the creation of the Union Territories, in greater proportions restoring full confidence of the people.

The people of J & K have the same rights, benefits and prospects as those in the rest of the country. Domicile certificate is now the basic eligibility condition for recruitment. The Indian constitution is fully applicable to J & K; consequently 170 central laws have now become applicable to J&K, guaranteeing justice and fairness to the underprivileged. The repudiation of Articles 370 and 35A has heralded a new dawn of empowerment, equity and development. The rights of women marrying outside



the UT now stand fully protected and gender discrimination has ended. The special status of Article 370 and 35 A had insulated the state from the rest of India leaving it backward as money was siphoned into vested pockets and did not reach the common man. On Nov 7, 2015, the Prime Minister announced a Reconstruction Plan of Rs. 80,068 crores.

Accordingly, post 370 has witnessed a new sunrise by reinforcing governance, accelerating development, building infrastructure, generating employment, broadening social inclusion, providing humanitarian relief and promoting growth.

The Prime Minister has transformed the "Tasveer" of J&K and the "Taqdeer" of the people by more than fulfilling their aspirations. Innumerable developmental projects stand completed while several projects are scheduled for completion soon. To promote transparency, the Modi Government has got instituted a portal namely the J & K Infrastructure Monitoring Sys-

tem (JKIMS) by which the progress of work is physically monitored on real-time basis and the status of project implementation can be accessed by any individual. The Modi government has rationalized reservation rules to give benefit to the marginalised sections which have remained either unrepresented or under represented. Kashmiri migrants have benefited from a series of welfare measures like employment, transit accommodation and monthly financial assistance.

Law and order has dramatically improved. Terrorism and peoples' miseries have nearly come to an end, despite Pakistan's frustrated efforts to activate its "deep state" again to heat up the environment, even in this state of the COVID pandemic. Abrogation of Article 370 has led to exasperation in the ranks of the terrorists; local recruitment of terrorists has dwindled. Pakistan is now encountering triple frustration - first, at the abrogation of Article 370; second, at the snub it has faced in all international fora where it has raised the

Kashmir issue and, third, at the fact that all its efforts to initiate terrorist acts have only resulted in their constant decimation in every encounter.

The formation of the Union Territory of J&K has not only witnessed development but also evoked patriotism and restored confidence of the people in the Constitution of India and our robust democratic system of a united sovereign India with Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity assuring the dignity of the Indian and unity and integrity of the nation.

The pro-active measures being taken by a determined government, under PM Modi, are ushering in a new era of peace, tranquillity and development.

In the words of PM Modi, "the court has strengthened the spirit of "Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat"..... "development, democracy and dignity have replaced and disillusionment and despondency".

R. K. Pachnanda is a former chairman, Haryana Public Service Commission. His views are personal.

## PERSPECTIVE INDIA-BANGLADESH TIES

### SHEIKH HASINA'S VICTORY BODES WELL FOR INDIA

Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's fourth consecutive win in the recently held national elections augurs well for the bilateral ties between New Delhi and Dhaka. Hasina's return to power in Bangladesh will not only have positive implications for continuity of the already robust bilateral relationship between the two neighbours but also help the two nations to explore new avenues so as to take the ties to a much higher level. While there are challenges galore all around in the neighbouring and other regions, the return of a trustworthy ally in the immediate neighbourhood is definitely a welcome development for India.

With India tackling security challenges from both Pakistan and China, a friendly government in Dhaka will be of immense importance for New Delhi. The two neighbours will now be able to continue to carry forward the existing cooperation in addressing security challenges resulting from terrorism and other strategic issues in the region. "India's most reliable ally in the region is back." This was the quick reaction from a senior diplomat in the Ministry of External Affairs soon after the result of Bangladesh general election



was announced. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent statement lent credence to this perception as well.

On Monday, after securing a record fifth term as Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina called India "a great friend" saying that the two neighbours have resolved many problems bilaterally. "India is a great friend of Bangladesh. They supported us in 1971 and also in 1975. They gave shelter to me and my sister and my other family members," she remarked. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was also quick in congratulating his Bangladeshi counterpart Hasina on her victory in what underlined the fact that New Delhi considers Dhaka as one of the most reliable allies. The PM said, "We are committed to further strengthening our enduring and people-centric partnership with Bangladesh". PM Modi also congratulated the people of Bangladesh for the successful conduct of elections in what should also be seen as a blunt message for the US and Britain who were saying that the elections were not credible, free or fair.

It was also a message for the main opposition party—Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)—led by former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia who boycotted the polls. That India's focus is on the welfare and development of people of Bangladesh is also the message that PM Modi's statement conveyed to Hasina. Undeniably, under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina, the relationship between India and Bangladesh has grown stronger over the years. As the two countries share a long border, the economic and social stability of the two nations is crucial for each of them. What is also important is that the return of a close ally to the helm in neighbouring Bangladesh is a positive development for India as its military confronts both Pakistan and China along hostile and disputed borders. A peaceful border with Bangladesh will allow India to focus more on other fronts of security challenges. Undoubtedly, China will spare no effort to expand its footprints and influence in Bangladesh. Noticeably, Beijing has been making all possible efforts in the past to expand its presence in Bangladesh obviously with its well-known agenda to needle and encircle India.

However, Hasina has always shown sensitivity to India's security concerns. India hopes that after the victory of the Awami League led by Sheikh Hasina, Dhaka would continue to address New Delhi's security concerns amidst Beijing's sinister aggressive agenda. Apart from the Chinese agenda, India has always been concerned about the fact that insurgents from north eastern states often take shelter in Bangladesh via porous border routes amid rising volatility in the regions. With the Hasina dispensation at the helm in Dhaka once again, India could be assured that these elements would be dealt with strictly by her. Significantly, Hasina has made it clear that she would not allow Bangladesh's soil to be used for any anti-India activities.

Dhaka is also a reliable strategic partner of New Delhi. The strategic ties will definitely get a fresh boost with Sheikh Hasina once again in power in Dhaka. Keen on expanding ties with Bangladesh under Hasina, India is taking notice of the fact that the country is set to become a trillion-dollar economy and a middle-income nation by 2041. Similarly, Bangladesh is also above average on the parameters of the Human Development Index. These are positive indicators that make Bangladesh a good neighbour of India.

T. BRAJESH

## India and Maldives need to handle each other with care

## OPINION

DR. PRIYANKA SINGH

India and Maldives share strong historical, cultural, linguistic, ethnic, religious and commercial links. Maldives got freedom from Britain in 1965 and India was among the first to recognise Maldives after its independence. India had extended a helping hand to the Maldives several times through Operation Cactus in 1988 when the Indian Armed Forces helped the government of Maldives in the neutralization of the coup attempt. In 2014 through Operation Neer when Maldives was facing the drinking water crisis and India supplied drinking water to Maldives. During the time of COVID-19 also India supplied 6.2 tonnes of essential medicines to Maldives, under Operation Sanjeevani assistance.

But India's relations with Maldives like its other neighbours had been subject to the inclination of the government who is in power. In the recent years during the time of Ibrahim

Mohamed Solih, who was in power from 2018-2023, India shared a very cordial relationship with the Maldives. India signed an agreement with the Maldives to "develop, support and maintain" a harbour at Uthuru Thila Falhu naval base. But Abdulla Yameen, the former President of Maldives, who was pro-China started the 'India Out' campaign, setting a narrative against India. Mohamed Muizzu, the current President of Maldives, since he came to power in 2023, the relationship between India and Maldives is going through tough terrain. President Muizzu has visited Turkey, the UAE, and China since assuming office last year, breaking from the tradition of making India the first foreign destination for a newly-elected Maldivian president. He also asked the Indian government to withdraw its troops as well as its hydrographic surveys, the MoU for which was signed in 2019. Muizzu's

campaign fanned anti-India sentiments across the island nation.

Amid this dismay, a new imbroglio kicked off after the three Deputy Ministers Maryam Shiuna, Mahzoom Majid and Malsha Shareef made deprecating remarks about India and PM Modi after his recent visit to Lakshadweep recently. They made disparaging remarks on Twitter (now known as X) regarding India's connections with Israel with the assumption that the Indian Prime Minister's visit to Lakshadweep was intended to pose a challenge to Maldivian tourism. Their comment flamed war of words between Indians and Maldivians on social media resulting in #Anti-India and #BoycottMaldives campaigns getting trended on X. The Indian High Commission in Maldives strongly raised this issue and the government of Maldives took immediate action and suspended those ministers as well as issued a statement where the government of Maldives distanced itself from those remarks. But the spike of hate comments on social media is incessant. Maldives is one of the top-notch holiday destinations for Indians. But amid this controversy large number of booked tickets for Maldives are getting cancelled. Meanwhile, President



In 2014 through Operation Neer India supplied drinking water to Maldives when the archipelago was facing the drinking water crisis. File photo

Muizzu, termed Beijing as the island nation's "closest" ally during his five-day visit to Beijing and has urged China to send more tourists to Maldives. This controversy has strained the relationship between the two nations.

The hyper-nationalism is hovering all around. But India, the regional giant, needs to understand Maldives' strategic location in the Indian Ocean. Maldives is India's key maritime neighbour in the Indian Ocean Region and occupies a distinctive place in the Prime Minister's vision of 'SAGAR' (Security and Growth for All in the Region) and 'Neighbourhood First policy'. 'China Factor' is one such issue which

cannot be ignored. China's growing presence in the Indian Ocean region and the development of Chinese-controlled ports and military facilities in Sri Lanka and Maldives is a matter of concern for India. If India does not handle Maldives with care it can end up losing one important strategic partner. We need to be more accommodative and generous in the case of our neighbours, as former PM of India A.B. Vajpayee once mentioned 'we can change our friends but not our neighbours'. Rather than becoming hyper-sensitive and so thin-skinned, we should understand that our neighbours are in a whirlpool of identity crisis and 'Big brother syndrome'.

India, rather than showcasing its big brother attitude should show its elder brother's love, affection and care.

Maldives also needs to understand that China cannot replace India. India is Maldives immediate neighbour and in any crisis India will be of first help and India has always extended its helping hand towards Maldives. Maldives should have respect and compassion towards India and should refrain from showing its ungratefulness. To foster this relationship both the nations should learn to handle each other with care.

Dr. Priyanka Singh, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, DAV PG College, Varanasi.



POLITICS

# RAHUL'S YATRA & ALLIANCE QUAGMIRE

Will Congress be able to muster enough support to defeat BJP through its yatra from Mizoram to Mumbai?



VIJAY DARDA

**H**ectic activities are going on in the Opposition camp in the run-up to the Lok Sabha elections this year. Two of these activities are more significant than the others. The first one is Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, which will commence on January 14 and conclude on March 20, covering 6,700 kilometres from Mizoram to Mumbai. The second activity is the fast emerging ideological differences within the INDIA grouping of the opposition parties! In such a situation, will Rahul's yatra be able to muster enough support to take on Narendra Modi's powerful BJP? The answer lies in the future but the analysis has

already begun in the minds of voters.

There is no doubt that Rahul gained a new foothold during his Bharat Jodo Yatra from Kanyakumari to Kashmir. Immediately after his yatra, the Congress won Assembly elections in Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka and Telangana too -- though the party lost power in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. So now the second yatra, quite obviously, is aimed at appropriating gains in the Lok Sabha elections. Rahul Gandhi's yatra will cover 15 states. There are 357 Lok Sabha seats in these states, with the BJP winning 239 of them in the 2019 general elections. Congress' predicament can be gauged from the fact that it was victorious in only 14 of these 357 seats. Congress could not even open its account in the states like Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat, covered during the Bharat Jodo Yatra. It won only one seat each in Meghalaya, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh



*The INDIA bloc parties are still at loggerheads. In such a situation, hope for success is a daydream!*

and Maharashtra. It bagged three seats in Assam and only two seats each in West Bengal and Chhattisgarh. Rahul Gandhi is aware too that Congress is no longer as powerful as it once was. It neither has resources nor

cadre. Once Rahul told me during a conversation that he had no attachment to power and he was aware of his party's strength. "If we start our work today, we will definitely reach our destination one day. If I think of eat-

ing ghee today and becoming strong immediately the next day, it is not possible," he told me. In this background, I think he is in no hurry. He is building a base. BJP too has reached the two-third seats' mark from two

seats! Even though Rahul is in the field like a warrior, his opponents do not fail to say that the more challenges Rahul Gandhi throws, the stronger Narendra Modi's BJP grows.

So, does the BJP want the Lok Sabha elections to be a Modi-Rahul contest rather than a BJP versus INDIA bloc fight? This is exactly what the BJP wants because if the INDIA bloc enters the fray untedly as a unit, the contest will not be easy for the BJP. The problem with the INDIA bloc is that there is no readymade adhesive available to hold it together. The differences are so pronounced that differences appear more than agreement. Each one of them has his or her own justification. There has been no agreement on seat sharing within the INDIA bloc, but the JD(U) has already announced the name of Ruhi Tagung from Arunachal (West) seat. In fact, in the 2019 Assembly elections, the JD(U) had fielded 15 candidates in Arunachal and seven of them emerged victori-

ous. However, all the seven MLAs later joined the BJP.

The JD(U) has announced not just its candidate in Arunachal Pradesh but also in Bihar where the party is projecting Devesh Chandra Thakur as its candidate from Sitamarhi and Sanjay Jha from Darbhanga. Nitish Kumar is thought to have done this to put pressure on the INDIA bloc. He is not saying anything publicly but everyone knows that he wants to be the convenor of INDIA, and if the alliance wins, he wants to see himself in the Prime Minister's chair. Meanwhile, West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee proposed the name of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge for the post of Prime Minister and the Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal seconded it. Lalu Yadav does not want Nitish's stature to rise. Lalu and Nitish are at loggerheads. They did not greet each other on New Year's day. Moreover, it was Rabri Devi's birthday on the first day of the New Year but Nitish did not even wish her on her birthday!

In West Bengal, there is a war-like situation between Congress and Trinamool. Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury has even stated that Trinamool is trying to please Narendra Modi to dodge the ED and the CBI. It is not serious about alliance. Trinamool even warned that the party may go it alone. On the other hand, the Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh has also started giving a go-ahead to its candidates. There is confusion everywhere. I feel that in spite of all the talk of strengthening the INDIA bloc, it is actually becoming weaker. As for the BJP, it stands to benefit from the Ram temple and the polarisation of Hindu votes. Therefore, INDIA bloc's unity is as important as Rahul's yatra if the Opposition really wants to take on the BJP. In the present situation, seizing power from Narendra Modi's BJP seems to be nothing more than a daydream.

*The author is the chairman, Editorial Board of Lokmat Media and former member of Rajya Sabha.*

IN COURT

## Long Separation Of 11 Years Peppered With False Allegations & Complaints Is Mental Cruelty: Delhi HC

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

It is most refreshing and most reassuring to note that the Delhi High Court in a most learned, laudable, landmark and latest judgment titled ABC vs XYZ in MAT. APP. (F.C.) 71/2020 and cited in Neutral Citation No.: 2024:DHC:147-DB while most rightly granting divorce to a man held unambiguously that the long separation of 11 years between the parties peppered with false allegations and complaints amounts to mental cruelty. It must be mentioned here that the Delhi High Court was dealing with an appeal that had been filed under Section 19 of the Family Courts Act, 1984 by the husband against the judgment and decree of the Family Court by which his divorce petition was dismissed on the ground of cruelty under Section 13(1) of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955. A Division Bench comprising of Hon'ble Mr Justice Suresh Kumar Kait and Hon'ble Ms Justice Neena Bansal Krishna minced just no words to observe unequivocally that, "The parties are separated for about 11 years and the adjustment issues started mushrooming within the very first month of their marriage which were of such nature that the marriage could not even survive for more than 6 months. There is no chance of reconciliation between the parties and such long separation peppered with false allegations and complaints have become a source of mental cruelty and insistence to continue this relationship would only be inflicting further cruelty upon both the parties.... The separation for more than eleven years for no



fault of the appellant, in itself is an act of cruelty." Very rightly so! At the very outset, this recent, remarkable, robust and rational judgment authored by Hon'ble Ms Justice Neena Bansal Krishna for a Division Bench of the Delhi High Court comprising of herself and Hon'ble Mr Justice Suresh Kumar Kait sets the ball in motion by first and foremost putting forth in para 1 that, "The appeal under Section 19 of the Family Courts Act, 1984 has been filed against the judgment and decree dated 22.01.2020, passed by the Learned Judge Family Courts, Dwarka, New Delhi in HMA No.566/17 (OLD No. 124/13) titled as 'Prahlad Kumar versus Deepa', dismissing the divorce petition filed by the petitioner/husband, on the ground of cruelty under Section 13(1) (ia) of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 (hereinafter referred to as 'HMA, 1955')." As we see, the Division Bench observes in para 2 that, "Briefly stated the parties got married on 30.11.2011 and no child was born from their wedlock."

respondent started putting pressure upon him to take her to her parental home and extended threats that in case she was not taken, she would commit suicide and falsely get the appellant and his family members implicated in frivolous cases. The appellant was thus compelled to take the respondent to her parental home on 24.12.2011." To put things in perspective, the Bench then envisages in para 4 that, "Thereafter, he persistently tried to persuade her and even visited the parental home of the respondent on 08.01.2012 to bring her back. Though, she remained adamant but was persuaded by her family members to return to the matrimonial home. The appellant in order to counsel the respondent to remain in the matrimonial home, called her father and brother to his house on 02.02.2012 and 29.02.2012, but they started blaming the appellant himself. Because of the pressure, the appellant again took her to the parental home on 15.04.2012, however, despite the humiliation and insults, the appellant brought her back to the matrimonial home. Eventually, the respondent left the matrimonial home on 15.06.2012 along with all her belongings and valuables, in the absence of

the appellant. All his efforts to bring her back did not need any positive result. A Panchayat was also held on 21.06.2012 but the respondent remained adamant in not returning to the matrimonial home." As things stands, the Bench specifies in para 5 that, "Faced with this adamant attitude, the appellant got served a Legal Notice dated 07.02.2013, calling upon the respondent to join the matrimonial home. A reply was given by the respondent making false allegations of dowry demand." It cannot be lost on us that the Bench notes in para 6 that, "The respondent made a complaint against the appellant in Aichik Bureau. The appellant along with his uncle, appeared before the Aichik Bureau on 06.06.2013 where they were abused and beaten up by the respondent and her family. The family members of the respondent also tried to malign the reputation of the appellant and his family members by making a telephonic call to PW-4 Sh. Shiv Kumar, father-in-law of the brother of the appellant." To be sure, the Bench states in para 7 that, "After filing of the petition, FIR under Sections 498A, 323, 506 of the Indian Penal Code, 1908 was also registered against the ap-

pellant, his brother, his father and two other family members, on the complaint of the father of the respondent. The appellant thus, sought divorce on the ground of cruelty under Section 13(1) (ia) of the HMA, 1955." Truth be told, the Division Bench points out in para 14 that, "The learned Judge, Family Court referred to the rival assertions of both the parties and concluded that the appellant was unable to prove any act of cruelty and observed that the disputes between the two spouses were normal wear and tear of married life, which could be condoned. The divorce petition was therefore, dismissed." Needless to say, the Division Bench states in para 15 that, "Aggrieved by the dismissal of the divorce petition, the present appeal has been preferred." It cannot be lost sight of that the Division Bench reveals in para 17 that, "The appellant has deposed that soon after the marriage, the respondent insisted on going to her parental home and he was compelled to leave her on 24.12.2011 and was brought back home on 08.01.2012. Again, on her persistence, she was taken back to her parental home on 15.04.2012, wherein again she threatened to commit suicide and implicate the appellant and his family members. However, she was again brought back with great difficulty. The petitioner/appellant deposed that she was largely involved with her own family members with whom she remained engaged on her phone and frequently threatened the appellant and his family members with false implication in multiple cases. She was supported in her threats by her father and

brother, who instead of counselling the respondent, always blamed the appellant and his family members." Do note, the Bench notes in para 18 that, "In this context, it is significant to observe that though the respondent was asserting that she was not being taken back to the matrimonial home, it has come on record that the appellant had served a Legal Notice, dated 07.02.2013, requesting the respondent to join the matrimonial home to which she reverted by sending a reply making allegations of dowry demands." Further, the Division Bench states in para 19 that, "He further deposed that she finally left the matrimonial home on 15.06.2012 along with her brother and Bhabhi, in his absence and took all her valuables and belongings with her." Most significantly, the Division Bench mandates in para 36 that, "The parties are separated for about 11 years and the adjustment issues started mushrooming within the very first month of their marriage which were of such nature that the marriage could not even survive for more than 6 months. There is no chance of reconciliation between the parties and such long separation peppered with false allegations and complaints have become a source of mental cruelty and any insistence to continue this relationship would only be inflicting further cruelty upon both the parties. The marital discord between the parties has pinnacled as there is a complete loss of faith, trust, understanding and love between the parties. Such long separation brings with it deprivation of conjugal relationship and cohabitation which

is the basic foundation of any matrimonial relationship. The separation for more than eleven years for no fault of the appellant, in itself is an act of cruelty." While citing the relevant case law, the Bench observes in para 37 that, "In one of the momentous decisions, the Apex Court in the case of Naveen Kohli v. Neelu Kohli (2006) 4 SCC 558 has held that once the parties have separated and the separation has continued for a sufficient length of time, the consequences of preservation of the unworkable marriage which has long ceased to be effective, is bound to be a source of greater misery for the parties." While citing yet another remarkable case law, the Bench then hastens to add in para 38 stating that, "The Apex Court in the case of Samar Ghosh v. Jaya Ghosh (2007) 4 SCC 511 observed that in a marriage where there has been a long period of continuous separation with no possibility of reconciliation, it can be termed as mental cruelty to continue such a dead marriage." What's more, the Bench further points out in para 39 that, "While referring to the case of Samar Ghosh (supra), the Apex Court in the case of Gurbux Singh vs Harminder Kaur (2010) 14 SCC 301, observed by that while trivial irritations, quarrels, normal wear and tear of married life which happens in day to day life in all families would not entitle a party to a decree of divorce on the ground of cruelty; continuing and subsisting unjustifiable and reprehensible conduct which affects the physical and mental health of the other spouse, may lead to mental cruelty." While citing the most

recent and relevant case laws, the Division Bench expounds in para 40 that, "Recently, the Apex court in the case of Rakesh Raman v. Kavita 2023 SCC OnLine SC 497, after relying upon the above referred observations of the Three Judge Bench in Samar Ghosh (supra), looking at the facts of the said case where parties were residing separately for almost 25 years; had no cohabitation during this period; no child was born from the said wedlock; and repeated efforts for reconciliation for settlement resulted in failure, concluded that this relationship must end as its continuation is causing cruelty on both the sides. The long separation and absence of cohabitation and the complete breakdown of all meaningful bonds and the existing bitterness between the two, has to be read as cruelty under Section 13(1) (ia) of the 1955 Act." No wonder, the Division Bench rightly holds in para 41 that, "We therefore conclude from the evidence of the parties that the appellant was subjected to cruelty." In addition, the Division Bench directs in para 42 that, "The appeal is, therefore, allowed and the divorce is granted on the ground of cruelty under Section 13(1)(ia) of the HMA, 1955." Finally, the Division Bench concludes by holding in para 43 that, "The Decree Sheet be prepared accordingly." All told, we thus see that the Delhi High Court after perusing the facts of the case very rightly grants divorce to the husband. It is rightly concluded by the Court that a long separation of 11 years peppered with false allegations and complaints is mental cruelty! No denying it!



IN COURT

## JAMMU AND KASHMIR AND LADAKH HIGH COURT: ADOPT LIBERAL APPROACH TO AMENDMENTS BEFORE TRIAL UNLESS IT CAUSES IRREPARABLE PREJUDICE TO OPPOSITE PARTY | O.6 R.17 CPC

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh High Court in the case Haja @ Hajira Bano Vs Gh. Mohammad Ahangar observed and has ruled that courts must adopt a liberal approach and allow amendments under Order 6 Rule 17 of the Civil Procedure Code, CPC unless they cause irreparable prejudice to the other party or change the very nature of the suit.

The bench headed by Justice M A Chowdhary in the case observed and has stated that whenever an amendment is sought before the commencement of a trial, a lenient view may be taken keeping in mind that the opposite party would have a chance to meet the case set



up by amendment.

In the present case, the court was hearing the petition moved challenging the order passed by the Court of Sub Judge, Chadoora in terms of which an application seeking leave to amend her civil suit had been re-

jected.

The court stated that the issue raised stemmed from a dispute over ancestral property in Budgam district.

Therefore, the plaintiff, Haja Alias Hajira Bano, filed a partition suit against her brother and other fam-

ily members. Thus, after the initial proceedings, she seeks to amend the plaint to include a newly discovered sale deed involving part of the property.

The Trial Court in the case observed and has rejected the amendment application citing order 2 Rule 2 of the CPC, which bars subsequent suits for claims omitted from the initial suit.

The bench of Justice Chowdhary while overturning the order passed by trial court clarified that Order 2 Rule 2 applies only to separate suits, not amendments within an existing one.

The court emphasized that the trial court had misdirected itself in rejecting the amendment application, as it did not consider the liberal approach required before the commencement of the

trial.

The bench in the case observed that where the amendment is sought before commencement of the trial, which is the position in the present case as well, the Court is required to be liberal in its approach. The said court is required to bear in mind the fact that the opposite party would have a chance to meet the case set up by amendment, as such, where the amendment does not result in any irreparable prejudice to the opposite party or divests the opposite party of an advantage which it had secured as a result of admission by the party seeking amendment, thus, the amendment is required to be allowed.

The court in the case observed that the essentiality of an amendment to deter-

mine the real controversy between the parties the court noted that the Petitioner or plaintiff had sought amendment with regard to mentioning of a sale deed with regard to a portion of the Suit property and, the trial court for amendment of the Plaintiff was allowed and the Trial Court was directed to take on record the Amended Plaintiff for further proceedings in the case as per law.

Accordingly, the court allowed the plea.

IN COURT

## Delhi High Court Raps Civic Authorities Over Water-Logging, Delhi's Drainage System In 'Very Bad State'

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court in the case Court On Its Own Motion v. Govt Of NCT Of Delhi And Ors observed and has rapped the civic authorities over the issue of water-logging in the national capital and said that the drainage system here is 'totally pathetic' and is in 'very bad state of affairs.' The Division bench comprising of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Manmeet Pritam Singh Arora in the case observed and has stated that the drainage system is in a very bad state of affairs. It had totally collapsed and do we have any system in Delhi or we don't have it? It is absolutely pathetic. In the present case, the suo motu Public Interest Litigation, PIL was initiated in the year 200 over the lack of rainwater harvesting efforts taken by the authorities and huge traffic snarls, especially during monsoon. The court while referring to various areas in the city facing the issue of water-logging remarked that the authorities must treat it as a 'wake up call' and 'start working

on the issue now itself.'

It has also been informed by the court to the authorities that do not wait for April or for the monsoon. To put it mildly, things are very very bad and your agencies cannot be tamed by anyone and everybody is a tiger in his own area, nobody listens to anyone or to any advice. Further, the court stated that the reform on the issue has to come from within the city authorities, while adding that the courts cannot do everything.

The court asked the authorities to get instructions on the issue, the court listed the matter for hearing next on January 16.

The court in the case was hearing the suo motu petition initiated after the court took note of an article published in the Times of India on June 18, 2022. The counsel, Ministry of Urban Development and Ministry of Road Transport, Delhi Government, DDA Commissioner of MCD, Principal Secretary of PWD, Commissioner of Police, Spl. C.P. (Traffic), Delhi Jal Board, Delhi Cantonment Board, NDMC and Flood Irrigation Department represented the respondent.

IN COURT

## Delhi High Court: True Love Between Adolescents Cannot Be Controlled Through Police Action

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court in the case observed and has stated that true love between two individuals, one or both of whom may be minor or minors on the verge of majority as the same cannot be controlled through rigours of law or State action.

The bench headed by Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma in the case observed and has stated that the dilemma at times faced by the court can be of trying in order to justify the State or the Police action which is against an adolescent couple, who marry each other and continue to lead a peaceful life and raise a family, and respect for obeying the law of the land.

The court in the case stated that when the scales of justice have to be weighed, they are not always on the basis of mathematical precision or mathematical formulas, but at times, while one side of the scale carries the law, the other side of the scale may carry the entire life, thus, the happiness and future of toddlers, their parents and parents

of their parents

Adding to it, the court stated that the scale that reflects and portrays such pure happiness sans any criminality will definitely equal to the scale carrying law as the application of law which is meant for maintaining rule of law.

The bench headed by Justice Sharma in the case observed while quashing the kidnapping and rape case registered which is against one Arif Khan who eloped with a minor girl and got married as per Muslim rites and ceremonies as they belonged to the same religion.

In the present case, the FIR was registered by the father of girl, thus, when she was recovered, she was five months pregnant. Further, she in the case refused to abort the child while stating that it was born out of her marital union and love for her husband.

Therefore, the court stated that the man was apprehended in June 2015 and remained in jail till April 2018 when he was granted bail.

The court observed that the couple was living together and

another daughter was also born from their wedlock.

The bench headed by Justice Sharma in the case observed that the love story of the couple was 'unfortunately interrupted' by the entry of investigating agency which was to work as per existing law.

It has also been informed by the girl to the court that she had voluntarily entered into a consensual relationship with Khan and that she was 18 years of age at the time of incident and the same was disputed by the Delhi Police, since as per school records her age was shown less than 18 years.

The court noted that the girl was pregnant when Khan was arrested and had made a choice to continue pregnancy and give birth to the child.

The court stated that the parties herein had made a choice with themselves, even though law did not permit them to enter into a marital union.

The court observed that she supported the case of the petitioner Mr. Khan, at every stage, and not the case of the State and the parties have now been

married for about nine years, and have been blessed with two daughters, and they are happily raising their children.

The bench of Justice Sharma in the case observed that the court's role extends beyond a mere application and interpretation of statutes and involves an understanding of the implications of its decisions on individuals and the community at large.

The court stated that this court must weigh competing interests, while considering the impact of its decisions on the parties involved and the broader implications for justice, fairness, and social order.

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case stated that the FIR is not quashed and the same will result in affecting the future of the daughters born from this union which will result in failure of effective and real justice.

The counsel, Advocate Mr. Dhiraj Kumar Singh and Advocate Mr. Ranjan Kumar appeared for the Petitioner.

The counsel, Mr. Amol Sinha, ASC for the State.

IN COURT

## DELHI HIGH COURT: STUDENT IS ENTITLED TO FULL MARKS IF EXAMINER FAILS TO AWARD MARK BUT PUTS A TICK AGAINST ANSWER PROVIDED | CBSE BOARD EXAM

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court in the case observed that the students is being entitled to full marks where the examiner fails to award mark in the margin against a particular answer even after entering the tick mark wherein it is indicated that the answer is correct.

The bench headed by Justice C Hari Shankar in the case observed and has stated that consequence of the lapse of the examiner, if any, cannot be visited on the student.

The court in the case stated that even if there is an error at the end of the examiner, so long as the answer sheet does not reflect the examiner's view as being that the answer is incorrect and the student has to be given the benefit of doubt.

The court observed that assuming the examiner is remiss in a particular case with regards to the manner in which he has marked the answer sheet, the student cannot be made to suffer and, unless the said court is satisfied that the examiner has found the answer to be incor-



rect, the student has to get the benefit of marks allotted to the question, against the answer that he has provided.

Adding to it, the court stated that this court is of the considered view that while the failure to award marks in the margin against a particular answer even after entering a tick ( ) mark may be a lapse on the part of the examiner in order to strictly comply with the instructions issued by the CBSE, thus, the student cannot be made to suffer for that reason.

The court made the said observations while awarding the full marks to a girl against the answer provided by her to a question in Class XIIth Board Examination's Geography paper held in March last year.

In the present case the girl moved the court that the examiner had entered two

peal over the decision of the examiner.

Adding to it, the court stated that if the answer to a question is correct, the student is being entitled to be awarded marks against that answer.

The court in the case observed that if the examiner has not assigned any mark less than the maximum marks which can be awarded against that question, the student is entitled to be awarded the maximum marks. The court is of the opinion that the petitioner is entitled to full marks against the answer which are provided by her to Question 27 of the Geography paper held on March 02, 2023 in the Class XII Board Examination. The bench headed by Justice Shankar in the case observed and has directed the CBSE to issue a corrected mark sheet to the girl by adding 5 marks against the answer provided to the question. The counsel, Advocate Mr. Musheer Zaidi and Advocate Ms. Zahra Naqvi appeared for the Petitioner.

The counsel, Advocate Mr. Atul Kumar represented the Respondent No.1

IN COURT

## DELHI HIGH COURT: SCHOOL CANNOT REFUSE ADMISSION IF DOE SATISFIED THAT CHILD IS ENTITLED TO PREFERENTIAL ADMISSION UNDER EWS/DG CATEGORY

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court in the case Ojas Satyawali Through His Mother Bhawna Pathak v. Directorate Of Education And Anr observed that once the Directorate of Education, DoE is satisfied that a child is entitled to preferential admission under the Economically Weaker Sections, EWS or Disadvantaged Group, DG category, the school cannot refuse admission to the child.

The bench headed by Justice C Hari Shankar in the case observed and has stated that it is the child welfare which is paramount and law cannot countenance a situation in which, despite DoE having found the child entitled to admission, school refuses the same.

The court stated that the



authority to grant admission to EWS, DG, CWSN category has been conferred on DoE. Thus, it being the DoE which is required to carry out requisite verification and satisfy itself that child in question is entitled to preferential admission under the said category and if the DoE is satisfied on that count, the respondent-School cannot refuse admission to the

child.

The bench of Justice Shankar in the case was dealing with the petitioner moved by the 7-year-old boy against denial of admission by a school to him under EWS category, despite allotment by DoE.

The court in the case observed and has confirmed the order passed by the coordinate bench on September 15 last year wherein the

court directed the school to grant admission to the minor in Class I in the EWS, DG, CWSN category for 2023-2024 academic session.

The court in its order stated that the child shall continue to receive education in the school in the said category in accordance with law.

The court stated that the admission of the petitioner shall stand regularized accordingly.

Accordingly, the court allowed the writ petition.

The counsel, Advocate Mr. Arkaneeil Bhaumik and Advocate Mr. Shashwat Kabi, Advocate for Dr. Amit George appeared for the Petitioner.

The counsel, Mr. Utkarsh Singh, Advocate for Mr. Santosh Kumar Tripathi, Standing Counsel (Civil) GNCTD for DoE represented the respondent.

IN COURT

## Punjab and Haryana High Court Pulls Up State Authorities For Not Sending Police Verification In Prescribed Proforma | Passport

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Punjab and Haryana High Court in the case Vikramjeet Singh v. Union of India and others has pulled up state authorities for not sending the police verification for issuing passport in the prescribed proforma, despite specific directions issued in different cases repeatedly.

The court in the case observed that in September 2023 that the police authorities are sending incomplete reports which is the 'root cause of denial of passport'. The court directed the police authorities to disclose complete status of FIR in verification done for issuing of the passport.

It has also been emphasized by the said court that the proforma prepared for

the information to be furnished by the Police Official in the meeting called by the Additional Solicitor General of India, pursuant to the case Mohan Lal @ Mohna vs. Union of India and others, which needs to be followed.

The bench of Justice Jagmohan Bansal in the case observed and has stated that despite specific orders passed in Mohan Lal @ Mohna (supra) as well as order dated September 13, 2023, the State authorities have not started sending police verification report in the prescribed proforma.

Therefore, the passport authorities are also not asking the police officials to send their report in the prescribed proforma.

The court stated that the afore-stated orders was passed to avoid undesired litigation wherein neither

the passport authorities nor the police authorities are interested to avoid litigation.

The passport authorities were directed to implement the aforesaid orders in letter and spirit and if the authorities in future fail to implement the afore-stated orders, they would be hauled up in contempt proceedings.

The court made the said observations wherein the petition is moved by the applicant denied passport due to 'adverse police verification' and he was being acquitted in a criminal case and appeal against the same was pending before the High Court.

The court noted that the police verification was not done as per the prescribed proforma which is the cause of the rejection of his application, thus, the Court had issued notice to Union gov-

ernment and State.

The counsel, Raman Sharma, Addl. A.G. Haryana, asserted before the court that the order passed by the court in the case Mohan Lal @ Mohan case has not been circulated to field staff, thus, police officials are still sending report as per old proforma.

The counsel, Senior panel counsel for Union of India submitted before the court that the application of the petitioner would be considered and disposed of within six weeks.

Accordingly, the court disposed of the plea.

The counsel, Kushagra Beniwal, Advocate appeared for the petitioner.

The Senior Panel Counsel, Amit Sharma appeared for the Union of India.

The counsel, Raman Sharma represented the Addl. A. G. Haryana.



TOP OF THE DAY

**SHARJAH RULER LAUNCHES PROJECT, REVIVING AL HIRA**

SHARJAH: Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah, inaugurated, on Wednesday, a project to revive the old town of Al Hira in the city of Sharjah. Upon Ruler Sharjah's arrival in the Al Hira area, he unveiled the memorial that commemorates the founding of the town of Al Hira four centuries ago, in the year 1613 AD, in which Al Qawasim arrived in the city of Sharjah. After that, the Ruler of Sharjah opened the house of Sultan bin Abdullah bin Majid Al Owais, which is located on an area of 900 square metres, to be Al Hira Literary Majlis.

**VIDHU P NAIR APPOINTED AS INDIA'S AMBASSADOR TO ANGOLA**

LUANDA: Vidhu P Nair, who is presently India's ambassador to Turkmenistan, has been appointed as the next ambassador of India to Angola, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Thursday. Nair is a Foreign Service Officer of Batch 2002 and has also served as the Director of the Ministry. "Dr. Vidhu P. Nair (IFS:2002), presently Ambassador of India to Turkmenistan, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Angola," the MEA said in a statement. Moreover, he is expected to take up the assignment shortly.

**ISIS-INFLUENCED TERRORISTS PLANNING JERUSALEM ATTACKS ARRESTED**

TEL AVIV: Israeli security forces arrested two Palestinians planning terror attacks in Jerusalem in support of Islamic State (ISIS), it was cleared for publication on Thursday morning. According to the Israeli Police and the General Security Services (Shin Bet), the suspects planned to prepare charges and explosive devices targeting security forces. The suspects, both in their twenties, were arrested in December in the eastern Jerusalem neighborhood of Jebel Mukaber, where they live. During a weeks-long investigation, authorities learned that the two were influenced by ISIS content online and on Telegram, including graphic videos of ISIS killings around the world.

**INDIAN EMBASSY IN OMAN 'SHELTERS' STRANDED WOMAN: ACTIVIST**

MUSCAT: A Hyderabad woman who is stuck in Oman allegedly after being trafficked there from Dubai on the pretext of a job offer has been given 'shelter' by the Indian embassy in the Gulf country, a Bundi-based activist said. The development came after activist Charmesh Sharma, working for Indians stranded abroad, wrote to the President, Minister of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and the Indian Embassy in Oman on January 7, a day after PTI Videos reported the matter.

**UN COURT HEARS GENOCIDE CLAIM AS ISRAEL ESCALATES FIGHTING IN CENTRAL GAZA**

TDG NETWORK  
KHAN YOUNIS

The United Nations' top court began hearings Thursday for South Africa's allegation that Israel's war with Hamas amounts to genocide against Palestinians. Israel strongly denies the claim. Although the case is likely to take years to resolve, South Africa is asking the International Court of Justice to order an immediate suspension of Israel's military offensive in the Gaza Strip. Israeli military operations in Gaza have lately focused on the southern city of Khan Younis and urban refugee camps in the territory's center. Hundreds of people have been killed in recent days in strikes across the territory, including in areas of the far south where Israel told people to seek refuge.

Meanwhile, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has been meeting with leaders across the Mideast, seeking

**SOUTH AFRICA LIKENS GAZA STRIP TO CONCENTRATION CAMP IN WORLD COURT CASE**

A lawyer representing South Africa's legal team has called the Gaza Strip "a concentration camp where genocide is taking place." John Dugard made the remarks while he was laying out a case in front of the International Court of Justice Thursday that South Africa has jurisdiction to take Israel to court over the genocide charge. He was repeating remarks made in 2023 by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa. The genocide charge strikes at the heart of Israel's national identity and such comparisons of Israel's war in Gaza to Nazi concentration camps on a world stage are likely to stir emotions in Israel, which sees itself as a bulwark of security for Jews after 6 million were killed in the Holocaust. International support for Israel's creation in 1948 was deeply rooted in outrage over Nazi atrocities. South Africa wants the court to rule that Israel is committing genocide in its war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Israel denies the charges, saying it is fighting a war of self-defense following Hamas' deadly October 7 attack.

to rally the region behind postwar plans for Gaza. Blinken spoke with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Wednesday about a reformed Palestinian Authority governing Gaza once the war is over. Blinken then flew to Manama, the capital of the tiny Gulf nation of Bahrain. The October 7 Hamas attack from Gaza into southern Israel that triggered the war killed around 1,200 people and saw some 250 others taken hostage by militants. Israel's air, ground and sea

**CURRENTLY ISSUES IN UN COURT**

- court opens hearings on South Africa's allegation that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza.
- Blinken seeks Palestinian governance reform for postwar Gaza.
- The Israeli military says it found traces of hostages in an underground tunnel in Gaza.
- Nelson Mandela's support for Palestinians endures with South Africa's genocide case against Israel.

assault in Gaza has killed more than 23,000 people, two-thirds of them women and children, according to the Health Ministry in the Hamas-ruled territory. The count does not differentiate between civilians and combatants.

**3 MALDIVES MINISTERS SUSPENDED INDEFINITELY WITH PAY OVER REMARKS AGAINST PM MODI**

TDG NETWORK  
SAO PAULO

Male Following derogatory remarks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Maldives Deputy Youth Ministers Mariyam Shiuna, Mahzoom Majid and Malsha Shareef have been suspended indefinitely, but all three will continue to receive their salaries, the President's Office has said, Maldives local media Adhadhu reported. Providing further information about the suspensions, Maldives President's Office Communications Minister Ibrahim Khaleel told Adhadhu that the three deputy ministers were suspended indefinitely as a measure taken to look into the matter. "They will be paid under



Deputy Youth Ministers Mariyam Shiuna, Mahzoom Majid and Malsha Shareef

the normal process in the past where ministers and deputies were paid when they were suspended. They were suspended from going to work and performing the duties of their posts," Khaleel said, as per Adhadhu. Asked about social media posts made by the deputy ministers, Khaleel said the President's Office did not have any comment. A

massive row was triggered between India and the Maldives after the deputy minister, along with other cabinet members and government officials, made disparaging references to PM Modi's Lakshadweep visit. Indians, including cricketers and film celebrities, have since come out in open support in promoting local beach destinations and other tourist spots.

**Cold weather claims 36 children's lives in Pakistan; morning assemblies banned**

TDG NETWORK  
LAHORE

At least 36 children have died due to pneumonia caused by cold weather in the last week in Pakistan's Punjab province, prompting the authorities to impose a ban on holding morning assemblies in schools, an official statement said on Thursday. The move to impose a ban on morning assemblies till January 31 came as the province also saw a surge in the number

of pneumonia cases among school children apart from the 36 deaths caused by it. "Last week at least 36 children died of pneumonia in the Punjab province due to extreme cold weather. The government has been forced to impose a ban on holding a morning assembly in schools till Jan 31 due to the extreme cold weather," said the statement issued by the Punjab government. Vacation has also been announced till January 19 for

the classes of nursery, prep and playgroup. Concerned with the situation, the officials also issued basic health directions for the children to keep them safe from the cold weather. "The children should wear masks, wash their hands and use warm clothes so that they can be prevented from catching pneumonia," it said, adding that eight out of 10 children are suffering from pneumonia in Lahore's Children's Hospital. It said that children having com-

TDG NETWORK  
TAIPEI

In the shadow of looming geopolitical tensions, Taiwan grapples with a multifaceted doomsday scenario, contemplating the prospect of a Chinese invasion coupled with an insidious wave of cyberattacks. Beyond conventional military threats, the island faces persistent and escalating cyber dangers, marked by a daily onslaught of approximately five million attacks, a menacing surge amplified in the lead-up to the presidential election. Fortinet's report of an 80% spike in cyber attacks during the first half of 2023 underscores Taiwan's vulnerability, earning it the dubious distinction of topping Asia Pacific rankings. The threat landscape extends beyond government and defense entities, reaching the heart of Taiwan's global significance—the semiconductor industry. A key player in the high-tech supply chain, the island's semiconductor infrastructure becomes a focal point

of cyber assaults, raising concerns of potential disruption in global economic dynamics. Analysts anticipate a rise in cybersecurity incidents as geopolitical tensions escalate. Taiwan's anxieties transcend the realm of conventional cyber threats; officials grapple with the nightmare scenario of undersea cables being severed, severing vital communication links and isolating the island. In response, Taiwan embarks on satellite communication initiatives, collaborating with foreign service providers and strategically deploying satellite receivers across its expanse. The objective: safeguarding government stability and ensuring accurate information dissemination in times of crisis. Amid these multifaceted challenges, Taiwan maintains a state of high alert, navigating the complex currents of an ever-evolving geopolitical landscape, where preparedness for diverse threats becomes paramount in safeguarding its sovereignty and global connectivity.

**SRI LANKA PRESIDENT SAYS PEACEFUL SOLUTION NEEDED FOR GAZA-ISRAEL CONFLICT**

AGENCIES  
COLOMBO

Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe on Thursday underlined the need to pursue a peaceful resolution to the Gaza-Israel conflict, emphasizing his country's unwavering commitment to a two-state solution. "President Wickremesinghe expressed his consistent public support for Palestine and Gaza and acknowledged Sri Lanka's unwavering support and steadfast stance for UN resolution calling for a cessation of hostilities in Gaza," a statement from his office said after he met Colombo-based ambas-



A woman reacts during the All-National minute of si

sadors of 10 West Asian countries. Ambassadors of Palestine, Egypt, Qatar, the UAE, Libya, Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Iraq attended the meeting. The President was accompanied by Foreign Minister Ali Sabry among others, local media reports said. "Wickremesinghe advocated for the establishment of a permanent Palestinian government and emphasised that a two-state solution couldn't be realised with a single state. Terrorist attacks by Hamas shouldn't justify the ongoing bombardment of Gaza," it said. The development comes days after the Sri Lankan Navy, on the directions of the President, announced that it was preparing to join a US-led coalition to protect merchant vessels sailing in the Red Sea against attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels. Responding to the criticism by the opposition, the government in parliament defended the decision saying safe-

guarding shipping lines was important as it would adversely impact shipping costs hurting Sri Lanka's already battered economy. Since November 2023, the Iranian-backed Houthi have been attacking merchant and commercial vessels in the Red Sea impeding global commerce and undermining navigational rights. They have said they launched the attacks with the aim of ending Israel's devastating air-and-ground offensive in the Gaza Strip that has killed more than 23,000 people. Israel launched the offensive after Hamas militants carried out a large-scale attack on Israel on October 7.

ASHISH SINHA  
NEW DELHI

The Nepal court has sentenced cricketer Sandeep Lamichhane to eight years of imprisonment in a rape case. A single-judge bench of Sishir Raj Dhakal also imposed a 3,00,000 fine on the cricketer, besides ordering him to pay a compensation of 2,00,000 to the victim. Nepal's cricketer Sandeep Lamichhane had previously been indicted in a rape case by the Kathmandu District Court. The verdict, issued in December last year by Sishir Dhakal's bench, followed the concluding statements of both sides. Despite the Apex Court's order on February 23 of this year to expedite the case through a fast-track process, the hearing faced delays due to various circumstances.

The court had repeatedly halted proceedings, notably when the accused, a former national team captain facing rape charges, traveled to Zimbabwe for World Cup qualifiers. Lamichhane, who spent several months in custody, was granted bail and later permitted to travel abroad. On January 12, the Patan High Court overturned the Kathmandu District Court's decision to place Lamichhane in judicial custody for the alleged rape of a minor, citing insufficient grounds for detention. Lamichhane secured his release on a bail amount of Rs 2 million the following day. Having sought permission from the Supreme Court to join the national team traveling to the UAE for ICC Men's Cricket World Cup League 2 matches against the UAE and Papua New Guinea in late February, Lamichhane's plea was granted by a joint bench of Justices Sapana Pradhan Malla and Kumar Chudal on February 27. The District Government Attorney's Office (DGAO), Kathmandu, had filed a case against Lamichhane under Section 219 of the National Penal Code Act, 2017, following a rape complaint by a 17-year-old girl. The DGAO has sought a prison sentence of up to 12 years, as stipulated by sub-section 3 (d) of Section 219, along with compensation for the victim. Despite Lamichhane's denial of the rape allegation in statements to the DGAO and the police, an arrest warrant was issued on September 8. On the same day, the Cricket Association of Nepal (CAN) suspended him from the national team following the issuance of the arrest warrant.

**Bangladesh: Sheikh Hasina government announces 36-member new cabinet**

TDG NETWORK  
DHAKA

The Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government on Wednesday named its 36-member cabinet which is set to take oath, Dhaka Tribune reported. However, Bangladesh's former Foreign Minister Abdul Momen and former Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam will not be part of the Hasina cabinet this time. Cabinet Secretary Mahub Hossain told reporters that the new

cabinet will be comprised of 36 members. This will include 25 ministers and 11 state ministers in this cabinet. Among them, there will be two technocrat ministers this time. The ministers are: AKM Mojaumder Haque, Obaidul Quader, Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun, Asaduzzaman Khan, Dr Dipu Moni, Md Tajul Islam, Md Faruk Khan, Abul Hasan Mahmud Ali, Anisul Huq, Hasan Mahmud, Md Abdus Shahid, Sadhan Chandra Majumdar, Ubaidul Mukhtar



Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh

man and Dr Samanta Lal Sen, according to Dhaka Tribune. The 11 state ministers are namely, Simeen Husain Rimi, Nasrul Hamid, Zunaid Ahmed Palak, Mohammad A Arafat, Md Mohibur Rahman, Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, Zahid Faruk, Kujendra Lal Tripura, Rumana Ali, Shafiqur Rahman Chowdhury, and Ahsanul Islam Titu. Earlier, President Mohammad Shahabuddin invited Awami League President Sheikh Hasina

to form the government as she has gained the confidence of the majority of the members of the parliament. Yeafesh Osman and Dr Samants Lal Sen will take oath as technocrat ministers, according to the Daily Star, a Bangladesh-based newspaper. Sheikh Hasina registered a historic victory clinching a consecutive fourth term as the Bangladesh Prime Minister. Her party, Awami League secured 223 seats to form the government in the elections held on January 7.

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina won the Gopalganj-3 constituency in a landslide victory, her eighth term as a Member of Parliament and fifth term as the PM. The elections were held amid tensions, as the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Jamaat-e-Islami and like-minded parties observed a strike across the country as they boycotted the elections. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also congratulated PM Hasina on the historic victory.



# OPPOSITION IN POLAND PROTESTS AGAINST NEW PRO-EU GOVERNMENT POWER SHIFT

TDG NETWORK  
WARSAW

Poland's right-wing opposition, frustrated over its recent loss of power, urged its supporters to protest on Thursday against moves by the new pro-European Union government to take control of state broadcasters and the state news agency. The Law and Justice party, which governed for eight years before losing October's parliamentary elections, called for a protest by "Free Poles" outside parliament. It portrayed the protest as a defense of democracy and free media, although during its time in power it was criticized for curbing media freedom.

It was unclear what the response would be, but emotions have been riding high over an escalating standoff between the current and the previous government. The protest was called for the same day that a contro-



versal chamber of the Supreme Court, still controlled by Law and Justice, was to rule on the validity of the election. The election had a record nationwide turnout of over 74 per cent and gave power to a coalition of parties opposed to Law and Justice.

The new government of Prime Minister Donald Tusk is set on reversing

some policies of its populist predecessor, including ones that brought conflict with the EU, such as changes that put Poland's justice system under political control. In one of its first steps, Tusk's government has moved to take control of the state television, radio and news agency PAP, which Law and Justice turned into tools of aggressive propaganda

against its critics and against Tusk personally. Leaders of the former government maintain that Tusk's moves were illegal and have staged occupations of the media premises, saying they are defending free media and democratic norms. Commentators say Law and Justice wants to keep control of the nationwide broadcasters ahead of local administra-

## WHY POLAND PROTESTING ?

- Pardon Controversy:** President Duda plans to pardon two arrested politicians, leading to a standoff with the opposition Law and Justice party.
- Supreme Court Decision:** Law and Justice protests follow a Supreme Court ruling validating the October election, where they lost power.
- Media Control Dispute:** New government, led by PM Tusk, seeks to reverse populist policies, taking control of state media, sparking protests and claims of defending democratic norms.
- Alleged Violations:** Law and Justice alleges illegal actions by the new government, with legal concerns raised by human rights organizations.
- EU Relations:** Tensions reflect broader issues of Poland's alignment with the EU and conflicts over justice system changes.
- Protest Motivation:** Law and Justice supporters rally against perceived threats to democracy, media freedom, and the shift in government policies.

tion elections this spring. Law and Justice members, as well as their ally, President Andrzej Duda, are protesting the arrest Tuesday of two prominent figures in the former government who were convicted

by a Warsaw court of abuse of power. The party called the arrests politically motivated. While in power, Law and Justice was repeatedly accused by law experts of violating Poland's legal order and the rule of law.

# Papua New Guinea declares state of emergency after violent protests kill 16



Riots break out in Papua New Guinea

TDG NETWORK  
PORT MORESBY

Papua New Guinea Prime Minister James Marape on Thursday declared a two-week state of emergency in the capital, Port Moresby, and suspended the Pacific island nation's chief of police after violent protests killed as many as 16 people in the country, The New York Times reported.

The unrest began on Wednesday after police, defence officers and other public servants appeared to walk off their jobs to protest what they said was an unexpected pay cut. The Papua New Guinea government blamed the error on a computer glitch and promised to fix the problem, but the situation in Port Moresby devolved quickly.

In the protests, more than a dozen stores were set on fire, and there were reports of widespread looting as the unrest lasted into the night. There were also reports of fatalities in Port Moresby, the capital, and in Lae, the nation's second-largest city, but the authorities did not release any official figures.

The violence came amid the backdrop of high unemployment and a rising cost of living in the country of about ten million people, according

to The New York Times.

About 1,000 special forces troops were on standby to prevent further unrest, Prime Minister James Marape said during a news conference on Thursday as he announced an investigation into the crisis. In addition to David Manning, the commissioner of police, Marape also suspended the heads of the government's finance, treasury and personnel management departments, as per The New York Times.

There were signs that the authorities had been able to regain some control, with the US Embassy in Port Moresby saying in a statement on Thursday that the police and defence forces had returned to work. "However," it added, "tensions remain high--the relative calm can change at a moment's notice."

Marape, who has pushed for closer ties with the United States and Australia while also maintaining economic links with China, suggested the unrest had been orchestrated by his political opponents, as per The New York Times.

He said, "You want to change the government, change it on the floor of Parliament. Not using my people to create lawlessness and recklessness."

# POWERFUL STORM HITS LARGE PARTS OF EASTERN US

TDG NETWORK  
WASHINGTON, DC

A powerful storm has battered large areas of the eastern US. The storm has knocked out power across several states, leading to multiple rescues. It delivered its final blow to New England on Wednesday, CNN reported. On Wednesday, multiple rivers were at major flood stage in the eastern US, most of them in the Northeast and mid-Atlantic. Flooding forced evacuations in New Jersey and Connecticut, where the Yantic River came perilously close to hitting a record high level and a dam was damaged.

In Alabama, Georgia and North Carolina, as many as four deaths were reported as storms hit the states with fierce winds, rain and tornadoes. An 81-year-old woman was among those killed after her Cottonwood, Alabama, mobile home was flipped multiple times on Tuesday, according to Houston County Commission Chairman Brandon Shoupe. The number of power outages dropped as the storm moved away, but more than 120,000 homes and businesses

were in the dark on Wednesday night in the eastern US, primarily in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Vermont and Maine, according to PowerOutage.us. And high temperatures in the Northeast were expected to top out only in the 30s and 40s on Wednesday, leaving many without power in frigid weather, as per CNN.

The storm generated 25 tornado reports across Texas, Alabama, Florida, Georgia and South Carolina since Monday. In South Carolina, "significant damage" from a potential tornado was reported in the city of Bamberg, 60 miles south of Columbia, where the century-old City Hall building collapsed, according to city clerk-treasurer Robin Chavis.

A section of Interstate 80 in Iowa had to be closed down on Tuesday afternoon due to whiteout conditions that led to a multi-vehicle crash. In Kansas, around 30 people, including children, got stranded and had to be rescued from vehicles and taken to a high school during blizzard and whiteout conditions on Monday, CNN reported.

# EU court adviser recommends multibillion fine for Google in antitrust case

TDG NETWORK  
LONDON

A legal adviser to the European Union's top court said on Thursday that Google should pay a whopping fine in a long-running antitrust case in which regulators found the company gave its own shopping recommendations an illegal advantage over rivals in search results.

The European Court of Justice's advocate general, Juliane Kokott, recommended rejecting the US search giant's appeal of the 2017 penalty. In a legal opinion, Kokott also proposed upholding the 2.4 billion euro (USD 2.6 billion) fine that the European Commission, the

27-nation bloc's top competition watchdog, slapped on Google. The commission had accused the company of unfairly directing visitors to its own Google Shopping service to the detriment of competitors. It was one of three multibillion-euro fines that the commission imposed on Google in the previous decade as Brussels started ramping up its crackdown on the tech industry. Google appealed to the top EU tribunal after the lower General Court rejected its challenge. Opinions by the Court of Justice's advocate general aren't legally binding but are often followed by its judges. Their final decision is expected within months.

"Google, as found by the Commission and confirmed by the General Court, was leveraging its dominant position on the market for general search services to favour its own comparison shopping service by favouring the display of its result," the Court of Justice said in a press summary of the opinion. This "self-preferencing" amounts to "an independent form of abuse" by Google, it said. Google made changes in 2017 to comply with the European Commission's decision requiring it to treat competitors equally. The company started holding auctions for shopping search listings that it would bid for alongside other com-

parison shopping services. "We will review the opinion of the Advocate General and await the final decision of the court," Google said in a statement. "Irrespective of the appeal, we continue to invest in our remedy, which has been working successfully for several years, and will continue to work constructively with the European Commission." The commission declined to comment.

The opinion was another setback this week for Google, which also said it laid off hundreds of employees on its hardware, voice assistance and engineering teams as part of cost-cutting measures.

# US-INDIAN SATELLITE TO MONITOR EARTH'S FROZEN SURFACES IN ICE, SNOW ENVIRONMENTS

TDG NETWORK  
WASHINGTON, DC

NISAR, the radar satellite, set to be launched this year in joint collaboration with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and US space agency National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), will measure some key Earth vital signs, including the health of wetlands, ground deformation by volcanoes, and the dynamics of land and sea ice.

It will measure the health of wetlands from ground

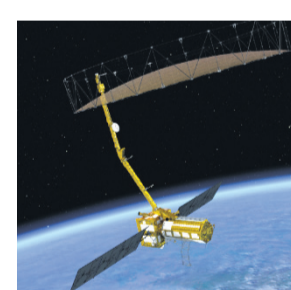
deformation by volcanoes to the dynamics of land and sea ice," NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory said in a press release. This will help researchers decipher how small-scale processes can cause monumental changes in the ice sheets covering Antarctica and Greenland, as well as on mountain glaciers and sea ice around the world.

"Short for NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar, NISAR will provide the most comprehensive picture to date of motion and deformation of frozen surfaces in Earth's ice- and snow-

covered environments, collectively known as the cryosphere," the release said.

The target launch readiness date is January 2024, according to ISRO. Alex Gardner, a glaciologist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Southern California said, "Our planet has the thermostat set on high, and Earth's ice is responding by speeding up its motion and melting faster."

"We need to better understand the processes at play, and NISAR will provide measurements to do that," he added.



NISAR, the radar satellite

Set to be launched in 2024 by ISRO from southern India, NISAR will observe nearly all the planet's land and ice surfaces twice every 12 days, according to NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory press release.

The satellite's insights into Earth's cryosphere will come from the combined use of two radars: an L-band system with a 10-inch (25-centimeter) wavelength and an S-band system with a 4-inch (10-centimeter) wavelength.

NISAR's orientation in orbit will enable it to collect data from Antarctica's far interior, close to the South Pole. Antarctica's ice sheets hold the planet's largest reservoir of frozen fresh water, and the rate at which it may lose ice represents the greatest uncertainty in sea level rise projections, according to

NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

According to the press release, NISAR's increased coverage will be crucial for studying the motion of ice flowing down from central Antarctica's high elevations towards the sea. The measurements will also enable scientists to closely study what happens where ice and ocean meet. Both Antarctica and Greenland have ice shelves--masses of ice that extend from land and float on the ocean that are thinning and crumbling as icebergs break off.

# IRAN LOOMS LARGE AS UN SECURITY COUNCIL CONDEMNS HOUTHIS

TDG NETWORK  
TEL AVIV

The United Nations Security Council didn't name Iran explicitly, but the message was clear, stating that Yemen's Houthis wouldn't be able to threaten global trade if not for the Islamic Republic's support. On Wednesday, the council voted 11-0, with four abstentions, in favour of a US and Japan-sponsored resolution condemning the Houthis' repeated attacks on ships traversing the Red Sea and demanding an immediate halt to them, along with the release of the crew of a Japanese-operated cargo ship taken hostage on November 19. The ship is affiliated with an Israeli businessman.

The Houthis vowed in early December to target any Israel-bound ship in the Red Sea, regardless of its ownership. Since November 19, they have attacked or harassed 26 ships, according to the US military's Central Command (Cent-

com). This includes the hijacking of the MV Galaxy Leader in November. The cargo ship and its crew of 25 are being held hostage in Yemen's port city of Hodeidah.

From bases along the Yemeni coast, the Iran-backed Houthi rebels have attacked and harassed ships in the Red Sea as they traverse the Bab el-Mandeb Straits, a narrow maritime chokepoint between the Arabian Peninsula and Africa. The majority of the world's oil passes through the strait from the Indian Ocean towards the Suez Canal and the Mediterranean Sea. The attacks have forced some major shipping companies to reroute around Africa, interrupting a crucial global trade route connecting Asia and the Middle East to Europe.

A US-led coalition of countries has set up shop in the Red Sea to ward off further attacks. Undeterred by military action or threats of further consequences, the Houthis fired their largest-ever



Linda Thomas Greenfield, Washington's UN ambassador

barrage of drones and missiles earlier on Wednesday, all of which were shot down by the US and UK

navies.

Last week, the United States and 12 other countries, including Bahrain, issued a statement warning that further attacks would necessitate a collective response.

"The Houthis will bear the responsibility of the consequences should they continue to threaten lives, the global economy and the free flow of commerce in the region's critical waterways," the statement read.

A senior Biden administration official called the statement "a final warning."

While Wednesday's resolution did not call out Iran specifically, it did note that all member states have a responsibility not to provide arms to the Houthis, in line with previous Security Council weapons embargoes. It also calls for "additional practical cooperation to prevent the Houthis from acquiring the material necessary to carry out further attacks."

# German diplomat offers support to de-escalate South China Sea

TDG NETWORK  
MANILA

Germany's top diplomat said on Thursday that China's actions in the South China Sea violate the rights of Asian coastal states like the Philippines and threaten freedom of navigation, but added that territorial disputes have to be resolved peacefully because "the world doesn't need another crisis." Annalena Baerbock, who held talks with Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and other top officials while visiting Manila, said Germany was ready to help de-escalate growing tensions and added that it was crucial to set up "mechanisms" to resolve the disputes peacefully and foster dialogue. "There are truly rough winds blowing across the South China Sea and this is happening in the middle of one of the most dynamic economic regions of the world," she told a news conference in Manila, speaking through an interpreter.

"It is now important to set up mechanisms to solve tensions together in a peaceful way," she said without elaborating. "I think we all agree that the world doesn't need another cri-

## CHINESE OFFICIALS DID NOT IMMEDIATELY ISSUE A REACTION.

The decades-long territorial dispute escalated last year between Beijing and Manila, sparking fears it could degenerate into a major conflict that could involve the United States, a longtime treaty ally of the Philippines. Chinese coast guard ships and accompanying vessels used military-grade laser and water cannons against Philippine coast guard and supply vessels and undertook dangerous maneuvers near disputed shoals, prompting the Philippines to file a large number of diplomatic protests against China, Philippine officials said.

There are too many crises at once." In a symbolic gesture of Germany's support for the Philippines, Baerbock visited the coast guard headquarters in Manila and boarded a patrol ship, where she briefly flew one of a number of surveillance drones that Germany donated to the Philippines.



## KAREENA'S TEAM ISSUES STATEMENT ABOUT HER NEXT PROJECT, ASKS EVERYONE TO WAIT



TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

Kareena Kapoor Khan is one of the most loved actors of Bollywood. Fans adore watching her on screen and eagerly await her next project. Over the past few days, there has been a buzz that she will be seen in Geetu Mohandas' 'Toxic', starring 'KGF' star Yash. However, there was no official announcement.

Kareena's team has now issued a statement on the rumours going around while requesting the media to "refrain from premature conjecture" about her next project.

"There have been many speculations doing the rounds about Kareena Kapoor Khan's next film. While we understand the excitement and the anticipation. We request media to refrain from Kareena Kapoor about her next project and its star cast. Something very exciting is coming up very soon and we request everyone to wait for the official announcement. Team Kareena Kapoor Khan," read the statement by Kareena's team.

After the massive success of 'KGF: Chapter 2' actor

Yash is all set to return to the big screen.

Yash announced the title of his next film with a special teaser video.

Taking to Instagram, Yash shared a post which he captioned, "What you seek is seeking you" - Rumi A Fairy Tale for Grown-ups #TOXIC."

Helmed by Geetu Mohandas, 'Toxic' is all set to hit the theatres on April 10, 2025.

The film is touted to be an action-oriented film set against the backdrop of the drug mafia.

Soon after Yash shared the official announcement video, fans swamped the comment section and dropped red hearts and fire emoticons.

"The only TOXICity we all approve of," a fan wrote.

Another fan wrote, "Yash stardom on peak."

"This will also be a blockbuster hit and break all the records boss," a user wrote.

Talking about Kareena, she will be next seen in 'The Crew' alongside Kriti Sanon, Tabu and Diljit Dosanjh. She also has Rohit Shetty's 'Singham Again', which also stars Ajay Devgn, Deepika Padukone, Akshay Kumar, Ranveer Singh and Tiger Shroff in pivotal roles.

### PICTURE PERFECT

Ranbir Kapoor, Anil Kapoor, Bobby Deol, Rashmika Mandanna, Tripti Dimri, Soloni Batra, director Sandeep Reddy Vanga, and filmmaker Bhushan Kumar pose at the success party of the film Animal. (ANI Photo)



## Aditya Roy Kapur, Sara Ali Khan's 'Metro... In Dino' to release on September 13

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

Makers of the upcoming anthology film 'Metro...In Dino' on Thursday announced the film's new release date.

Taking to Instagram, production house T-series shared a post in which they captioned, "#MetroInDino gets a new release date. This anthology of heartwarming stories will now release on 13th September 2024."

<https://www.instagram.com/p/Ci8y-dqSRdPC/>

'Metro...In Dino' will now be hitting theatres on September 13, 2024.

Helmed by Anurag Basu, the anthology film stars Aditya Roy Kapur, Sara Ali Khan, Ali Fazal, Fatima Sana Shaikh, Anupam Kher, Neena Gupta, Pankaj Tripathi, and Konkona Sen Sharma in the lead roles. Earlier, the film was



slated to hit theatres on March 29, 2024.

'Metro...In Dino' marks Aditya and Basu's second collaboration. The duo first worked together in 'Ludo'.

'Metro...In Dino', a film that apparently draws its title from the popular song 'In Dino' from 'Life in a... Metro',

will showcase bittersweet tales of human relationships based in contemporary times.

Sharing more details about the film, Basu had earlier said, "Metro...In Dino is a tale of the people and for the people! It has been a while since I am working on this one and I am glad to be collaborating with a powerhouse like Bhushan Kumar yet again who has always been like a pillar to me!"

He added, "The storyline is very fresh and relevant as I look forward to collaborating with amazing artists who bring that essence of contemporary aura with them. As music plays a very important role in any film, I couldn't be happier to be collaborating with my dear friend Pritam who has literally added life to the characters and story with his work."

Basu is known for his films like 'Barfi', 'Life In a Metro', 'Ludo', and 'Jagga Jasoos'.

## PANKAJ TRIPATHI STEPS DOWN AS NATIONAL ICON OF ELECTION COMMISSION

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Actor Pankaj Tripathi, who was appointed as the 'National Icon' of the Election Commission of India, has voluntarily stepped down from his position.

"Acknowledging his role as a political leader in an upcoming film, actor @PankajTripathi has voluntarily stepped down as #ECI National Icon as per terms of MoU. #ECI expresses gratitude for his impactful contribution to voter awareness & #SVEEP since Oct 2022," read a statement on the social media handle of ECI, posted by Spokesperson ECI on X.

Pankaj Tripathi was roped in as the ECI National Icon in October 2022.

These days he is occupied in promoting his upcoming project 'Main Atal Hoon'. Recently, he talked about his interest in politics.



Tripathi is playing the role of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in the biopic 'Main Atal Hoon'.

In an interview with ANI, Tripathi spoke about his interest in becoming a politician in his home state, stating, "Everyone is a politician in Bihar."

Tripathi, who was a member in the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) during his college days in Bihar, said he had never thought about joining politics at that time.

The actor said, "I never

thought about entering politics at that time. There was a thought that I might proceed in this line but then there was an arrest and the cops beat me up so I left that thought there and then. At the same time, I became inclined towards plays and dramas and after watching those, I got more attracted towards theatre."

Recently, during the trailer launch of his soon-to-be released biopic on Atal Bihari Vajpayee, he had opened up on his interest in politics and how he prepared for his role portraying the late Prime Minister of India.

He also recalled a funny anecdote from his college days when he joined the ABVP.

"I was in a youth wing. I have participated in andolans.

I was even jailed for a week! Toh main us raaste pe nikal chuka tha. Then I realised that the path of politics is full of thorns. Hence, I took a turn and started developing an in-

terest in street theatre. There was Kaildas Rangelaya, Patna where I enrolled myself. Mujhe laga ki yeh behhtar hai. Yahaan kam se kam bol ke acting hoti hai ki 'main acting kar raha hoon'," Tripathi quipped.

The film 'Main Atal Hoon' is directed by Ravi Jadhav and will be released on January 19.

The actor said that he is honoured to bring Atal Bihari Vajpayee's story to silver screen. "More than the film, the journey of playing Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee is really close to my heart. The man is truly a legend, and we are honoured to bring his inspiring story to the world. I hope audiences appreciate our efforts to bring in the legacy of Atal ji onto the big screens," he said. The film is backed by Bhanushali Studios Limited and Legend Studios, Vinod Bhanushali, Sandeep Singh, Sam Khan and Kamlesh Bhanushali.

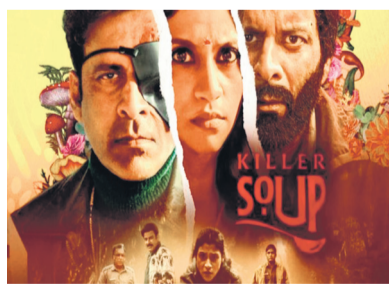
## SOUP: MANOJ BAJPAYEE, KONKANA SPICE UP THIS DARK TALE WITH THEIR PERFORMANCE

LATHA SRINIVASAN

Rating: 3 stars on 5

Swathi's (Konkana Sensharma) dream is to open a restaurant and she makes paya (mutton soup) day after day in this endeavour. Her husband, Prabhakar aka Prabhushetty (Manoj Bajpayee) dream is to build a fancy resort. But he is in business with his elder brother, Arvind Shetty (Saiyaji Shinde) who calls all the shots where finances are concerned. The husband-and-wife, who reside in a small town in the hilly terrains of Tamil Nadu, are constantly at loggerheads as a result.

Prabhushetty is conjuring up a way to swindle his brother of crores while Swathi is up to some no good herself. The scheming, loser husband is indulging in exhilarating messages by Umesh Pillai (Manoj Bajpayee), interestingly a Prabhushetty look-alike, with his brother in an attempt to convince him to part with his money. But foul-mouthed, crass but shrewd Arvind is in no mood to consent. Suddenly comes into the story a private detective,



blackmail and murder, and tremendous chaos ensues. Bodies start dropping like flies and a killer/s are on the loose. Will Inspector Hassan (Nasser), constable Asha (Shilpa Mudbi) and Thupalli (Anubhushan) crack the case?

Director Abhishek Chaubey's dark comedy, Killer Soup, has everything that is required to spice up this mutton soup i.e. blackmail, shady photos, extra-marital affairs, murderers, private detectives, cover ups and more. Manoj Bajpayee and Konkana Sensharma stand out in their roles and are aided by fine performances by veterans Nasser and Saiyaji Shinde. The effortless chemistry between Manoj Bajpayee and Konkana and their really natural interaction on screen keeps you

invested. Nasser, however, is the one that gets you hooked with the about-to-retire cop character.

The story may be set in Tamil Nadu but the characters speak Hindi, Tamil, Dakkhini and English liberally, which makes the series more engaging. The nuances of each language are different and coupled with the desi accents of the diverse character adds tremendous flavour to the story. Kudos to Chaubey for such detailing.

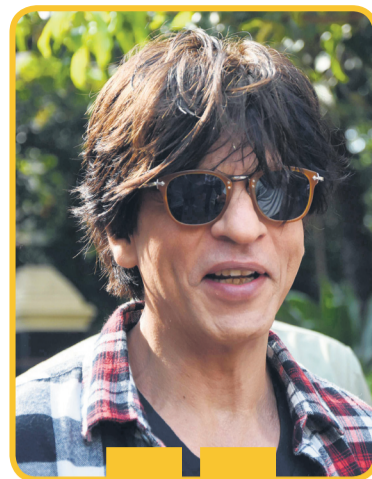
So, how engaging was this first web series by Kaminey and Ishqiya director Abhishek Chaubey? Killer Soup is a good watch for the most part but somewhere one feels that a little more punch was required to make it Michelin-starred. There are clear shades of Chaubey's earlier works in this eight-part series that is streaming on Netflix. In another aspect, this series is a cop drama too, or more accurately, a small-town whodunnit with a plethora of characters flitting in and out to take the story forward.

Though Killer Soup may not be the best black comedy series, it is definitely a fun watch with good performances.

### BRAIN PICKING



There is no such thing as normal. Normal is just another word for Lifeless.



—SHAH RUKH KHAN  
(Bollywood Actor)

## AKANSHA RANJAN KAPOOR TO MAKE SOUTH DEBUT

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

Actor Akansha Ranjan Kapoor, well-known for her roles in Bollywood in "Guilty," "Ray" and "Monica, Oh My Darling," is gearing up for her debut in South Indian cinema. She will be seen in "MaayaOne," co-starring Tollywood actor Sundeep Kishan.

In an informal chat, the actress shared, "Honestly, I think it's the best time to do a South film. Suddenly like for a year everybody just wants to grab a South film. So, I think it came at the perfect time. I'm ecstatic, it's just so fun and so different from here. I am just learning and enjoying the newness of all this. Yeah, I am just thrilled. I pick my projects very intuitively; however, South was a direction I wanted to foray into for the longest time but I didn't know how to actively pursue it."

She further added, "So, it just so happened with 'Maaya One', when an agent from the South called me and just told me about the set-up, even



before I heard the narration, I said yes to the film. It was just my intuition and I knew that this definitely will open a whole new audience, new doors and so many more opportunities that a fairly new actor like me needs. I have had very limited visibility because of streaming but I'm very happy because with this I will have my first theatrical release."

When asked whether her decision to venture into South cinema was driven by pressure or intuition, she clarified, "It was a no-brainer decision for me. I usually follow my instincts and rarely seek a second opinion. It wasn't pressure guiding this choice, although there's always an industry pressure to select roles.

## DEEPIKA PADUKONE FIGHTS OVER PIZZA WITH 'FIGHTER' CO-STAR HRITHIK ROSHAN

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

As actor Hrithik Roshan turned a year older, his 'Fighter' co-star Deepika Padukone shared a special birthday post for him.

Taking to Instagram, Deepika on Wednesday shared an unseen pic on her stories which she captioned, "May you forever nurture your inner child @hrithikroshan."

With their arms intertwined, Deepika and Hrithik were seen fighting for a slice of pizza while the candid picture was being taken.

Soon after the 'Piku' actor shared the picture it went viral on social media.

Deepika and Hrithik will be soon seen in director Siddharth Anand's aerial action thriller film 'Fighter'.

The film marks their first-ever on-screen collaboration.

'Fighter' is all set to hit the theatres on January 25.

Apart from Hrithik and Deepika, the film also stars Anil Kapoor, Karan Singh Grover and Akshay Oberoi in pivotal roles.

On the occasion of Hrithik's 50th birthday, team 'Fighter' treated fans and movie enthusiasts with an intriguing behind-the-scenes video of the actor from the sets of the film.

The BTS video drop is a rollercoaster ride through Roshan's transformation into an Air force officer.

Recently, the makers unveiled the official teaser of



the film which received a massive response from the fans.

The 1 minute 14-second teaser features Hrithik as Squadron Leader Shamsher Pathania aka Patty, Deepika as Squadron Leader Minal Rathore aka Minni, and Anil as Group Captain Rakesh, Jai Singh aka Rocky fighting for the country.

The teaser showcased the lead cast flying high in their jets and doing some aerial stunts. It also shared a glimpse of a party track featuring the lead cast and a smouldering kissing scene featuring the lead pair -- Hrithik and Deepika. The teaser ended on a high note with the tune of 'Sujlam Sulam' playing in the background as Hrithik unfurls a tricolor from his aircraft. The film is primarily shot at air bases in India with real Sukhois, Indian fighter planes.

However, Hrithik will also be seen in the action thriller film 'War 2'.

Deepika, on the other hand, also has sci-fi action film 'Kalki 2898 AD' and 'The Intern' in her kitty.



## THESE MORNING MISTAKES IN WINTER CAN INCREASE THE RISK OF HEART ATTACK, KNOW THE WAYS TO AVOID THEM



DR. D.K. JHAMB

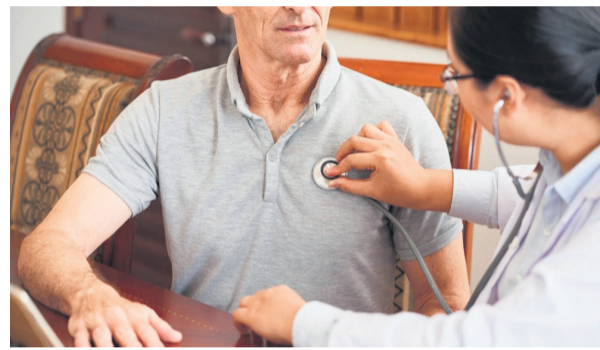


As the winter chill sets in, researchers warn that the risk of heart attacks surges, particularly during the early morning hours between 4 am and 10 am. This alarming trend is attributed to the heightened levels of hormones such as Epinephrine, Norepinephrine, and Cortisol during this time frame, leading to an increase in blood pressure and oxygen demand. Additionally, lower levels of endothelial cells further elevate the risk of a heart attack. The winter season exacerbates this peril, especially for individuals grappling with high blood pressure, diabetes, or lung

problems. Health experts advocate caution, suggesting that those at risk should steer clear of morning workouts and early morning strolls.

One of the primary culprits behind the increased risk during winter mornings is the constriction of blood vessels due to the cold. The frigid temperatures cause these vessels to shrink, impeding the smooth flow of blood and subsequently elevating blood pressure. The heart

is compelled to work harder to pump blood, placing individuals at a higher risk of heart-related complications.



This strain can lead to angina, characterized by chest pain. In severe cases, angina may escalate into a full-blown heart attack.

To mitigate the risk of heart attacks during winter, health professionals recommend adopting a holistic approach. Here are some key practices to incorporate into your daily

routine:

- Adequate Sleep:** Aim for a full eight hours of sleep. Quality sleep promotes

- heart health and reduces the risk of heart attacks.**
- Morning Walks on Grass:** Commence your day with a barefoot walk on grass. This not only imparts tranquility and positive energy but also aids in regulating blood pressure.
- Balanced Breakfast:** Never skip breakfast, a vital component for heart

health. Opt for a nutritious diet comprising fruits, sprouts, and milk.

**Regular Exercise:** Engage in regular physical activities, particularly during the morning. Exercise boosts energy levels throughout the day.

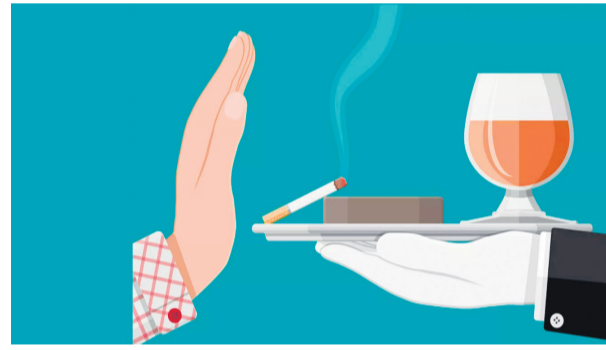
**Quality Time with Loved Ones:** Spend meaningful time with family and friends to alleviate stress and enhance mental well-being, which is crucial for heart health.

**Avoid Smoking and Limit Alcohol:** Minimize or eliminate smoking and alcohol consumption, as these habits can be detrimental to heart health.

**Morning Meditation:** Incorporate morning meditation into your routine. It fosters peace of mind and contributes to overall mental well-being.

**Routine Heart Checkups:** Regular heart checkups are imperative. Timely identification of issues allows for prompt intervention and treatment. By adhering to these measures, individuals can fortify their health during winter, substantially reducing the risk of heart attacks. A purposeful and health-conscious morning routine lays the foundation for a vibrant and heart-healthy life.

*The author is Director & Head of the Department in Department-Interventional Cardiology at Sanar International Hospitals.*

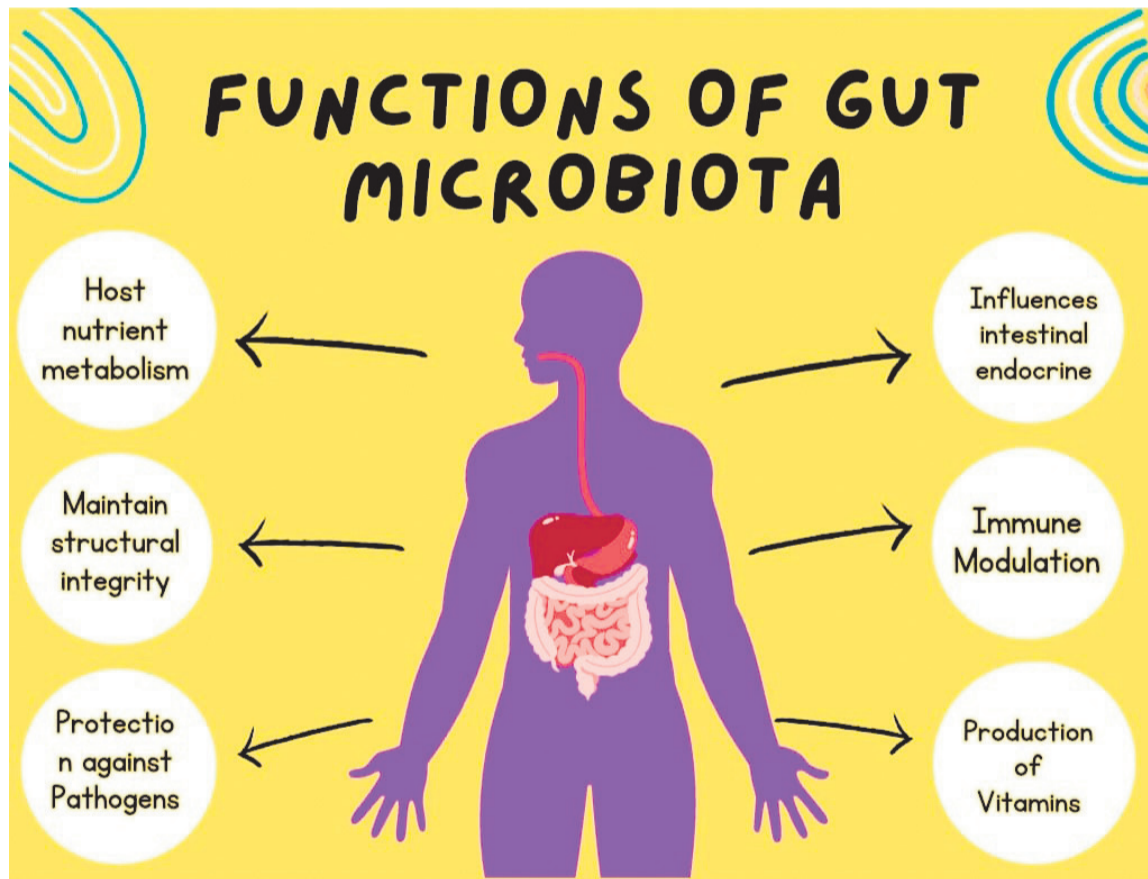


## THE ROLE OF GUT MICROBIOTA IN DIABETES: EXPLORING THE GUT-BODY CONNECTION

DR RICHA CHATURVEDI

The human body has been seen as a tightly woven tapestry, with organs playing distinct roles in a grand physiological orchestra. But beneath the surface, a hidden chorus of trillions sings a vital melody: the gut microbiota. These microscopic maestros, residing within our intestines, are not mere bystanders; they are active conductors, influencing our health in ways we are only beginning to understand. And in the complex dance of diabetes, their role is proving to be both profound and intricate.

Diabetes, a metabolic illness defined by elevated blood sugar levels, has long been related to factors such as heredity and lifestyle. Recent study, however, has revealed an unexpected guest player in this drama: the gut flora. Studies have revealed a significant variation in the composition of gut bacteria between those with and without diabetes. This shows that when the microbial symphony is out of tune, it can contribute to the development and progression



tabolism. Beneficial bacteria create short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs), which affect insulin sensitivity and glucose absorp-

tion. Beneficial bacteria create short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs), which affect insulin sensitivity and glucose absorp-

3. Breakdown of the Gut Lining: The gut lining serves as a barrier, preventing dangerous substances from entering the bloodstream. In diabetes, however, this barrier can become leaky, allowing bacterial compounds to enter the body and aggravate inflammation. The gut microbiota can alter the barrier's integrity, providing another layer to the complicated interplay.

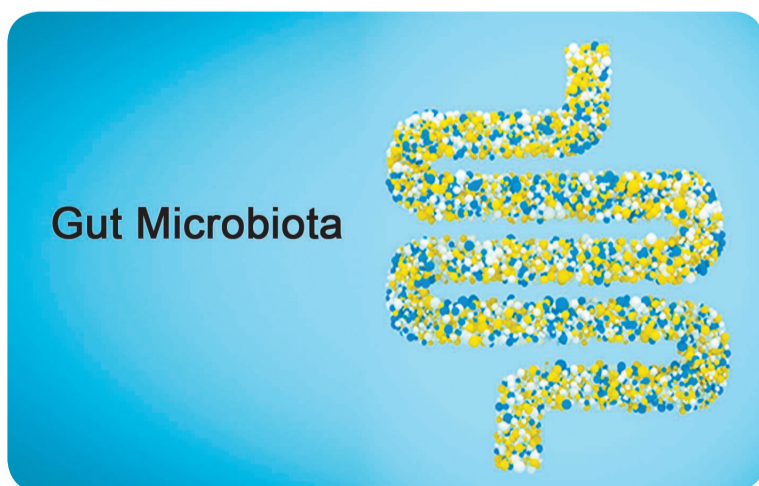
4. Hormonal Balance: Gut bacteria also influence hormone production, which regulates hunger, fullness, and digestion. Diabetes can interrupt this hormonal symphony, resulting in weight gain and subsequent metabolic abnormalities.

Understanding the role of the gut microbiota in diabetes opens up exciting avenues for therapeutic interventions. Pro-

biotics, prebiotics, and even fecal microbiota transplantation are being explored as potential ways to modulate the gut orchestra and restore balance. By harmonizing the microbial melody, we may be able to conduct a new kind of dance - one where diabetes loses its grip on our health.

However, it is important to remember that this is still a young field of research. While the evidence is promising, more studies are needed to fully understand the complex interplay between the gut microbiota and diabetes. Nevertheless, the gut symphony is captivating researchers and offering a new perspective on this chronic disease. By listening closely to the chorus of microbes within, we may finally find the key to turning the tide on diabetes and dancing towards a healthier future.

*The author is Senior Consultant in Endocrinology at Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, New Delhi.*



of this chronic disease. So, how do these tiny maestros conduct the diabetic dance? Their influence is multifaceted, operating through a series of intricate mechanisms.

1. Metabolic Mayhem: Our gut bacteria are like small factories, producing a variety of substances that affect our me-

tion. However, in diabetes, the generation of these beneficial SCFAs may be interrupted, resulting in poor glucose management.

2. Inflammatory Interlude: Gut bacteria are also important in regulating inflammation. Pro-inflammatory chemicals can be generated when the mi-

crobial balance is disrupted, resulting in chronic low-grade inflammation. This inflammation, in turn, can compromise insulin signaling and contribute to diabetes development.

However, it is important to remember that this is still a young field of research. While the evidence is promising, more studies are needed to fully understand the complex interplay between the gut microbiota and diabetes. Nevertheless, the gut symphony is captivating researchers and offering a new perspective on this chronic disease. By listening closely to the chorus of microbes within, we may finally find the key to turning the tide on diabetes and dancing towards a healthier future.

*The author is MD & Founder at MediSage.*

## MEDICINE QUALITY: INDIA'S JOURNEY TOWARDS GLOBAL STANDARDS



MR. BHAGWAT DHINGRA

Over the course of my four-decade-long journey in the pharmaceu-

and Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya. These representations have highlighted various concerns, with a particular focus on the issue of quality. In response to these concerns, the Indian government has taken several proactive measures to ensure that the medicines available to its citizens meet the highest global standards.

Recognizing the paramount importance of good quality medical

gent measures to stop cross-contamination during the manufacturing process. This includes detailed guidelines on Air Handling Units (AHUs) and filtration levels to reduce the contamination risk

● **Multi-Product Shared Facility:** The schedule also delineates technical and organizational steps to minimize the risk of cross-contamination for facilities that handle multiple products



tical industry, I have witnessed a significant transformation in the quality of medicines produced in India. Today, India proudly stands as a global pharmaceutical powerhouse, catering to the healthcare needs of people around the world with high-quality products. However, as we continue to make strides on the international stage, it is crucial not to overlook the quality of medicines available within the country for Indian consumers.

The Indian pharmaceutical industry is an umbrella for about 10,500 companies. Although drug exports have more than doubled in the past decade, the industry has recently faced a series of scandals—prominent among which was a 2022 WHO-led investigation into four contaminated cough syrups causing acute kidney injuries and linked to the deaths of 66 children in the Republic of Gambia.

These incidents prompted the Indian government to tighten manufacturing practices among pharmaceutical companies in India for improving the quality of drugs manufactured in India, thereby restoring its image in the world as the pharmacy hub of the world

Recent developments, such as the National Medical Commission's Registered Medical Practitioner (Professional Conduct) Regulations, 2023 that advocate the use of generic medicines, have been put on hold after the Indian Medical Association (IMA) and the Federation of Resident Doctors Association approached the Centre

products in maintaining the well-being of the population, the government has adopted Schedule-M, a section of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, which outlines Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) for pharmaceutical companies in India. These GMP standards encompass a comprehensive framework that covers various aspects of the manufacturing process, from machinery and facilities to personnel, testing, storage, and record-keeping. In a significant move to enhance the quality management standards of pharmaceutical manufacturing in India, the Health Ministry has introduced a Revised Schedule-M.

**MAJOR AMENDMENTS IN REVISED SCHEDULE-M**  
The Revised Schedule-M, which will soon come into effect, includes some vital factors:

● **Batch Record Review & Stability Studies:** Batch record review procedures are now an essential part of compliance, emphasizing the need for meticulous oversight of production records, while stability studies will be carried out to make sure drugs maintain their potency and efficacy till their expiry date

● **Stress on Computerized Systems:** The revised schedule attaches significant importance to the integration of robust computerized systems, reinforcing data integrity and accuracy in pharmaceutical processes

● **Stopping Cross-Contamination:** A prominent addition to the Revised Schedule-M is the strin-

The Revised Schedule-M aligns seamlessly with WHO-GMP standards and introduces essential requirements related to batch record review, stability studies, and measures to prevent cross-contamination during the manufacturing process. By doing so, it aims not only to ensure compliance with global drug standards but also to foster innovation, boost exports, and build trust in the quality of manufactured medicines.

Moreover, the government has provided distinct timelines for the implementation of the Revised Schedule-M, allowing both large-scale enterprises and smaller units sufficient time to adapt to the new compliance standards. This strategic approach includes a 12-month grace period for small-scale manufacturers and a six-month window for larger units to obtain WHO-GMP certification, commencing on August 2, 2023.

As industry leaders advocate for a shift towards a Pharmaceutical Quality System (PQS) approach, it is evident that a commitment to innovation and quality will continue to shape the future of India's pharmaceutical landscape. With these concerted efforts and initiatives, India is well on its way to ensuring that the quality of medicines available to its citizens matches the highest global standards, reinforcing its position as a pharmacy for the world and for its own people.

*The author is MD & Founder at MediSage.*





# SOME OIL PLEASE: A RELAXING, LUXE NOON AT THE RAFFLES SPA!

SANJANA CHAWLA

Nestled amidst the courtyards of Raffles, Udairpur—the European architectural marvel in India—is the luxurious Raffles Spa. Its name promised and echoed moments of pure serenity and rejuvenation, and so I walked into this sacred haven to experience its magic firsthand!

As I entered the Raffles Spa, a wave of tranquility washed over me. The air was infused with a soothing fragrance, instantly transporting me to a realm of calm and relaxation, and the ambience was a symphony of soft lighting, gentle melodies, and warm smiles, creating an oasis of peace. The wall art, paintings, decor, and the jharokhas in the Spa swayed me and how!

Guided by their expertise, I embarked on a voy-



age of self-care, eager to immerse myself in the array of treatments offered and opted for an hour-long de-stressing oil body massage, followed by a nourishing hair massage, and then culminating in a blissful DIY body scrub to say bye to all the dead cells.

I was guided to a serene space where the aromatherapy and spa experts awaited. They introduced me to the art of crafting my own body scrub, sharing the therapeutic benefits of the natural ingredients and essential oils. Inspired, I carefully selected a blend that spoke to my senses, a symphony of rice flour, desiccated coconut, in-

vigorating rose petals and generous amounts of sesame oil. The rice flour helps smoothen the rough skin and scrapes the dead cells, while coconut shreds moisturise the skin.

After this, the therapist led me to a private chamber, adorned with plush linens and the faint sound of trickling water. As I settled onto the massage table, the therapist began to work her magic. Warm, aromatic lavender and clove oil was gently poured onto my skin, and with skilled hands, she glided and massaged it all over my body, expertly kneading away the knots and tension that had accumulated within me.

The rhythmic movements of the massage lulled me into a state of

deep relaxation, and I almost slept! I could feel the stress melting away, as if each stroke was a gentle caress, soothing my weary soul. The therapeutic benefits of the massage extended beyond the physical, as the aroma of the oils enveloped me, transporting me to a place of tranquility and inner peace.

After the rejuvenating oil body massage, the therapist turned her attention to my hair. With nimble fingers, she delicately massaged my scalp using the same lavender oil, releasing all my stress and revitalising my senses. The gentle strokes and soothing pressure sent waves of relaxation cascading through me, as if every touch was a tender embrace from the spa itself!

As the hair massage concluded, the therapist applied the DIY fragrant scrub we made all over my body. The exfoliating granules of rice flour and the moisturising bits of coconut and rose petals renewed and brought a radiant glow to my body. The aroma of the essential oils danced around me, uplifting my spirits and leaving me with a profound sense of zen!

I felt at peace, calm, and full of composure as I left the magical doors of the Raffles Spa. The hour-long oil body massage, the luxurious hair massage, and the personalised body scrub had worked in harmony to rejuvenate my mind, body, and soul. It had woven its magic, reminding me of the importance of self-care and the

transformative power of relaxation!

My luxury spa experience ended by sipping onto jasmine green tea with nuts and dried fruits in Raffles Spa's Private Pink Room Lounge. This high-ceiling room with beige linens and pink and green couches made me feel like royalty!

The expertise of Raffles' aromatherapy, combined with the skilled hands of the masseuses and the therapists, had created an experiential journey that would linger in my heart for long. This experience had truly lived up to my reputation, and I can't wait to revisit this sanctuary where my stress melted away, skin got baby soft, hair became smooth, and serenity embraced me all over!



## Snow-Kissed Skin: A Guide to Winter Skincare Prep



DHEERAJ BANSAL

As winter blankets the world in a shimmering coat of snow, it brings a set of challenges for the skin. The biting cold and frosty wind has a way of wreaking havoc on our skin and sapping away the natural moisture of our skin. This often leads to our skin feeling tight, dull, and prone to irritation. However, with the right winter skincare routine, you can ensure that your skin remains radiant and healthy even in the coldest of temperatures. In this guide, Dheeraj Bansal, the founder of Recode Studios will share some of the effective ways you can prepare your skin for winter while keeping it nourished and hydrated.

### START THE ROUTINE WITH A GENTLE CLEANSING

During winter, start your skincare routine with a proper and gentle cleansing. However, it's essential to choose a type of face wash that goes with every skin type and contains Niacinamide, Witch Hazel, Cucumber, and strawberry Extract. It will help your skin get a deep cleansing, purify and brighten it, and make you feel refreshed. While you cleanse your face, gently massage in a



circular motion.

### HYDRATE YOUR SKIN BY MOISTURISING

Hydration is the key to combating winter dryness, and a high-quality

moisturizer should be a staple in your winter skincare arsenal. Look for moisturizers that include ingredients like Vitamin E, Watermelon Seed extract, Almond Oil, Grape Seed Oil, Isopropyl Myristate, and more. These ingredients work together to lock in moisture, strengthen the skin's natural barrier, and prevent water loss. To receive maximum benefit, spray it on your

face from a distance of 15cm. For better coverage of spray, wait for 1-2 mins, allowing absorption on your skin. Consider using a thicker, more emollient mois-

turizer during the winter months to provide your skin with the extra nourishment it needs.

### LOCK-IN THE MOISTURISER

Once you are done cleansing your face and have also properly moisturized your skin, it's not time to seal in that moisture. Consider using a face oil that is rich in vitamins A, C, and E, fatty acids, and

evaporating throughout the day.

### END YOUR SKIN-CARE ROUTINE WITH A SUNSCREEN

Many people associate sunscreen with summer, but protecting your skin from the sun's harmful rays is a year-round necessity. Snow can reflect UV rays and intensify the impact on your skin. Choose a broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 50 and apply it every morning, even on cloudy days. It helps provide protection and prevention from the burning effect of UVA and UVB rays. Pay extra attention to exposed areas like your face, neck, and hands. Sunscreen not only protects your skin from sun damage but also helps maintain an even skin tone and prevents premature aging. Achieving snow-kissed skin during winter requires a thoughtful and nourishing skincare routine. And by including these into your daily routine you can protect your skin from the harsh winter elements and ensure a radiant and healthy complexion.

## Embrace the best of both worlds with Indo-Western fashion

As we navigate the ever-changing currents of the fashion industry, the convergence of tradition and modernity stands as a testament to the enduring allure of timeless elegance. Fashion been a reflection of society, a canvas where designers paint the aspirations, values, and cultural narratives of the time. In recent years, there has been a discernible shift towards a more conscious and sustainable approach to fashion, with designers drawing inspiration from the past to create pieces that stand the test of time. In the age of technology, the marriage of fashion and innovation is inevitable. Smart fabrics, 3D printing, and virtual fashion experiences are pushing the boundaries of what is possible in the world of style. This fusion of technology with traditional craftsmanship opens up exciting new avenues for creativity and expression, giving rise to garments that are not only aesthetically pleasing but also functionally advanced. From the graceful silhouettes of the 1950s to the bold and experimental looks of the 1980s, designers are seamlessly blending classic elements with contemporary twists.

And what's getting trending this wedding season is: **Desi Style Suits for Women**

There was a time when wedding outfits were all about lehenga, saree, suit, gown etc. But now what's getting on every woman's mind is super elegant, chic and attention-grabbing Suit, in a different style. It is all over the social media and worn by many celebrities too which has influenced women very much. It has several categories having various uniqueness. These are some the trendy designs of Desi Style Blazer and Pants;

### 1. Aqua Blazer set with Sharara

This blazer suit is perfect for Indian weddings, Reception and any other event. It has a very unique work of hand embroidery and beads, which makes it look super elegant and stylish. It has deep V-neck blazer style kurta paired with flared sharara. It comes with the fabrics like net, crepe and double georgette. It is stitched by using Beads, Resham, Sequin and Thread. It gives a very luxurious with a feminine and glamorous feel after wearing it.

### 2. Silk Sets

This set is more trending among all of the suits and has been seen worn by many celebrities too. It looks very classy and is comfortable to wear too. It is more appropriate for any professional event or occasions like sangeet night or any party. It comes with handwoven silk coat with a single button lapel detailing and gold zari embroidered borders. Comes with a straight pant having side zipper detailing. They are just perfect for giving you the most chic, glamorous and party look.

### 3. Suit along with a Belt

Suits along with the belts have more demand than all the other categories of suits. This gives you liberty to size the blazer according to you and it gives a very versatile and sophisticated look and is perfect for weddings and other different occasions. Blazer and pant gives you a bold look along with confidence.

### 4. Shrug style Blazer

For more festive look and heavy design, you can go for super trendy Shrug like Blazer, which is appropriate for weddings, puja and many different occasions. The shrug looks way more party wear than short blazer and gives you a very feminine and elegant look. It adds flair to your outfit and will make you look divine.

So this wedding season, choose your perfect blazer outfit and leave a memorable impression on everyone.





# LALREMSIAMI SHARES ON INDIA WOMEN'S HOCKEY TEAM PREPARATIONS

TDG NETWORK  
RANCHI

Key forward of the India women's hockey team Lalremsiami has shared insights into the team's forward line preparations as they gear up for the highly anticipated FIH Olympic Qualifiers Ranchi 2024, scheduled from January 13 to 19.

Amidst rigorous training sessions and strategic drills, Lalremsiami highlighted the team's meticulous approach towards refining their forward line dynamics.

"Our preparations for the FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifiers Ranchi 2024 have centred on fortifying our forward line. We've dedicated ourselves to enhancing our coordination, sharpening our skills, and synchronizing our movements to create a potent attacking force," she said as



quoted from Hockey India.

With a focus on precision, timing, and adaptability, Lalremsiami emphasized the unity within the forward line. "Each member brings a unique skill set to the turf, and our collective goal is to seamlessly blend our strengths to create impactful opportunities during the tournament," she added.

- India is placed in Pool B alongside New Zealand, Italy, and the United States
- Germany, Japan, Chile, and the Czech Republic are in Pool A
- Quest for semi-final qualification awaits the top two teams from each pool

"Every training session has been instrumental in fine-tuning our strategies and understanding each other's playing styles. We're

driven by a shared determination to make a difference on the field and contribute significantly to the team's success," Lalremsiami stated.

Notably, India are placed in Pool B alongside New Zealand, Italy, and the United States, while in Pool A, World No. 5 Germany, alongside former Asian Games Champions Japan, Chile, and the Czech Republic, will engage in an intense battle for supremacy.

The quest for semi-final qualification awaits the top two teams from each pool.

The ultimate prize—a ticket to the Paris Olympics 2024—awaits the top three teams emerging victorious in this prestigious tournament. As the FIH Olympic Qualifiers drew closer, Lalremsiami exuded confidence in the forward line's readiness. We're entering the tournament with a sense of preparedness and eagerness to execute our plans effectively. Our focus remains on optimizing our forward-line capabilities to secure our place at the Paris Olympics," she concluded optimistically.

# David Warner set to arrive in helicopter for BBL clash

TDG NETWORK  
SYDNEY

Australia batter David Warner will arrive in a helicopter for Sydney Thunder's Big Bash League (BBL) clash against local rival Sydney Sixers on Friday after attending his brother's wedding, according to a report.

As per the report, if the weather permits, Warner is due to arrive around 5 pm for the local derby.

Warner's BBL teammate Gurinder Sandhu heaped praise on Warner for making efforts to be available for the game.

"He's going to a lot of effort to come and play for us. We love having him here. Last year, he was awesome for us, maybe didn't score as many runs as he would have liked but around the group and passing on knowledge was awesome to have him around. He's one of the better team men. All the fans get to en-



Warner is going to a lot of effort to come and play for us. We love having him here. Last year, he was awesome for us, maybe didn't score as many runs as he would have liked.

-Gurinder Sandhu

joy him playing cricket," Sandhu said.

Pacer Sean Abbott joked about Warner's style of arrival, stating he has a bit of a "Hollywood" touch.

"He is a bit Hollywood, isn't he, that's very Davey.

I got the Lime bike in today and I'll be doing the same tomorrow night and riding out the gate as Davey lands.

I'm glad they are making it happen because think everyone in the country who is a fan of cricket wants to see David Warner in the BBL and I'm really looking forward to coming up against him. One of the best players in the world and has been for a long time," Sean Abbott said. Before BBL's last season, the southpaw signed a two-year deal with the Sydney Thunder.

# India beats Afghanistan by six wickets in first T20I, Dube scores 60

TDG NETWORK  
MOHALI

A half-century by Shivam Dube and a cameo by Jitesh Sharma helped India secure a six-wicket win over Afghanistan in the first T20I of the three-match series at Mohali on Thursday. Chasing 159 runs, India were off to a terrible start as skipper Rohit Sharma was run out for a two-ball duck on his return to T20Is. India was 0/1. Shubman Gill, however, continued his innings. Gill's inning of 23 in 12 balls was cut short by Mujeeb, who cleaned up his stumps. India was 28/2 in 3.5 overs. Tilak Varma and Shivam Dube were the new pair and the score read 36/2 in six overs at the end of the first powerplay with Tilak (7\*) and Shivam (6\*) on the crease. The seventh over delivered by Mohammed Nabi eased off some



After the match Rohit Sharma said it was extremely cold. Now I am okay. When the ball hits the tip of the finger, it was sore.

-Rohit Sharma

pressure as it yielded 16 runs, including two massive sixes by Shivam and a four by Tilak. India touched the 50-run mark in eight overs. The next over by Naveen ul Haq also yielded 14 runs, including a four by Dube and a six by Tilak.

Jitesh hit some clean boundaries to take India beyond the 100-run mark in 11.5 overs. His knock came to an end when Mujeeb cleaned him up for 31 in 20 balls, with five fours. India were 117/4 in 13.5 overs. Shivam reached his second T20I fifty in 38 balls, with four boundaries and a six. Shivam hit the winning runs. India scored 159/4 in 17.3 overs, with Dube (60\* in 40 balls, five fours and two sixes) and Rinku (16\* in nine balls, with two fours) unbeaten.

# DU'S SPORTING PROWESS SHINES, BRINGING PRIDE TO NATION

DR ANJU LUTHRA  
NEW DELHI

The greatest shown on the earth, sports and Games have been widely recognized as an essential ingredients of human resource development. Olympic Games, the World's biggest global sporting occasion, there is no more tremendous test for an athlete than competing in the Olympic Games.

## Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad Trophy

Keeping in view the excellent achievements of the Indian University in the field of sports, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy was instituted in 1956-57 as a running trophy by the Government of India. This running trophy is awarded President of India each year to University, which has the all around best performance in sports in Inter-University, National and International Competitions. Guru Nanak Dev University (GNDU) established on November 24, 1969 to

mark the 500th birth anniversary of Sri Guru Nanak Devji, GNDU started its actual participation in Inter-University and other tournaments in theyear 1974-75 and since then, the University has been winning one or the other positions for MAKA Trophy.

It goes to the admirable credit of GNDU that out of the 42 years of its actual participation, it has won India's coveted MAKA Trophy 26 times. Panjab University, Chandigarh won MAKA Trophy 16 times. The DU has been winning one or other positions for this trophy until 2009. However, the University of Delhi has won 14 times. The last time the DU won was in 2001-02 under the strict discipline, sports strategic planning of former Director of Physical Education and Sports, Dr Jitendra Singh Naruka, and-ably support and motivated by erstwhile and his team such as Dr Sudarshan Pathak.

# CAN SUSPENDS SANDEEP LAMICHHANE FROM NATIONAL, INTERNATIONAL GAMES

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Kathmandu: The Cricket Association of Nepal (CAN) suspended rape-convicted former national team captain Sandeep Lamichhane from all national and international games.

In a press release issued on Thursday by the nation's cricket governing body, Chatur Bahadur Chand, Chairman of CAN, announced that the rape-convicted player has been removed from the national team and will no longer represent the nation in any game format.

The decision of the cricketing body comes a day after the Kathmandu High Court sentenced the spinner to an 8-year jail term after he was proven guilty of rape. The bench of Shishir Raj Dhakal handed over the verdict of 8 years imprisonment along with compensation and penalties after a hearing on Wednesday. Earlier, the Kathmandu



District Court had indicted Lamichhane in the rape case.

The court had paused the hearing time again after Sandeep travelled to Zimbabwe to participate in the World Cup qualifiers. Lamichhane, who stayed behind bars for a few months, was released on bail in January last and later allowed to travel abroad.

The Patan High Court had repelled the order of the Kathmandu District Court to send Lamichhane to ju-

dicial custody in the case, citing a lack of grounds to keep him in custody. He was released on bail of Rs 2 million the next day. Lamichhane had also moved to the SC, demanding he be allowed to travel with the national team to the UAE to play ICC Men's Cricket World Cup League 2 matches against the UAE and Papua New Guinea at the end of February. Lamichhane had denied the rape allegation in his statements to police.

# Odisha Juggernauts face Gujarat Giants in ultimate Kho Kho semi-final

TDG NETWORK  
CUTTACK

Defending champions Odisha Juggernauts will hope to keep their impressive run going when they take on Gujarat Giants in the first semifinal of Ultimate Kho Kho Season 2 at the Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium in Cuttack on Thursday.

Odisha Juggernauts have been unbeaten over their last five games, winning a number of them convincingly. Their 35-27 victory over the Telugu Yoddhas on Sunday was especially impressive. Players like Deepak Sahoo, one of the best Wazirs this season, Gowtham MK and Dilip Khandavi have all stepped up when it mattered. They will also have the luxury of playing in front of a very vocal home crowd that has been a tremendous source of support all season.

However, in Gujarat Giants they face an opponent that convincingly routed them in the league stages.

They did have their revenge in the reverse



Gujarat Giants are a good team but we are also very confident as we won the last game against them, so I am looking forward to that match.

Dipesh More captain, Odisha Juggernauts

fixture, but the Odisha Juggernauts will not be underestimating their op-

ponents going into Thursday's encounter.

"Gujarat Giants are a good team but we are also very confident as we won the last game against them, so I am looking forward to that match," said Odisha Juggernauts captain Dipesh More as quoted from UKK.

"We are very happy with the crowd support and that is adding the extra advantage to the way we are playing so it feels really good to play in front of our home fans. We are not taking pressure, just thinking about one step at

a time. Our first target is to win the semifinals and then we will think about the finals," Dipesh added.

Meanwhile, the Gujarat Giants will look to arrest a worrying dip in form. After looking unstoppable in the early stages of the tournament, they have only registered two wins in their last five games. Players like Sanket Kadam, P Narasayya and Rajvardhan Patil have been impressive in patches, but they will need the whole team to come together and contribute if they are to make it to the final.

# WEST INDIES ANNOUNCE 15-MEMBER SQUADS FOR WHITE BALL SERIES

TDG NETWORK  
ST. JOHN'S

West Indies named 15-player squads for their upcoming T20I and ODI series against Australia, which will be played from February 2 to 13.

The ODI squad features two potential debutants, Teddy Bishop and wicket-keeper-batter Tevin Imlach, in contention to receive their maiden caps.

Bishop earned his call-up after putting up a strong campaign in the West Indies 50-over competition.

The series also sees a return for Justin Greaves from



injury, Hayden Walsh Jr and Kavem Hodge.

On the other hand, star players Brandon King and Sherfane Rutherford were unavailable for selection,

while Shimron Hetmyer and Yannic Carriah have been left out of the squad.

Lead selector Desmond Haynes urged the side to continue with the momen-

tum that they gained in Australia while also preparing for the much-awaited T20 World Cup, which will be played on their home soil in June. "On the back of a series win against England, we are expecting our ODI team to be very competitive in Australia. We have some new inclusions, who have impressed over a significant period and a couple of returning players who we think will have an impact," Haynes said as quoted from the ICC. "For the T20I series, this forms part of our crucial preparations for the upcoming T20 World Cup where we are hosts.

# De Villiers terms Rohit-Virat recall for T20Is a 'smart move'

TDG NETWORK  
GOEBERHA

Former South Africa batter and captain AB de Villiers has backed experienced India batters playing in the ICC T20 World Cup and said bringing Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli back for the T20Is after over a year is a "smart move".

Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Sunday revealing a 16-player roster for a three-match T20I series starting on January 11.

The senior duo made a comeback to India's T20I setup for the first time since the end of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2022 and ahead of this year's T20 World Cup. "I am not surprised. I am happy for both Rohit and Virat. You want to take your best team to the World Cup. I can understand the criticism regarding the young-

sters who will miss out after playing all this while.

I was in this position at the back end of my career, it did not work out for me like it did for Virat and Rohit. It is a right and a smart move to get your experienced players, who have been there and done that, to play in the World Cup," De Villiers told the media. He also said that Virat has found a fine balance in his career and is able to spend time with his family well, and it is something he admires.