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## AMID DRAMA, BJP MEMBER ELECTED CHANDIGARH MAYOR

Emotions ran high in 1st major battle between I.N.D.I.A and BJP.

**TARUNI GANDHI**  
CHANDIGARH

**D**rama, thrill, allegations and counter allegations -- Chandigarh mayoral election has all these and more in matter of just few hours on Tuesday. In the end, the BJP achieved a surprise victory, dealing another setback to the I.N.D.I.A bloc, 12 days after the unexpected deferral of the election due to the returning officer's illness. After the BJP candidate was announced the mayor, protests erupted against presiding authority Anil Masih, who was accused of premeditated invalidations. The live telecast allegedly showed BJP leaders taking away and tearing ballot papers, prompting the need for marshals to control the situation. The stakes for the one-year tenure post-election were



BJP Mayor candidate Manoj Sonkar won the Chandigarh Mayoral elections with 16 votes. (ANI Photo)

**'DARKEST DAY' IN INDIAN POLITY, SAYS MANN**

CHANDIGARH: Chief Minister of Punjab Bhagwant Singh Mann on Tuesday said that January 30 will be remembered as the 'darkest day' in the annals of Indian polity.

FULL STORY ON **P5**

**NEITHER ARITHMETIC NOR CHEMISTRY: NADDA**

NEW DELHI: BJP president JP Nadra said I.N.D.I.A bloc fought their first electoral battle and still lost. It shows neither arithmetic nor chemistry, he said.

FULL STORY ON **P5**

high. The BJP's significant win, securing the mayor and both deputy mayor positions, reflected a 16-0 victory. The Congress and AAP, protesting the mayor election, stayed away, claiming foul play and suggesting cross-voting within their ranks. Before Tuesday's voting, the Congress had seven councillors, AAP had 13 and the BJP had 15 votes, including those of the Chandigarh MP. The Congress and AAP anticipated an easy win with a total of 36 votes. In the rotation, the mayor's seat was reserved for a scheduled caste candidate. The result saw BJP's Manoj Sonkar securing 16 votes, AAP's Kuldeep Tita, backed by the Congress, receiving 12 votes. Eight votes declared invalid. Earlier, voting was delayed, **P5**

## SONIA GANDHI MAY NOT CONTEST LS POLLS, PARTY EYES RS SEAT FOR HER

**AJIT MAINDOLA**  
JAIPUR

The last session of the 17th Lok Sabha, which is commencing from Wednesday, could also be the last session of former Congress President Sonia Gandhi in the Lower House. Next time, she may be seen in the Rajya Sabha, instead of the Lok Sabha. If sources are to be believed, in the changed political environment, the party is planning to send her to the Rajya Sabha this time instead of making her contest the Lok Sabha elections. If Sonia Gandhi gets elected for Rajya Sabha, then Priyanka Gandhi may have to contest elections from Raebareli in place of her mother. Now the question is whether Priyanka Gandhi would like to contest elections from Raebareli. Sources told The Daily Guardian that she is in no mood to contest election as of now. Raebareli and Amethi were once considered safe seats for the Gandhi family. But in 2019, Rahul Gandhi lost the Lok Sabha election from Amethi. Somehow Sonia Gandhi was able to win the election from Raebareli. Rahul reached the Lok Sabha from Wayanad in Kerala, but leaving Uttar Pradesh, the country's largest state, was fatal for the party. After he went to Kerala, his sister Priyanka Gandhi took charge and started leading from the front, but she flopped miserably. **P5**



## SP RELEASES 1ST LIST OF CANDIDATES FOR LS POLLS

**TIKAM SHARMA**  
NEW DELHI

The Samajwadi Party (SP) announced on Tuesday the names of 16 candidates to contest the Lok Sabha election, in slated to be held in April-May. The party has released the first list on its official social media platform, X (formerly Twitter). The first list includes the name of the party's chief, Akhilesh Yadav's wife, Dimple Yadav. She will contest from her current Mainpuri seat. SP also fielded sitting MLAs Ravidas Mehrotra and Lalji Verma from Lucknow and Amedkar Nagar seats, respectively. The candidates' list includes the names of Devesh Shakyra from Etah, Utkarsh Verma from Kheri, Anand Bhadauria from Dhaurahra, Anu Tandon from Unnao, Naval Kishore Shakyra from Farrukhabad, Rajaram Pal from Akbarpur, Shivshankar Singh Patel from Banda, Awadhesh Prasad from Faizabad, Ramprasad Chaudhary from Basti, and Kajal Nishad from Gorakhpur. The party has also fielded Akshay Yadav, son of senior SP leader Ramgopal Yadav, from Firozabad, while Dharmendra Yadav is from Budaun parliamentary constituency. The party has also named 93-year-old Shafiqur Rahman Barq to contest the election from the Sambhal **P5**



Akhilesh Yadav had earlier said that his party's alliance with the Congress is "off to a good start with 11 strong seats to the Congress. This trend will move forward with the winning equation. 'I.N.D.I.A' team and 'PDA strategy will change history. **P5**

## TOP OF THE DAY

### 3 CRPF PERSONNEL KILLED IN ENCOUNTER WITH NAXALITES

SUKMA (CHHATTISGARH): Three personnel of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) were killed and 14 others injured in the exchange of fire with naxals in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district on Tuesday, an official said.



According to Inspector General of Police (Bastar Range) P. Sundarraj, the incident occurred near Tekalgudem village when a joint team of security personnel was out on a search operation. The injured are now out of danger and are undergoing treatment in Raipur. The village is located along the border of Bijapur and Sukma districts. A team from the 201 battalion of the CoBRA and the 150 battalion of the CRPF was working in the area to establish a Forward Operating Base (FOB) when the exchange of fire began around 1 pm. An FOB is a remote camp meant to facilitate security forces operating in core Naxal areas. Notably, as many as 22 jawans were killed in the encounter with Naxals in Chhattisgarh in 2021 during an encounter along the Sukma-Bijapur border.

## Elon Musk's startup implants first human brain chip

**AGENCIES**  
NEW DELHI

Elon Musk, the billionaire founder of Neuralink, announced on Monday that the first human recipient of an implant from the brain-chip startup underwent the procedure on Sunday and is recovering well. Taking to social media, X, Musk posted, "The first human received an implant from @Neuralink yesterday and is recovering well." Neuralink was given clearance by the US Food and Drug Administration last year to conduct its first trial to test its implant on humans. "Initial results show promising neuron spike detection," Musk's post added. According to Neuralink's website, it has received approval from the independent institutional review board. The PRIME Study (short for Precise Robotically Implanted Brain-Computer In-



*The first human received an implant from @Neuralink yesterday and is recovering well.*

— Elon Musk

terface) - an investigational medical device trial for fully-implantable, wireless brain-computer interface (BCI) - aims to evaluate the safety of our implant (NI) and surgical robot (RI) and assess the initial functionality of our BCI for enabling people

with paralysis to control external devices with their thoughts, according to the company's website. During the study, the RI Robot will be used to surgically place the N1 Implant's ultra-fine and flexible threads in a region of the brain that controls movement intention. Once in place, the N1 Implant is cosmetically invisible and is intended to record and transmit brain signals wirelessly to an app that decodes movement intention. The initial goal of our BCI is to grant people the ability to control a computer cursor or keyboard using their thoughts alone, it also said. The PRIME Study is being conducted under the investigational device exemption (IDE) awarded by the FDA in May 2023 and represents an important step in our mission to create a generalised brain interface to restore autonomy to those with unmet medical needs, **P5**

## SUSPENSION OF 11 RAJYA SABHA MEMBERS REVOKED

**AGENCIES**  
NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar has revoked the suspension of 11 members of the House who were held guilty of breach of privilege by the House panel. According to the Vice President's office sources, Chairman Rajya Sabha invoked the authority vested in him including under Rules 202 and 266 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States (Rajya Sabha) to revoke their suspension enabling the members to attend the Special address by the President to be held on January 31, 2024. The Committee of Privileges of Rajya Sabha has held 11 members that were Jebi Mather Hisham, Dr L Hanumanthaiah, Neeraj Dang, Rajmani Patel, Kumar Ketkar, GC Chandrashekar, Binoy Viswam, Sandosh Kumar P, M Mohamed Abdulla, Dr John Brittas, and **P5**

## KERALA COURT AWARDS DEATH SENTENCE TO 15 PFI MEN FOR MURDER OF BJP LEADER

**ASHISH SINHA**  
NEW DELHI

The Alappuzha sessions court in Kerala handed down a death sentence to 15 individuals associated with the now-prohibited Islamist organization Popular Front of India (PFI) on Tuesday. This ruling is in connection with the murder of BJP OBC wing leader Ranjith Sreenivasan in December 2021. Mavelikkara Additional District Judge V G Sreedevi pronounced the sentence. The prosecution pressed for the maximum punishment, asserting that the convicts constituted a "trained killer squad," and the brutal manner in which the victim was murdered in front of his mother, infant, and wife classified it as among the "rarest of the rare" crimes. The 15 individuals convicted include Naisam, Ajmal, Anoop, Mohammed Aslam, Abdul Kalam alias Salam, Saffaruddin, Manshad, Jas-eeb Raja, Navas, Sameer, Nazir, Abdul Kalam, Zakir



Policemen accompany the accused to a court in Kerala.

Hussain, Shaji, and Shernas Ashraf. According to the prosecution, Ranjith Sreenivasan, the State secretary of BJP's OBC Morcha and a lawyer, was brutally hacked to death by the accused at his residence in Vellakinar, Alappuzha municipality. The assailants had forcibly entered his house on the morning of December 19, 2021. The murder of the BJP leader was considered an act of retaliation, responding to the killing of SDPT's State secretary K S Shan at Mannancherry's Kuppezham Junction in Kerala, which occurred just the night before. All 15 accused were found guilty by the court on January 20. The first eight accused,-- Nizam, Ajmal, Anoop, Muhammad Aslam, Salam Ponnad, Abdul Salam, Safaruddin and Manshad-- were found guilty of murder. Ranjith Sreenivasan, the BJP OBC Morcha state secretary, was brutally attacked and killed in his home on December 19, 2021, in front of his family

## Indian Navy rescues hijacked Sri Lankan fishing vessel

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

The Indian Navy successfully intercepted and rescued the hijacked Sri Lankan fishing vessel on Tuesday, in coordination with Seychelles Defence Forces and Sri Lanka Navy, the Ministry of Defence said. The Indian Navy has successfully intercepted and rescued a hijacked vessel, in collaboration with Seychelles Defence Forces and Sri Lanka Navy. "In a coordinated multilateral response to the hijacking of a Sri Lankan fishing vessel, the Indian Navy, Seychelles Defence Forces and



Representative image.

Sri Lanka Navy, successfully intercepted and rescued the vessel which was hijacked on January 27," the statement read. According to the statement, the Indian Navy deployed

INS Sharada ex Kochi PM on January 28 and also tasked the HALE Sea Guardian drone to locate and intercept the hijacked fishing vessel. All three pirates surren- **P5**

## AGENCIES ON HIGH ALERT AFTER PAK ARMY CHIEF'S COMMENT

**T. BRAJESH**  
NEW DELHI

With Pakistan Army Chief Gen Syed Asim Munir "ruling out reconciliation with arch rival" India, New Delhi's security, intelligence and military establishments have heightened their vigilance. The different foreign agencies, with which the Indian diplomatic establishment is coordinating actively, have warned that Pakistan may once again resort to some dirty tricks to foment troubles for India. China will be helping Islamabad in the conspiracy, agencies warned. "Pakistan Army Chief's statement ruling out peace with India will embolden the terror organisations that are ac-

*"Pak Army Chief's remarks could also be a message for the terrorists who are involved in anti-India activities with the backing of the Pakistan Army."*

tive along the Line of Control, to increase infiltration bids along the LoC," diplomatic sources who are coordinating with the foreign offices of the various countries told The Daily Guardian. "Pak Army Chief's remarks

could also be a message for the terrorists who are involved in anti-India activities with the backing of the Pakistan Army," sources added. "So there may be an increase in infiltration bids by terrorists along the LoC as a large number of them have been hiding at the launch pads located in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK)," said sources. "With Pakistan going to polls on February 8, the politicians, officials and Pakistan brass are keen to divert the public attention from the failures of the government in Islamabad. Repeated terror attacks in Pakistan have also led to public anger against the Pak Army. General Munir is try- **P5**

## IMRAN SENTENCED TO 10 YEARS IN JAIL IN CYPHER CASE

**AGENCIES**  
RAWALPINDI

A Pakistan court has sentenced former prime minister Imran Khan and former Pakistan's foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi to jail for 10 years each in a case involving leaking of state secrets, local media reported on Tuesday. A special court estab- **P5**





# NITISH NOT NEEDED ANYMORE IN BATTLE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE: RAHUL GANDHI IN BIHAR

Wayanad MP mentioned that current alliance partners in Mahagathbandhan are ready to fight for social justice.

**TDG NETWORK**  
PURNEA

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday, mocked the return of JDU chief Nitish Kumar to the NDA fold, saying that this reflects the real condition of Bihar politics as when a little pressure is exerted by the BJP-led Centre, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar takes a U-turn.

Rahul Gandhi said that Nitish Kumar is not needed anymore in their battle to give social justice.

Addressing the public in Purnea, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said, "Right now Baghel ji (former Chhattisgarh CM) told me a joke. The joke goes like this...Your Chief Minister took oath at Governor's house. Some of



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi waves to the gathering during a public meeting in Purnea on Tuesday.

his ministers also took oath. Celebrations were going on. Nitish Kumar decided to go back to his home. Suddenly while going back he realised he has left his shawl at the Governor's house. He went back and met the Governor. Governor was shocked and

bandhan are ready to fight for social justice in Bihar.

"Our society has people from backward class, Dalit, Adivasi, minority and general caste.OBC community is the biggest community. But today you will not have the answer if I ask you about the population of the OBC community. BJP does not want you to know this. Nitish Kumar was caught in the middle of it. BJP showed him a way to escape and he went on that. Don't worry, we will provide social justice. Nitish Kumar is not needed anymore. Our alliance partners in the state are capable enough for this," he said.

"The time has come for an X-ray of India to ascertain the population in this country.The first step towards social justice is an X-ray of the

country," he added.

Rahul Gandhi interacted with farmers in Bihar's Purnia district today as his Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra continues its journey from West Bengal to Bihar.

Nitish Kumar took the oath as Chief Minister of Bihar for the ninth time in Raj Bhawan, Patna, switching sides again, this time with the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA). It was for the second time in two years that Nitish Kumar had jumped the ship, his fifth crossover in a little over a decade.

Two Deputy CMs from the BJP, Samrat Choudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha, and six other ministers, including Bijendra Prasad Yadav, Santosh Kumar Suman, Shrawan Kumar, and others, also took the oath on Sunday.

# BIHAR: ED QUESTIONS TEJASHWI FOR EIGHT HOURS IN 'LAND-FOR-JOBS' SCAM

**TDG NETWORK**  
PATNA

Former deputy chief minister of Bihar and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav left the Enforcement Directorate office after eight hours of questioning in the money laundering probe into the alleged land-for-job scam.

The former Bihar Deputy Chief Minister was seen waving to his supporters outside the ED office.

Tejashwi Yadav arrived at Enforcement Directorate office around 11.35 am amid heavy security deployment and a large number of RJD members and supporters who raised slogans in his support.

He appeared before the probe agency a day after his father and RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav was questioned for nearly ten hours by the central agency in the same case.

The central probe agency had on January 19 issued a fresh summons for questioning Prasad and Yadav.

Earlier in the day, RJD MP Manoj Jha asserted that the BJP's top leadership is afraid of opposition parties, and it is targeting them by misusing central investigation agencies. "The BJP is using the ED, CBI and IT Depart-



Former Bihar Dy CM Tejashwi Yadav leaves from Enforcement Directorate (ED) office after questioning in the alleged land-for-jobs case in Patna on Tuesday.

ment against those it is afraid of. That is why it is trying to break (opposition parties) through these central agencies," he said.

Shakti Singh, RJD's Member of Legislative Council (MLC), said, "It's a known fact that Tejashwi Yadav was a minor at the time when the alleged scam took place. BJP leaders are ruffled as he provided a large number of jobs to people in the previous 'Mahagathbandhan' government in Bihar."

The RJD was a key constituent of the 'Mahagathbandhan'.

Reacting to the RJD's allegations, Bihar Deputy Chief Minister and BJP leader Samrat Choudhary told reporters, "When Lalu Prasad was the CM, he was involved in the fodder scam. When he

was the Railways Minister, the land-for-jobs scam took place. The ED will certainly investigate the case."

Lalu is being quizzed for his alleged involvement in the Land for Jobs scam. The alleged scam occurred when Lalu Yadav was Railway Minister between 2004 and 2009. Apart from the RJD national president, the chargesheet also includes the name of the then-Railway General Manager.

In lieu of getting them appointed in the Railways, Lalu Prasad Yadav allegedly got lands transferred owned by candidates and their family members in the names of his wife Rabri Devi and daughter Misa Bharti for sale consideration, which was much less than the prevailing circle rates as well as the prevailing

## WILL FILE SUPPLEMENTARY CHARGESHEET AGAINST LALU: CBI IN DELHI COURT

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) informed Delhi's Rouse Avenue court on Tuesday that it will file a supplementary charge sheet within a month in connection with an alleged land-for-job scam in the Railways against RJD chief Lalu Prasad and his family members.

The central probe agency made this statement before Special Judge Vishal Gogne, indicating that the final report will be filed by the end of February. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) shared this information while responding to an application by RJD leader Ahmed Ashfaq Karim, seeking the release of Rs 13 lakh cash seized during the investigation.

The court has kept the application pending until the filing of the supplementary charge sheet.

The matter is scheduled for a hearing on February 27, 2024.

Previously, the court had summoned Lalu Prasad, his wife Rabri Devi, their son Tejashwi Yadav, and others in connection with the case. The case revolves around 'Group D' appointments made in the West Central Zone of the Railways during Lalu Prasad's tenure as the railway minister from 2004 to 2009.

These appointments were allegedly made in exchange for land parcels gifted or transferred by the recruits to the RJD supremo's family or associates. The CBI registered the case on May 18, 2022, against Lalu Prasad and 15 others, including his wife, two daughters, and unidentified public servants and private individuals.

market rates.

The CBI filed the chargesheet in October last year against former Bihar chief ministers Lalu Prasad, Rabri Devi, their daughter Misa Bharti, and 13 others in the land-for-jobs scam.

According to the CBI, the people were first recruited as

substitutes in Group D posts in the Railways and were regularised when their families made a land deal. The CBI is probing the allegations of taking land for a bribe in lieu of a job in the railways.

At the same time, ED is investigating the case of money laundering.

## SHAHI IDGAH CASE: ALLAHABAD HC TO HEAR PLEA CHALLENGING MAINTAINABILITY OF SUIT ON FEB 22

**TDG NETWORK**  
PRAYAGRAJ

The Allahabad High Court on Tuesday fixed February 22 for hearing a plea regarding maintainability of a suit seeking removal of Shahi Idgah mosque in Mathura which it claims has been built on 13.37 acre land of Katra Keshav Deo temple. The high court passed the order after the Hindu side failed to file its reply on the plea challenging maintainability of the suit.

Justice Mayank Kumar Jain said that the application regarding maintainability of the suit has to be filed in between and the court will hear the issue on February 22.

On January 17, the court had given time to the Hindu side to file its reply on the application of the Muslim side moved regarding maintainability of the suit. A copy of the Supreme Court order was submitted on that day by which an earlier order of the

high court dated December 14 last year regarding the survey of the mosque complex adjoining the Sri Krishna Janmabhoomi temple was stayed. On December 14, 2023, the high court allowed a court-monitored survey of the Shahi Idgah complex and agreed to the appointment of an advocate commissioner to oversee the survey of the mosque premises, which the petitioners claim holds signs suggesting that it was a Hindu temple once.

The mosque management committee had challenged the high court's survey order in the top court.

The Supreme Court stayed the implementation of the high court's December 14 order. However, the apex court made it clear that proceedings before the high court in the dispute including the maintainability of the suit under Order 7 Rule 11 of the Civil Procedure Code will continue.

# Eight new flights for Ayodhya from various parts of the country to begin tomorrow

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

Eight new flights for Ayodhya from various parts of the country will be started from Thursday to facilitate arrival of pilgrims to pay obeisance at Lord Ram Temple, a government official said.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation will launch eight new flight routes for Ayodhya from Delhi, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Patna, Darbhanga, Mumbai, and Bengaluru, he added.

The flight services will be inaugurated by the Union Minister of Civil Aviation and Steel Jyotiraditya Scindia.

The immense demand emanating from the recent Pran Pratishtha ceremony at Ram Temple has increased the tourism potential of Ayodhya and laid down a new path for economic and social development.

Maharishi Valmiki International Airport at Ayodhya Dham built at a cost of Rs 350 crore, was inaugurated by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi; Chief Minister, Yogi Adityanath; and Jyotiraditya Scindia.



Ayodhya's grand airport has been built by the Airports Authority of India after signing a MoU with the Government of Uttar Pradesh in April last year.

Phase 1 of the state-of-the-art airport has been developed at a cost of more than Rs 1450 crore.

The airport's terminal building has an area of 6500 sqm, equipped to serve about 10 lakh passengers annually.

The facade of the terminal building depicts the temple architecture of the upcoming Shri Ram Mandir of Ayodhya. The interiors of the terminal building are decorated with local art, paintings and murals depicting the life of Lord Ram.

The terminal building of Ayodhya Airport is also equipped with various sus-

tainability features, like an insulated roofing system, LED lighting, rainwater harvesting, landscaping with fountains, a water treatment plant, a sewage treatment plant, a solar power plant and many other such features have been provided to meet GRIHA - 5-star ratings.

The airport will improve connectivity in the region, leading to a boost in tourism and business activities while generating new employment opportunities.

Meanwhile, the Pran Pratishtha of Ram Lalla at Ram Temple in Ayodhya was held on January 22. The Ram Lalla idol was unveiled at the Pran Pratishtha ceremony after the hour-long rituals in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who led the ceremony.

# MODI GOVT LAID FOUNDATION OF STRONG RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN LAST 10 YEARS: AMIT SHAH

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

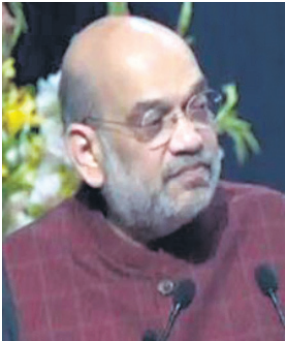
As Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led central government is to complete its 10 years in May, Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah on Tuesday said it laid the foundation of a "strong rural development".

Shah's statement came after he launched the computerization project of Agriculture and Rural Development Banks (ARDBs) and the Registrar of Cooperative Societies (RCSs) of all States and Union Territories here in the national capital.

This event was organized by the Ministry of Cooperation in collaboration with the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC).

Speaking at the event, the Minister said that the Modi government of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is to complete its 10 years in May.

"In the last 10 years, Modi government has done two major works-- one to bring 23 crore people of the country out of poverty and provid-



ing facilities like electricity as well as a free ration to 60 crore poor, and the second is the establishment of Ministry of Cooperative to bring self-employment," said Shah.

"BJP's Modi government has laid the foundation of a strong rural development," he added.

Shah said the computerization of ARDB and RCS offices of all States and UTs is one of the several important steps taken by the Ministry of Cooperation towards realizing Prime Minister Modi's vision of "Sahkar Se Samridhhi".

The project, under the aegis of the Ministry of Cooperation, Shah said, shows the commitment of the Modi government to modernize the cooperative sector and

enhance efficiency by bringing the entire cooperative ecosystem on a digital platform.

The Computerization Project of ARDBs aims at computerizing 1,851 units of ARDBs located in 13 States and UTs and link them with NABARD through a Common National software, said the Minister, adding "This initiative of the Ministry of Cooperation will increase the operational efficiency, accountability and transparency in ARDB by standardizing business procedures through Common Accounting System (CAS) and Management Information System (MIS)."

"It will cost around Rs 225 crores for the computerisation of the offices of the Agricultural and Rural Development Banks (ARDBs) and Registrar of Cooperative Societies (RCS) in all States and UTs," Shah mentioned.

Furthermore, the initiative aims at reducing transaction costs, facilitating loan distribution to farmers and enabling real-time data access for better monitoring and assessment of schemes.

# BJP, JDS destroying Gandhiji's Peace Mantra for Politics: Karnataka Deputy CM Shivakumar

**TDG NETWORK**  
BENGALURU

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Tuesday said that BJP and JDS are trying to disturb the peace and tranquility of the State for political gains violating the 'shanti mantra' of Mahatma Gandhi.

Speaking at the Martyrs' Day event organised at KPCC office, he said, "For us, peace is everything, but BJP and JDS have joined hands to disturb that peace. They

are doing this because they have their own political axe to grind."

"They are doing politics in the name of the saffron flag in Mandya. We have no objection if they hoist the flags atop their house, but they can only hoist the national flag or state flag which are approved," he said.

"Though it is 76 years since Gandhiji was martyred, his thinking and ideals live on. Many countries and world leaders have accepted and

adopted Gandhiji's shanti mantra. Congress party workers are members of Gandhi family. Congress party under the leadership of Gandhiji have got us independence," he noted.

"We had fetched water from the Gandhi well in Belagavi, where Gandhiji took over as President of AICC, to clean up the dirt on Karnataka. We had announced Gruhajyothi to dispel the darkness from homes in Karnataka," he said.

# MANDAVIYA LAYS FOUNDATION STONE FOR NATIONAL CENTRE FOR DISEASE CONTROL'S REGIONAL BRANCHES

**TDG NETWORK**  
GUWAHATI

Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare Mansukh Mandaviya laid the foundation stone of the regional branches of the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) in Delhi, along with nine other states, including Assam, through a virtual ceremony on Tuesday.

The laying of the foundation stone of the regional NCDC in Assam's Guwahati was graced by the presence of Keshab Mahanta,

Minister for Health and Family Welfare, etc., along with Queen Oja, Member of Parliament from NHM Conference Hall in Guwahati.

This regional branch of the NCDC will be built on the allotted plot next to Rani CHC, Kamrup. The NCDC branches in the States will support the state government in timely disease surveillance and monitoring and will enable early warning leading to timely intervention based on evidence gathered from the field.

# LETTER PETITION SENDS TO THE SUPREME COURT FOR PERMISSION TO WORSHIP IN GYANVAPI

**ASHISH SINHA**  
NEW DELHI

Advocate Vineet Jindal, the National General Secretary of Hindu Singh Vahini Sena, has submitted a petition to the Supreme Court, urging the prohibition of Namaz in Varanas's Gyanvapi complex and seeking the restoration of worship rights for Hindus.

In a letter addressed to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Advocate Jindal referred to a scientific survey report on the Gyanvapi complex, asserting the existence of a Hindu temple at the site before the construction of the current structure. The report highlighted a stone inscription indicating that the mosque was built between 1676 and 1677 during the rule of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, with subsequent repairs in 1792-93. The report also featured a photograph from 1965-66 depicting a stone on which

the mosque was constructed, revealing that the pillars used in the mosque's corridor were originally part of a pre-existing temple.

During mosque construction, attempts were made to distort lotus medallions and Hindu mythological creature figures, known as Vyala, present on the pillars. The ASI report noted the presence of similar pillars with Hindu symbols on the northern and southern walls of the western chamber. In the 'Sculptural remains in the basement' section, the report detailed the reuse of columns from a pre-existing temple in the construction of a basement on the eastern side of the platform.

The basement and platform, designed to accommodate prayer attendees, contained a pillar adorned with bells and spaces for lamps - features uncommon in Muslim religious places. The report also

highlighted the discovery of fragmentary inscriptions in various languages and sculptures of Hindu deities buried in the basement.

The letter petition mentioned a Civil Court's stay order on May 17, 2023, allowing Muslims to offer Namaz in the Gyanvapi complex, a decision contested in the Supreme Court. Following the ASI report, it has been established that the Gyanvapi complex is a Hindu temple, and the mosque structure above it is deemed illegal. Advocate Vineet Jindal concluded the petition by urging the Supreme Court to issue an order halting Namaz in Gyanvapi, citing the evidence presented. Additionally, based on the ASI report, the petition emphasized the well-established right of Hindus to perform worship and rituals at Gyanvapi, urging the court to grant permission for Hindus to worship in the sacred complex.



TWEET OF THE DAY



I am delighted that Rashtrapati Ji has nominated Shri Satnam Singh Sandhu Ji to the Rajya Sabha. Satnam Ji has distinguished himself as a noted educationist and social worker, who has been serving people at the grassroots in different ways. He has always worked extensively to further national integration and has also worked with the Indian diaspora. I wish him the very best for his Parliamentary journey and am confident the Rajya Sabha proceedings will be enriched by his views.

# DELHI PLANS TO TRANSFORM INTO INDIA'S FIRST AI CITY, SAYS BHARDWAJ

AAP leader Bhardwaj outlines Delhi's MSME empowerment plans

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Aam Admi Party leader Saurabh Bhardwaj laid out plans to build the country's first artificial intelligence (AI) city in Delhi on Tuesday, along with launching a single-window facility for MSMEs.

In a bid to promote micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSME) globally, the CII MSME Summit was held in the national capital, which saw the participation of Delhi Minister and AAP leader Saurabh Bhardwaj, advisor to the Delhi Government Gopal Mohan, and various other prominent industrialists.

While addressing the summit, Saurabh Bhardwaj announced the idea of making Delhi an AI city, a



**DELHI'S AI TRANSFORMATION**

- Saurabh Bhardwaj announced the idea of making Delhi an AI city
- Government approves 147-acre eco-friendly tech parks

first of its kind in India, and shared that the government has taken its first step by approving the outlines and layout for establishing 147-acre eco-friendly technology parks, mainly focusing on electronic design, refurbishment, warehousing, and plug-and-play facilities.

He also shared the various key initiatives and future plans to empower MSMEs in Delhi.

Gopal Mohan, during the summit, shed light on the industry department's initiatives to launch a single-

window facility for Delhi's MSMEs for ease of doing business and increasing transparency in order to deliberate on the challenges faced by the sector.

Ranjit Singh, Special Commissioner, Department of Industries, GNCTD, shared about the launch of "Delhi Bazar," a dedicated platform for MSMEs in Delhi to showcase and sell their products directly to consumers without incurring any commission fees.

The initiative facilitates market access and empowers MSMEs to reach a wider audience, fostering their economic growth. Furthermore, he also informed about the collaboration with SIDBI (Small Industries Development Bank of India) to bolster the financial resilience of MSMEs.

# JNU Vice Chancellor calls UGC de-reservation draft a 'mistake'

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) Vice Chancellor Santishree D Pandit on Tuesday opposed the University Grants Commission (UGC) draft Guidelines for Implementation of Reservation Policy in Higher Education Institutes and said that it must be a "mistake."

She emphasised that there are enough Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC) and Economically Weaker Section (EWS) candidates for reserved faculty positions in universities.

This comes after UGC suggested de-reserving faculty positions, meant for SC, ST and OBC aspirants if sufficient reserved candidates are unavailable.

Speaking to the new agency, the VC asserted that JNU



follows the government of India's policy for the recruitment of teachers and that the "Modi government has not given any document on the reservation."

Recently, the University Grants Commission's draft on Reservation Policy in Higher Education caused furore as it suggested de-reserving faculty positions meant for SC, ST, and OBC aspirants if sufficient reserved candidates are unavailable. "I don't think UGC has the power to make

JNU follows the government of India's policy for the recruitment of teachers. - Santishree D Pandit (JNU VC)

such changes... So I think this must have been a mistake; I don't know. But in JNU, we are very clear that there was no de reservation of any post, and let me also reiterate that in JNU, since I came in the last two years, the highest number of reserved category faculty have been recruited," she said.

"I would not agree with this saying that candidates are not available. I think the way to resolve that would be rather to either broaden the specialisation for professorship; yes, we are not getting people in every category, including the open category," she added.

# 2020 DELHI RIOTS: HC ASKS TRIAL COURT TO DECIDE ON SHARJEEL IMAM'S BAIL PLEA IN FEB

ASHISH SINHA  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday directed the trial court to decide by next month a plea by student activist Sharjeel Imam in connection with a 2020 communal riots case involving allegations of sedition and unlawful activities.

A bench of Justices Suresh Kumar Kait and Manoj Jain was informed by Imam's counsel that his plea before the trial court is scheduled for February.

In response, the bench directed the trial court to decide and pronounce the judgement on the application within 10 days from the next date of hearing in the trial court, which is listed for February 7. Imam, seeking bail under Section 436A of the CrPC, argued that he has been in custody for the last four years and that the maximum sentence for the offence under Section 13 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act is seven years if convicted.

According to Section 436-A of the CrPC, a person can be released from custody if they have served more than half of the maximum sentence prescribed for the offense. The high court, while disposing of Imam's plea challenging the trial court's January 24, 2022, order denying him bail, stat-

ed that if he is granted bail by the lower court under Section 436-A of the IPC, that will conclude the matter. If denied bail, he has the right to file an appeal based on the grounds mentioned in the plea or any other ground.

During the hearing, Imam's counsel informed the court that out of a total of 43 prosecution witnesses in the case, 22 have been examined so far. The high court had previously emphasised that, since Section 124A (sedition) of the IPC has been kept in abeyance on the directions of the Supreme Court, it must examine the trial court's bail rejection order considering the other penal sections applied against Imam.

In 2022, the trial court had framed charges against Imam under Sections 124A (sedition), 153A (promoting enmity), 153B (imputations prejudicial to national integration), 505 (statements conducing to public mischief) of the IPC, and Section 13 (punishment for unlawful activities) of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act. The prosecution alleges that Imam made speeches at Jamia Millia Islamia on December 13, 2019, and at the Aligarh Muslim University on December 16, 2019, where he threatened to cut off Assam and the rest of the Northeast from the country.

# Delhi BJP meets Police Commissioner on Kejriwal's accusations

TIKAM SHARMA  
NEW DELHI

A delegation from the Delhi unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), led by Delhi BJP Chief Virendra Sachdeva, met Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora on Tuesday, submitting a complaint regarding the baseless allegations made by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal that the BJP tried to break the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) by luring 7 to 21 MLAs.

The complaint urged an investigation into the Chief Minister's allegations. They also asked the Commissioner to take legal action against the AAP leaders who made the allegations, including Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, PWD Minister Atish Singh, and MLAs Durgesh Pathak and Dilip Pandey.

Following the submission of the complaint letter,

Delhi BJP Chief Virendra Sachdeva said that as soon as the Chief Minister and his associates made false allegations against the BJP for luring the Aam Aadmi Party MLAs, the BJP refuted them and asked the CM and other AAP leaders to present evidence, but they remained silent. "Yesterday also, we challenged Kejriwal to come with the evidence to prove the allegations and meet the Police Commissioner with us, but even today he did not come here," said Delhi BJP chief Sachdeva. "Kejriwal is habitually making false allegations against BJP leaders and then going silent or apologizing." He added that this time they have decided to expose the lies of Arvind Kejriwal and submitted a complaint to the Police Commissioner demanding an investigation and legal action against CM Kejriwal and other AAP leaders.

“सिक्ख गुरु परंपरा केवल आस्था और अध्यात्म की परंपरा नहीं है। ये 'एक भारत श्रेष्ठ भारत' के विचार का भी प्रेरणापुंज है।”  
- नरेन्द्र मोदी

## Release Ceremony of Book Titled 'Haryana Sikhs & Khattar'

Chief Guest  
**Sh. Manohar Lal**  
Chief Minister, Haryana

January 31, 2024 | 11:00 AM  
Auditorium, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra

जन कल्याण, सेवा भाव, डबल-इंजन सरकार

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TOP OF THE DAY

MAN VANDALISES 'SHIVLING' IN MP'S INDORE

INDORE: A man was arrested for vandalising a 'Shivling' and tearing the poster of Lord Shiva placed in a temple in Madhya Pradesh's Indore district, a police official said on Tuesday. The temple is located in Kotwali Police Station area in the district and the incident occurred on Monday night. The accused had committed the incident in an inebriated state, the officer said. The entire incident was also captured in the CCTV camera installed in the temple in which the accused was seen vandalising the 'Shivling' by throwing a flower pot on it. The accused, Gajju, a resident of Rajendra Nagar in the city, damaged a 'Shivling' by throwing a flower pot on it on Monday late night and also tore the poster of Lord Shiva placed in the temple. The police registered a case under IPC section 295 and arrested the accused," said Tulsiram Raghuvanshi, Assistant Sub Inspector (ASI) of Kotwali Police Station. During the interrogation, the accused told the police that he was angry with God and he did it in an inebriated state, ASI Raghuvanshi said. Further investigation into the matter is underway.

RADHA RATURI TO BE FIRST WOMAN CS OF UTTARAKHAND

DEHRADUN: IAS officer Radha Raturi will be the first woman Chief Secretary of Uttarakhand, officials said on Tuesday. According to information,, 1988 batch IAS officer Radha Raturi will be the new Chief Secretary of Uttarakhand. An Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of the 1988 batch, Raturi is currently the additional chief secretary of Uttarakhand. Raturi is the first woman to hold the top administrative post in Uttarakhand.

TWO MAIN ACCUSED IN COUPLE MURDER CASE ARRESTED

UJJAIN: Two main accused were arrested in connection with the murder of an elderly couple in Madhya Pradesh's Ujjain district, a police official said on Tuesday. The murder incident occurred on the intervening night of January 26 and 27 in Piploda Dwarkadhish village under the jurisdiction of Narwar police station in the district when the elderly couple were sleeping in their house. According to the police, the accused entered the house with the intention of theft and during this, they committed the crime. The deceased couple were identified as Ramniwas Kumawat (70) and his wife Munni Kumawat (65). A murder incident of an elderly couple occurred a few days ago in Piploda Dwarkadhish village under Narwar police station in which a case was registered under IPC sections 302 and 397. Based on the investigation so far in this case, the main accused have been arrested today. The accused entered the house with the intention of theft and committed the crime," said Sachin Sharma, Superintendent of Police (SP). The accused have been identified as Alphas (19) and Arif (22), both are residents of the same village.

DMK GOVT DENYING POOR THE BENEFITS OF PM HOUSING SCHEME: TAMIL NADU GOVERNOR

LATHA SRINIVASAN  
CHENNAI

Governor RN Ravi has criticised the Tamil Nadu government stating that the poor villagers in Nagapattinam district have not been able to benefit from the Prime Minister's housing scheme. He alleged that this was due to 'corruption' and 'administrative apathy' of the DMK government.

The governor wrote on his social media profile on X (formerly Twitter), "A humongous high-cost concrete structure in Keezhvenmani village as a memorial, to commemorate the massacred 44 poor labourers, in the midst of thatched shacks of the poor all around by a political party that claims to champion the proletariat is not only ironical but a mocking insult to the martyrs and



Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi

the poor."

However, the DMK government was quick to retaliate. Law Minister S Regupathy said in a statement, "The governor is suffering from 'media mania disease' and seeking publicity by criticising the state government. Governors of all southern states, including Kerala Governor Arif Mohammad Khan and Telangana Gover-

nor Tamilisai Soundararajan are engaging in a discreet competition for media attention and acting like state spokespersons of the BJP. If at all Ravi needed any clarification about the scheme, he could have asked the government. Is this right for the governor to criticise the government like an opposition party? I want to know on what basis he is alleging cor-

ruption in the PM's scheme."

Minister for Rural Development I Periyasamy also stated that under the PM's Awas Yojana, there have been 127 beneficiaries in the Keezhavenmani panchayat. Out of the 31,051 houses to be constructed by the union government in Nagapattinam district, 23,110 had been completed.

"He (Governor) doesn't know what the Keezhvenmani issue is. We came to power, and we set it right by giving land and setting the Land Ceiling Act to 15 acres. We knew the crux of the issue and set it right. It only shows his ignorance. The Governor does not have historical or political knowledge. He was appointed as Governor to create trouble for the state," DMK spokesperson TKS Elangovan added.

Baku-bound IndiGo plane takes off without ATC clearances

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the aviation regulatory body, has grounded a pilot for allegedly taking off the Baku-bound IndiGo plane without Air Traffic Controllers (ATC) clearances. According to the DGCA, the Baku-bound IndiGo plane took off without ATC clearances. "The DGCA has begun an investigation where an IndiGo plane from Delhi to Baku has taken off without ATC clearances," it said. According to a top DGCA official, "the indigo pilot of 6E-1803 has been off duty till the investigation." "The pilots of IndiGo's Janu-



ary 29, 2024, Delhi-Baku flight (6E 1803) have been removed from flying duty as the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) investigates whether they took off without the required air traffic control

(ATC) clearance," it added. The flight departed at around 7:38 p.m. on January 29. The Indigo has said that appropriate action will be taken as necessary. "With reference to reports

around IndiGo flight 6E 1803 operating between Delhi and Baku on January 28, 2024, the incident is currently under investigation, and appropriate action will be taken as necessary," IndiGo said in a statement.

NOTICE ISSUED TO EX-CHHATTISGARH CM BAGHEL ON PLEA CHALLENGING HIS ELECTION AS MLA

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Chhattisgarh High Court has issued a notice to former chief minister Bhupesh Baghel in response to a petition challenging his election as an MLA in the recent assembly polls, citing an alleged violation of the model code.

A single bench of Justice Parth Prateem Sahu was hearing the matter.

The petition was filed by BJP MP Vijay Baghel, who had contested against Bhupesh Baghel in the assem-



bly election for the Patan seat but was unsuccessful. According to petitioner's counsel TK Jha, Vijay Baghel argues that Bhupesh Baghel breached the provisions of the Representation of Peoples Act, 1951, by leading a procession in the Patan constituency after 5 pm on November 15, 2023.

Karan Johar shares a picture from his meeting with Gujarat CM Patel

TDG NETWORK  
GANDHINAGAR

Filmmaker Karan Johar recently met with Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel. On Tuesday, Karan took to Instagram and shared a picture from his meeting with Bhupendra Patel. The image shows Karan and Bhupendra Patel engaged in a conversation. "Had the pleasure and privilege to meet and interact with the Honourable CM of Gujrat ...@bhupendrapatelji.Gujarat is a symbol of growth and progress and we look forward to bringing our movies to this glorious state.....," he captioned the post on Tuesday.

Karan's meeting with Bhupendra Patel happened on the sidelines of Filmfare Awards 2024. The 69th edition of Filmfare Awards was held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat last week. Karan hosted the ceremony along with Ayushmann Khurrana. KJo's directorial film 'Rocky aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani' received nominations in 18 categories including Best Director, Best Actor in a Leading Role (Male) and Best Actor in a Leading Role (Female). Alia bagged Best Actor award for 'Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani'. As the film garnered several awards at the



Chief Minister of Gujarat Bhupendra Patel meets Bollywood actors Ranbir Kapoor, Sara Ali Khan, Ayushmann Khurrana, Kartik Aaryan, director Karan Johar, and others at the Filmfare Award ceremony in Gandhinagar.

ceremony, Karan posted a note of gratitude. "A night to remember! @filmfare...And thank you to everyone for all the love for our #RockyAurRaniKi-

iPremKahaani," he wrote. 'Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani' marked his comeback to the director's chair after almost seven years. The film starred Ranveer

Singh, Alia Bhatt, Dharmendra, Jaya Bachchan, and Shabana Azmi. The film turned out to be a hit. He has not announced his next directorial yet.

STUDENTS SHOULD COME IN UNIFORM: RAJASTHAN MINISTER BEDAM OVER HIJAB ROW

TDG NETWORK  
JAIPUR

Amid hijab row and dress code in schools of Rajasthan, BJP leader and state Minister Jawahar Singh Bedam on Tuesday stressed the need for students to adhere to school uniforms and urged them to come in uniform.

The controversy over hijab row erupted after BJP MLA Balmukund Acharya, who, while attending a Republic Day celebrations in a school in Jaipur allegedly raised questions of whether there are two types of dress codes in the school. Reacting to this, Bedam said, "Rajasthan Government and Education Department has issued directions from time to implement the dress code.



Students should come in uniform, and with that, they learn discipline. That is the temple of education where the Education Department has enforced the dress code. Students should come as per dress code". Bedam said that the dress code is applicable for students and instructions regarding the same have been issued which should be followed. "Will it look good if the police officer does not come in

uniform but comes wearing a 'pyjama'? Will people listen to him? Many times we have seen that action has been taken against the police officers who come wearing a teddy cap. Dress code is applicable for students, instructions have been issued and they should be followed," he told ANI. Earlier, several schoolgirls protested outside the Subhash Chowk police station on Monday demanding that the MLA Acharya should apologise and an FIR be lodged against him. They alleged that Acharya told them that hijab was not allowed. Families of some of the students also participated in the protest. Meanwhile, Balmukund Acharya dismissed the protest against him after he visited a school in Jaipur during Republic Day

celebrations, and called it "politically motivated". "This protest was done by a few people who are doing politics. I spoke with the girls and had a good interaction with them. We spoke about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's schemes and their studies," the MLA from Hawa Mahal told ANI. He said that during his visit to the school, he observed that the dress code was not followed on occasions like Republic Day. "The truth is that the dress code is not observed there on occasions like Republic Day, Basant Utsav, annual functions or Independence Day. Why are students coming in burqa and hijab? What is this new rule and regulation? There is a separate madrasa for that.



# ‘Darkest day’ in Indian polity, says Punjab CM

TARUNI GANDHI  
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann on Tuesday said that January 30 will be remembered as the ‘darkest day’ in the annals of Indian polity as BJP-led Union government has murdered democracy during the election for post of Mayor in Chandigarh.

Interacting with the media persons here at local Punjab Bhawan, the Chief Minister said that this moment will be remembered as a black day in the history of our democracy. He said that unfortunately it is the same month when Republic Day is celebrated in the nation and BJP chose the same month for undermining the constitution of the country. Bhagwant Singh Mann said that this is a chronic habit of the BJP as they had earlier toppled democratically elected governments in Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra and other states.

The Chief Minister said that if the counting of 36 votes can’t be conducted in a free and fair manner then how the polls and counting of votes for the entire country will take place impartially. He said that these leaders will loot the ballot papers from the voters for their vested interests, adding that EVM machines have already been found in their homes. Bhagwant Singh Mann said that democracy



is not going in the right direction adding that it is not in the interest of the common man and the country.

The Chief Minister said that BJP had deliberately appointed the head of its minority wing as the Presiding officer in these polls. He said that the spineless presiding officer acted as per the whims and fancies of his masters to ensure victory of the BJP nominee. Bhagwant Singh Mann said that the presiding officer has jeopardized the constitutional process envisaged by Dr BR Ambedkar in the Indian constitution thereby backstabbing the entire nation.

The Chief Minister said that Presiding officer must be booked under sedition for deceiving the constitution of the country. He said that the presiding officer had deliberately counted the votes in the absence of polling agents just to ensure the win of the BJP candidate. Bhagwant Singh Mann said

that this is unprecedentedly unfortunate as democratic has once again muzzled for the sake of the saffron party.

The Chief Minister said that the worry is not that BJP had hijacked the democratic process in Chandigarh but the real problem is that they will divest the people of their democratic rights in ensuing Lok Sabha polls too. Bhagwant Singh Mann said that today democracy has been murdered in Chandigarh adding that the soul of Baba Sahib Ambedkar must be hurt by seeing all this. He said that they will go to the court and challenge this election in which all the democratic norms have been set aside.

The Chief Minister said that it is beyond doubt that there is no democracy in the country as the BJP led government has hijacked the polls. He said that this has further raised doubts that the upcoming polls across the country will not be free and fair.

## NEITHER THEIR ARITHMETIC IS WORKING NOR THEIR CHEMISTRY: NADDA ON I.N.D.I.A BLOC

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

BJP National President JP Nadra has congratulated the saffron party’s Chandigarh unit for emerging victorious in the Chandigarh Mayoral polls held on Monday.

“Congratulations to @BJP4Chandigarh Unit for winning the Mayor election. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi Ji, UTs have witnessed record development. That the INDI Alliance fought their first electoral battle and still lost to BJP shows that neither their arithmetic is working nor their chemistry,” Nadra posted on X.

Meanwhile, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal took a shot at the BJP, alleging that Mayoral elections were tainted by an open display of dishonesty.

“The manner in which dishonesty has been done in broad daylight in the Chandigarh Mayor elections is extremely worrying. If these people can stoop so low in a mayor’s election, then they can go to any extent in the country’s elections. This is very worrying,” Kejriwal posted on X.

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MP Raghav Chadha too has expressed his disappointment with the results of the Mayoral elections and said that he will expose the fraud done by BJP.

Raghav Chadha, taking to the microblogging site X, said, “I, along with senior Congress leader Pawan Bansal, will address a joint press conference at 2:30 PM at Punjab Bhawan, Chandigarh. We will expose the FRAUD that BJP has committed today in Chandigarh Mayor Elections.”

However, BJP national spokesperson Jaiveer Shergill has declared BJP’s victo-



ry the victory of democracy.

“BJP’s victory in the Chandigarh Mayoral elections is the victory of democracy and the defeat of ‘thagbandhan’ of AAP and Congress. BJP’s victory is the victory of truth over lies, the victory of nation-serving politics over the politics of corruption, and the victory of people-serving politics over the opportunistic politics of AAP and Congress. The INDI Alliance should understand by now that the addition of zero to zero is zero. The INDI alliance’s defeat in the Chandigarh Mayoral elections is a trailer and in 2024, INDI will come to know who stands where. The whole country is resonating with just one voice--‘Yeh Dil Mange More, Modi Sarkar, Once More,’” said Shergill. Meanwhile, AAP MP Sandeep Pathak said that the result of the Mayoral election poses a deep concern.

“The level of dishonesty witnessed in the Chandigarh mayoral election is deeply concerning. If these malpractices can occur in a local election, it raises serious questions about the integrity of our national elections. This is extremely alarming and calls for a thorough examination of our electoral processes,” read the post by Pathak on X.

Punjab Congress president Amarinder Singh Raja

Warring, sharing a video on social media platform X, claimed that a senior bureaucrat in the video can be seen manipulating the votes of the Mayoral elections.

“@bjp4india is not just corrupt. It is hell bent to murder democracy. They are comfortable with using muscle power, agencies, money, pressure tactics, using the officers and what not...The attached video clearly shows a senior bureaucrat manipulating the votes. Today’s incident is not just concerning for the political class... it should be concerning for every parent, for every student, for every citizen of this country... do we want such future for our kids? Do we want a dictatorship? And if the answer is no... it’s time to fight back! Otherwise it will soon be too late,” Warring posted on X.

After a high-voltage drama around the Chandigarh mayoral elections, the BJP emerged victorious after the votes were cast and counted on Tuesday.

The polls were rescheduled to January 30 after the presiding officer fell ill on the original date, January 8.

The fresh scheduling of the elections, which AAP MP Raghav Chadha described as the first direct electoral contest between the BJP and the Opposition bloc--INDIA--happened on the order of the Punjab-Haryana High Court.

## Amid drama, BJP member elected Chandigarh mayor

CONTINUED FROM P1

and confusion ensued as Akali Dal councillor Hard-eep Singh sought to exercise the NOTA option, which was rejected due to the lack of provision in mayoral polls.

The mayoral polls were previously postponed on January 18 due to Anil Masih’s illness, leading to legal actions by AAP and Congress, who deemed it unconstitutional. The High Court ordered the resumption of

polls on January 30.

Reacting to the result, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal called it “dishonest” and “very worrying.” AAP’s Raghav Chadha compared the situation to “treason,” demanding the arrest of the presiding officer.

Congress leader Pawan Bansal criticized the election process, alleging BJP members tore ballot papers. On the other hand, Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann de-

mand to lodge FIR against Presiding Officer Masih on tempering ballot papers that can be seen clearly in camera clip.

Chandigarh’s mayoral polls gained attention in recent years, notably in 2022 when AAP won 14 seats, later equalized by a Congress councillor moving to the BJP. The subsequent year, in 2023, the BJP won, with the Congress abstaining from voting and undergoing shifts in councillor affiliations.

## SP releases 1<sup>st</sup> list of candidates for LS polls

CONTINUED FROM P1

seat, from where he currently represents SP in the Lok Sabha.

Last week, the Samajwadi Party announced the number of seats that the party is going to contest in Uttar Pradesh in the Lok Sabha election with I.N.D.I.A. ally partner Congress and RLD.

Party chief Akhilesh Yadav shared in a post on X that his party’s alliance with the Congress is “off to a good start with 11 strong seats to the Congress. This trend will move forward with the winning equation. ‘I.N.D.I.A’ team and ‘PDA strategy will change history.”

Congress seemed unhappy with this, A source in the

Congress party said when the seat-sharing talks started between the two parties, the Congress had demanded 30 seats.

However, the SP was not willing to accommodate the Congress on more than 13 seats. Currently, the alliance stands at 11 seats in Congress, 7 in RLD, and 62 in the Samajwadi Party.

## SONIA GANDHI MAY NOT CONTEST LS POLLS, PARTY EYES RS SEAT FOR HER

CONTINUED FROM P1

Her policy of sidelining experienced leaders and placing a bet on new faces flopped badly. The inexperienced team sank the party in Uttar Pradesh, resulting in the party’s biggest ever defeat in the 2022 assembly elections. After facing failure in Uttar Pradesh, Priyanka intervened in other states, but there too her efforts came a cropper. States such as Punjab, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan are the glaring examples of the same. The party leaders and workers are disappointed after the defeat in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh

last year. In the current situation, most of the big leaders are reluctant to contest the upcoming election. After the consecration ceremony of Ram idol in Ayodhya, the situation has changed in Karnataka and Telangana also. The Grand Alliance government fell in Bihar. Similarly, all is not well in Maharashtra too. Rahul Gandhi can definitely win the elections from Wayanad, Kerala. But in North India, Congress is not in a position to ensure the victory of the Gandhi family from anywhere. In such a situation, the party does not want Sonia Gandhi to contest elections from

Uttar Pradesh this time. If Sonia Gandhi loses the election at this age, it will be a big blow for the party. This time, even if opposition remains intact, victory is not guaranteed, given the “Ram wave” sweeping across UP and the rest of the country in the wake of the consecration ceremony. Rajya Sabha elections are to be held next month. Congress may get ten seats. Congress is sure to get one seat each in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. It will be interesting to see whether the party sends Sonia Gandhi to Rajya Sabha or she contests elections from Raebareilly.

CONTINUED FROM P1

dered to the Seychelles Coast Guard (SCG) and all six crew members are safe the vessel is being escorted to Mahe, Seychelles.

In a separate case, the Indian Navy carried out two major rescue operations within 36 hours and rescued two hijacked fishing vessels and crew members including 17 Iranian and 19 Pakistani nationals.

On Monday, the Indian Navy warship INS Sumitra thwarted the piracy attempt on an Iranian-flagged fishing vessel, Al Naeeem sailing

off the East Coast of Somalia and successfully rescued 19 Pakistani nationals.

This operation came shortly after the INS Sumitra saved another Iranian-flagged fishing vessel, FV Iman, from Somali pirates, which had 17 crew members onboard in its anti-piracy operations along the east coast of Somalia and the Gulf of Aden.

“INS Sumitra, over the course of less than 36 hours, through swift, persistent and relentless efforts has rescued two hijacked Fishing Vessels along with 36 Crew (17 Iranian and 19

Pakistani) in the Southern Arabian Sea approximately 850 nm West of Kochi, and prevented misuse of these Fishing Vessels as Mother Ships for further acts of Piracy on Merchant Vessels,” the Indian Navy said in a statement.

Earlier, in a rapid and effective response, the Indian Navy’s mission-deployed guided missile destroyer, INS Visakhapatnam, on January 18 addressed a distress call from the Marshall Island-flagged MV Genco Picardy following a drone attack on the night of January 17.

## AGENCIES ON HIGH ALERT AFTER PAK ARMY CHIEF’S COMMENT

CONTINUED FROM P1

ing to shift the public focus to other foreign issues, sources said. Increasing tension with India is one of the ploys that Pakistan would prefer to have recourse to, with the objective of shifting public attention from domestic economic and law and order crisis to non-issues,” officials said here, adding, “The Pakistan Army Chief’s statement can also be seen in this context.”

Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N), led by former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, in its manifesto ahead of the February 8 general elections, already emphasised the restoration of Article 370 as a key step for normalising ties with India. “PMLN strongly holds the position that normalisation of ties with India cannot take place until New Delhi reverses the unilateral measures taken on August 5th, 2019 to restore Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir,” the manifesto read.

India has told Pakistan that Jammu and Kashmir is an inalienable and integral part of the country. Article 370, which was abrogated by India’s Parliament in 2019, is entirely a matter of India as well as its Constitution, as the Ministry of External Affairs has reiterated previously.

While Indian security agencies are on a high alert, diplomats are also taking regular updates on the development from different foreign embassies and high commissions, sources said, adding, “Several senior envoys from India are constantly keeping a close eye on political activities in Pakistan.”

According to sources, Pakistan and China may resume joint efforts to expand the CPEC projects under Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) which India is opposed to.

The motive of Pakistan behind this will be only to needle India amid tensions between New Delhi and Beijing, said a source.

## IMRAN KHAN SENTENCED TO 10 YEARS IN JAIL IN CYPHER CASE

CONTINUED FROM P1

lished under the Official Secrets Act sentenced Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Khan and former Pakistan’s foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi handed out the 10-year jail sentence in the cypher case, Dawn reported.

The verdict was announced by special court Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain during the hearing held at Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi.

The special court had begun the cypher trial afresh last month at the Adiala district jail after Imran and Qureshi were indicted for a second time in the case on December 13, Dawn News reported. The former premier and Qureshi, who is also behind bars, were first indicted in the case in October. Both had pleaded not guilty. The IHC had termed the government’s notification for a jail trial “erroneous” and scrapped the entire proceedings.

Taking to social media platform X, Khan said, “This is not a trial but a fixed match whose outcome was predetermined by the characters and planners of the London Plan and their seals. That is why I already know the decision of this case.”

He added, “Remember that Cipher is a case which has been declared null and void twice by the Islamabad High Court and ordered to be retried because both times the case was tried to be run in violation of the constitution and the law. Then the Supreme Court has also given me bail in this case because the whole building of this case has been built on lies, bullying, conspiracy and deceit.”

The former Pakistan PM also alleged that “these people want to provoke you by giving me a harsh sentence in this case so that you go out on the streets and protest, then add your unknowns to it and do another false flag operation in the style of May 9 to get those results. Attempts should be made which could not be achieved by the earlier false flag operation. Second, they want you people to stay at home on February 8, disappointed and angry.” He urged, “My Pakistanis! This is your war and this is your test that you have to take revenge for every injustice by your vote on February 8 while remaining peaceful. Innocent Pakistanis imprisoned in jails for the last 8 months will get justice and release now only with your

vote. I believe that just as you broke the chains of fear yesterday, you will come out in millions on election day and defeat the planners of the London plan by the power of your vote and tell them that we There are no sheep that can be driven with a stick. I believe that February 8 will be our day of victory. God willing.”

Earlier this month, Pakistan’s caretaker federal government challenged the Islamabad High Court’s (IHC) decision to declare its notification regarding the jail trial of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader in the cypher case as null and void.

It reported that the government filed a petition in the apex court to overturn the High Court’s decision saying that the High Court did not evaluate the facts of the case properly.

It contended that the IHC did not have the authority to declare a special court formed to hold cypher trial of the former premier invalid.

As per Geo News, in November last year, the IHC nullified the notification for conducting PTI founder Imran Khan’s jail trial in the cypher case registered on charges of leaking state secrets.

An IHC division bench, comprising Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb and Justice Saman Rafat Imtiaz, announced the verdict on November 21, 2023 on Imran’s intra-court appeal against a single-member bench’s decision to approve his jail trial in the cypher case under the Official Secrets Act, 1923. Earlier, allowing Khan’s intra-court appeal, the division bench declared the law ministry’s notification “to be without lawful authority and no legal effect”.

The IHC stated in the three-page short order that the jail trial can be conducted in “exceptional circumstances”. “In exceptional circumstances and where it is conducive to justice, a trial can be conducted in jail in a manner that fulfills the requirements of an open trial or a trial in camera, provided it is in accordance with the procedure provided by law.

“The court also declared that the November 15 notification issued by the Ministry of Law and Justice after the caretaker cabinet’s approval of the jail trial “cannot be given retrospective effect”. Geo News reported that Imran’s cypher trial was started afresh, but the IHC declared all the proceedings in the cypher case conducted by a special court after December 14, 2023, invalid.



ASSESSING AJAY BHATT’S PERFORMANCE AS NAINITAL-UDHAMSINGH NAGAR’S MP

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

A ground-level survey of the Udhm Singh Nagar Parliamentary constituency was conducted by India News to analyse the performance of Ajay Bhatt, the Member of Parliament from Udhamsingh Nagar, and gather voters’ feedback about him.

On September 30, 1995, the establishment of Udhamsingh Nagar district marked its separation from Nainital district in the Terai region of Uttarakhand.

Ranked as the third most populous district among Uttarakhand’s major industrial centres, Udhamsingh Nagar boasts the presence of India’s inaugural Govind Ballabh Pant Agricultural University.

In the politically active terrain of Uttarakhand’s hills, Ajay Bhatt, a prominent leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), currently serves as the Member of Parliament, representing the region.

The creation of the Nainital Udhm Singh Nagar seat occurred after the delimitation in 2008, replacing the Nainital Lok Sabha seat. The BJP has clinched victory in the last two general elections.

Analyzing the dynamics of the Nainital Udhm Singh Nagar Lok Sabha constituency provides valuable insights into the political landscape. Since 1952, Congress has secured victory 12 times, while the BJP has emerged victorious four times, and Janata Dal and Janata Party once each.

Considered a VIP seat, voters in this constituency prioritize development while expressing concerns about the post-election visibility of Members of Parliament in

the hilly areas.

While developmental progress is evident in the plains, the mountainous regions have received increased attention in recent years.

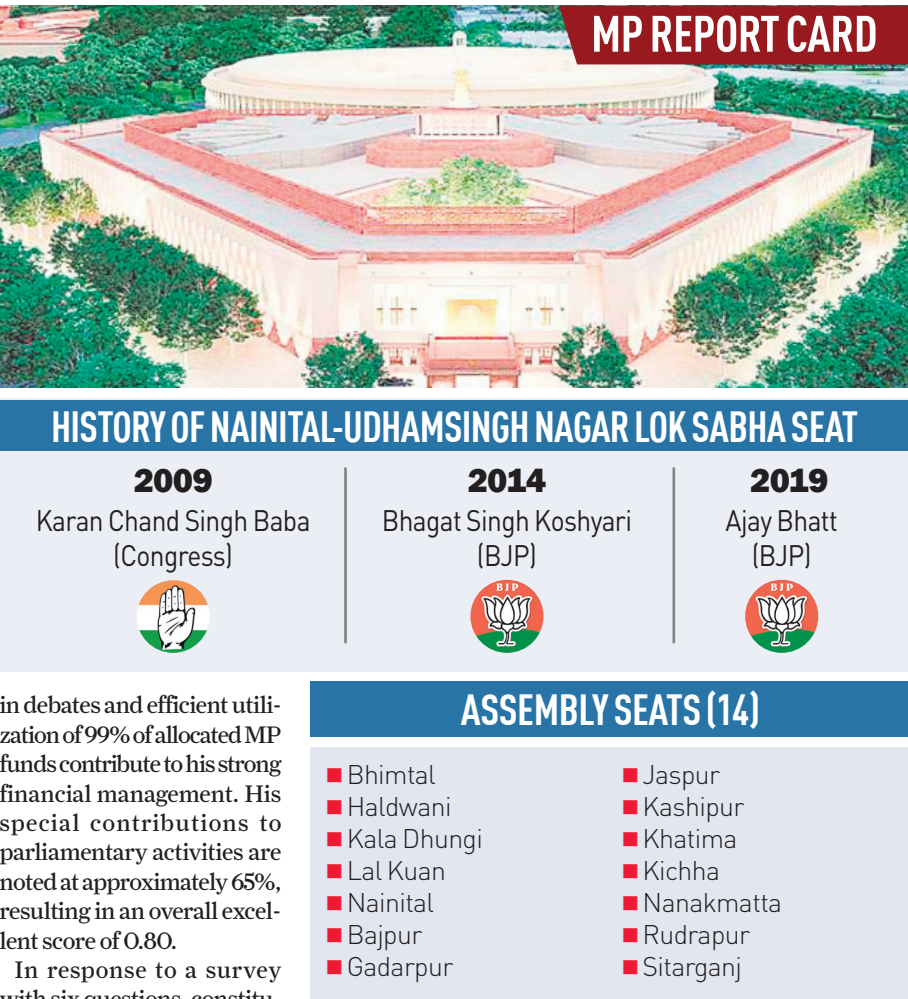
With 14 assembly seats and a voter base exceeding 1.9 million, the constituency showcases a diverse caste equation. Hindu, Muslim, and Dalit voters, along with significant numbers of Rajput and Brahmin voters, contribute to the intricate caste dynamics during elections.

Caste considerations play a visible role, and the large parliamentary constituency experiences varied development rates among its assembly segments.

Despite witnessing tourism-driven development in Nainital and industrial growth in Udhm Singh Nagar, the hilly areas often feel neglected by their elected representatives.

As the 2024 general elections approach, the electorate will closely scrutinize the performance of their Member of Parliament. India News is currently conducting a comprehensive survey to gauge public opinion and evaluate the MP’s effectiveness ahead of the upcoming elections.

Parliamentary performance evaluation for Ajay Bhatt, the Member of Parliament from Nainital-Udhm Singh Nagar constituency, is based on key criteria such as presence in Parliament, question participation, MP funds utilization, and special contributions. Bhatt’s impressive presence in Parliament stands at around 98%, with approximately 58% of his questions focusing on constituency and country development. Active participation



in debates and efficient utilization of 99% of allocated MP funds contribute to his strong financial management. His special contributions to parliamentary activities are noted at approximately 65%, resulting in an overall excellent score of 0.80.

In response to a survey with six questions, constituents express high satisfaction with Bhatt’s parliamentary work, citing his consistent focus on regional development. A satisfaction rating of 80% indicates strong approval of Ajay Bhatt’s performance among the public.

Social media feedback positions Ajay Bhatt favourably, with a score of approximately 0.60, representing favourable opinions from 60% of users. The ground survey reveals a satisfaction score of 0.46, with 46% finding the MP’s ground performance satisfactory.

Combining parliamentary, ground, and social media scores, Ajay Bhatt secures the top position with a total score of 6.13 out of 10, placing him

in the first division and reinforcing public confidence in his capabilities. Constituents consider his performance deserving of a “PASS” in his report card.

The constituency considered a VIP seat, places a strong emphasis on development, with concerns about post-election visibility in the hilly areas. Despite witnessing progress in the plains and increased attention to the mountainous regions, challenges persist, especially in addressing the diverse caste dynamics during elections.

The India News survey aligns with ground survey results, showing a satisfaction score of approximately 61%, reflecting positive re-

ception across various demographics, including women, men, farmers, labourers, students, and individuals from diverse religious and caste backgrounds.

In summary, Ajay Bhatt’s parliamentary, ground, and social media assessments depict positive feedback. High satisfaction among constituents underscores confidence in his ability to address the region’s development needs.

As the 2024 general elections approach, the electorate in Nainital Udhm Singh Nagar will carefully evaluate the performance of their Member of Parliament, Ajay Bhatt. A comprehensive survey conducted by India News indicates high satisfaction

VOTER DEMOGRAPHICS	
Gender Ratio	
Male	51%
Female	49%
Caste Composition	
Brahmin	17%
Rajput	27%
SC/ST	22%
Muslim	19%
Sikh	7%
KEY ISSUES	
Extreme unemployment	
Drinking water crisis	
Poor mountain roads	
Large-scale migration	
Education-health neglect	
Distress from flooding	
Threat of wild animals	
Damage from floods	
Rising famine	



with Bhatt’s parliamentary work, particularly noting his consistent focus on regional development. Social media feedback and ground surveys further reinforce positive sentiments, placing Ajay Bhatt in the top position with an overall score of 6.13 out of 10.

The alignment of parliamentary, ground, and social media assessments reflects a robust and positive image of Ajay Bhatt among con-

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	61.37%
No	33.33%
Can't say	5.30%
2- Should your MP be more active for the development of the constituency?	
Yes	92.69%
No	5.65%
Can't say	1.66%
3- In the 2024 general elections, for which party would you like to vote?	
N.D.A	58.67%
I.N.D.I.A	5.65%
Other party	7.77%
NOTA	4.12%
Can't say	23.79%
4- On what basis will you vote in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections?	
Performance of the Modi government	57.36%
Unemployment and inflation	24.38%
Caste	0.82%
None of these	10.48%
Can't say	6.96%
5- Have you benefited from the central government's schemes?	
Yes	27.32%
No	72.55%
Can't say	0.13%
6- Which scheme has benefited you?	
Free ration	9.81%
Jan Dhan Yojana	1.06%
Home and toilet	0.70%
Ayushman Bharat	6.24%
Ujjwala Yojana	0.70%
Other scheme	1.64%
All of these	7.06%
None	72.79%

stituents, spanning various demographics. The electorate’s confidence in his ability to address the region’s de-

velopment needs is evident, making him a promising candidate as the 2024 elections draw near.

INTERNATIONAL TOURIST ARRIVALS SOARED BACK IN 2023

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Tourism stands as one of the world’s largest economic sectors, fostering job creation, driving exports, and promoting prosperity on a global scale. Its potential to contribute significantly to local economies is evident, particularly in a diverse country like India, celebrated for its landscapes, cuisines, heritage, adventure, wildlife, and rich culture. Over recent years, India has gained recognition as a prominent destination for both international and domestic travellers.

Recognizing tourism’s integral role in the economy, the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, has undertaken various development initiatives. The importance of tourism statistics cannot be overstated in this context. Timely, comprehensive, accurate, and reliable statistics play a crucial role in shaping sound economic development policies. They serve as an essential ingredient for the formulation of government decisions and development plans.

In 2023, the global number of international tourist arrivals witnessed an increase compared to the previous year. However, it remained below the 2019 figures, pre-dating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The initial decline to approximately 407 million in the first year of the health crisis marked the lowest figure recorded since 1989. Subsequently, global inbound tourist arrivals exhibited robust signs of recovery in the following years, reaching just under 1.3 billion in 2023.

**TOURISM STATISTICS IN INDIA**

In November 2023, the For-

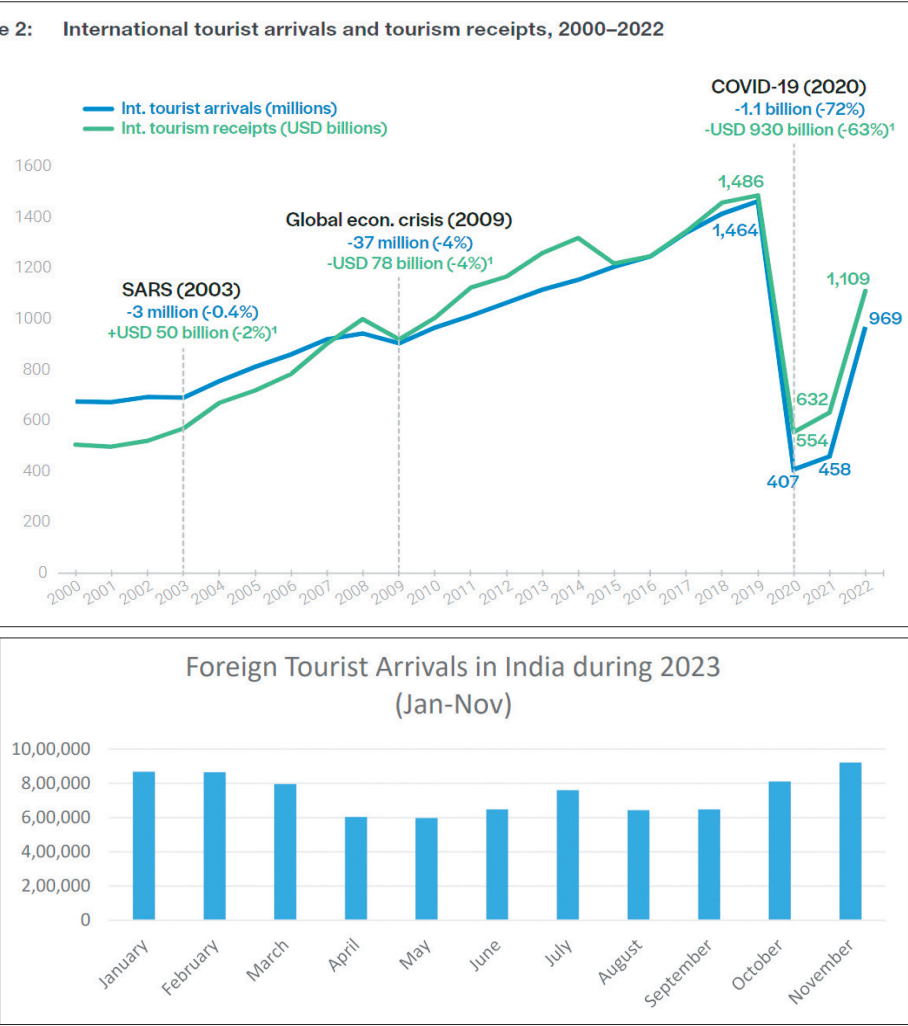
eign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) reached 9,22,265, showcasing a notable increase from 7,89,330 recorded in November 2022. However, when compared to November 2019, which saw 10,92,440 FTAs, there was a decrease of -15.6%. The growth rate between November 2022 and November 2023 stood at 16.8%.

For the cumulative period of January to November 2023, the FTAs totalled 81,65,945. This marked a substantial growth of 50.0% compared to the same period in 2022, which recorded 54,44,490 FTAs. However, in comparison to the January to November period in 2019, with 97,03,957 FTAs, there was a decline of -15.8%. The data reflects the dynamic nature of international tourist arrivals over these specified periods.

**EUROPE IS THE MOST POPULAR DESTINATION FOR INTERNATIONAL TOURISM**

Since 2005, Europe has consistently emerged as the leading global region in terms of attracting the highest number of international tourists. In 2022, there was a notable increase in inbound tourist arrivals to Europe compared to the previous year. However, the numbers had not yet reached the levels observed before the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Within Europe, Southern and Mediterranean Europe stood out as the most sought-after destination for international tourism, recording approximately 265 million arrivals in 2022. Despite the recovery, the region was still working towards matching the pre-pandemic levels of tourist activity. This underscores the resilience and



enduring appeal of Europe as a key player in the global tourism landscape.

**COVID-19 IMPACT ON THE GLOBAL TRAVEL AND TOURISM MARKET**

The travel and tourism industries bore a significant brunt during the health crisis, facing substantial setbacks as countries globally imposed restrictions on non-essential travel to curb the spread of the virus. According to Statista’s Mobility Market Insights, the global travel and tourism market experienced a sharp contraction in revenue in 2020, witnessing a decline of approximately 55 per cent compared to the

previous year.

In particular, segments such as cruises and package holidays reported some of the most substantial drops in revenue in 2020. The restrictions and uncertainties surrounding travel during the pandemic profoundly impacted these sectors, highlighting the challenges faced by industries heavily dependent on global mobility and tourism.

**2020 BECAME THE WORST YEAR FOR THE TOURISM SECTOR**

The year 2020 marked a profound global crisis with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, impacting health, society, and economies worldwide. Commencing in March

2020, the pandemic triggered an unparalleled disruption to the tourism sector, witnessing a substantial decline in international travel following widespread lockdowns and diminished demand due to extensive travel restrictions implemented to curb the virus’s spread.

International tourist arrivals, encompassing overnight visitors, plummeted drastically from 1.5 billion in 2019 to a mere 400 million in 2020, representing a staggering 72% drop. This unprecedented decline translated to 1.1 billion fewer international tourists, making 2020 the worst year on record.

The scale of this contraction far surpassed the 4%

reduction witnessed during the global economic crisis in 2009, returning cross-border travel numbers to levels reminiscent of three decades ago.

In 2020, both international tourism receipts and total export revenues from tourism, inclusive of passenger transport, experienced a severe 63% decline. The financial impact amounted to a loss of USD 1.1 trillion. The implementation of various travel restrictions, including border closures, quarantines, curfews, and mandatory testing, was widespread across destinations.

These measures severely disrupted cross-border mobility, exacerbated by the absence of a COVID-19 vaccine. The lack of coordination among countries regarding health safety protocols and restrictions further contributed to the uncertainty and weakened demand. Tourism emerged as one of the sectors most profoundly affected by the pandemic, with businesses, employment, and livelihoods globally suffering severe consequences.

In 2023, international tourist arrivals worldwide displayed an increase across all regions compared to the previous year. However, with the exception of the Middle East, inbound arrivals remained below the figures reported in 2019, pre-dating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Europe, overall, reported the highest volume of inbound travellers during this period, with around 700 million arrivals in 2023.

**ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC**

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on international tourism revenues has been significant. In 2020, export revenues from international

tourism, which include international tourism receipts and passenger transport fares, saw a substantial decline from USD 1.7 trillion in 2019 to 0.6 trillion. This marked a staggering loss of USD 1.1 trillion, reflecting a 63% decline in real terms, measured in local currencies and constant prices.

While there was an 8% growth in revenues from international tourism in 2021, reaching USD 739 billion, it remained 60% below the levels recorded in 2019. These revenues encompass the ‘travel’ and ‘passenger transport’ items in the Balance of Payments.

With the reopening of many destinations in 2022, travel experienced a rebound, and revenues climbed to USD 1.3 trillion, reflecting a substantial 77% increase from 2021. However, despite this recovery, the figures remained 24% below the levels observed in 2019.

The cumulative loss in international tourism revenues is estimated at USD 2.5 trillion for the years 2020, 2021, and 2022. Specifically, international tourism receipts, which exclude passenger transport fares, followed a similar trajectory, dropping from USD 1.5 trillion in 2019 to USD 0.6 trillion in 2020, reflecting a 63% decline. Receipts remained 60% below pre-pandemic levels in 2021 and 26% in 2022.

**TOURISM IN VARIOUS REGIONS**

The impact of the pandemic on international tourist arrivals varied across regions. In 2020, Asia and the Pacific, being the first region affected by the pandemic and having stringent travel restrictions, experienced the largest relative decline, with an 84% de-

crease in international arrivals. This translated to about 300 million fewer arrivals compared to 2019.

Europe recorded a 68% decrease in arrivals in 2020, despite a brief revival in the summer. It suffered the most significant drop in absolute terms, with over 500 million fewer international tourists.

Arrivals in the Americas also declined by 68%, representing 150 million fewer international tourists. Both the Middle East and Africa saw a 73% decrease in arrivals.

All subregions worldwide witnessed substantial drops in arrivals ranging from 70% to 90%, except for Western Europe, North America, and the Caribbean, where the decline was less than 70% in 2020. Europe and the Americas saw a strong rebound in 2021.

In 2021, the Middle East and Europe recorded the best results by region compared to 2020, with arrivals up by 56% and 26%, respectively, although they remained almost 60% below 2019 levels.

The Americas saw a 17% increase in 2021 compared to 2020 but remained 63% below 2019 levels. Arrivals in Africa grew by 5% versus 2020 but were still 72% lower compared to 2019. In Asia and the Pacific, arrivals dropped 58% from 2020 levels and 93% compared to pre-pandemic values, as many destinations remained closed to non-essential travel.

By subregion, the Caribbean showed the best performance in 2021 relative to 2019, with international arrivals reaching 55% of pre-pandemic levels (-45% compared to 2019), and some island destinations even surpassing 2019 levels. Southern Mediterranean Europe also experienced a significant rebound.



# SOREN RETURNS, CHAIRS MEETING OF ALLIANCE MLAs AFTER DRAMA POST ED SEARCH AT DELHI

TDG NETWORK  
RANCHI

Amid suspense about his whereabouts, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren arrived at his official residence in Ranchi and chaired a meeting of alliance legislators on Tuesday.

A high-voltage drama began unfolding after an ED team searched his Delhi residence on Monday, and camped there for almost 13 hours in order to question him in a money laundering case linked to an alleged land deal in Jharkhand.

Later, the ED claimed to have seized Rs 36 lakh, an SUV and some “incriminating” documents during the search.

Soren, also the executive president of the ruling JMM, had left for the national capital on January 27 night, while his scheduled government programmes in the state were cancelled without any explanation.

The 48-year leader who



Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren chaired a meeting with ministers of his ruling coalition amid allegations by the BJP that the JMM chief was “absconding” to avoid the Enforcement Directorate’s probe into an alleged land scam case, in Ranchi on Tuesday.

was groomed into a leadership role by his father and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) supremo Shibu Soren after his elder brother Durga Soren died in 2009, is possibly facing his toughest test so far.

“I reside in your hearts,” he asserted facing the media for the first time post his return to Ranchi.

After chairing the meeting of legislators at his home to chalk the future course of strategy, Soren went to Babu Vatika, a local park, to pay

tributes to Mahatma Gandhi on his death anniversary.

Soren, who is currently riding a political storm which has been whipped up after ED issued summons to him, termed the move “motivated by political agenda” to disrupt the state government’s functioning.

He claimed that the central agency’s insistence to record his statement in connection with the alleged land fraud case reeked of malice, before agreeing to depose before ED sleuths on Wednesday at his Ranchi residence at 1 pm.

## ED SEIZES RS 36 LAKH, SUV FROM SOREN’S DELHI RESIDENCE

ASHISH SINHA  
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) conducted a search at the Delhi residence of Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, leading to the seizure of Rs 36 lakh, an SUV, and several “incriminating” documents, as per official sources on Tuesday.

The federal agency carried out the search at the 5/1 Shanti Niketan residence of the JMM leader in south

Delhi on Monday, remaining there for almost 13 hours, as part of an inquiry into a money laundering case related to an alleged land deal in Jharkhand. During the extensive operation, ED teams confiscated approximately Rs 36 lakh in cash, a BMW with an HR (Haryana) number plate registered under a “benami” name, and various “incriminating” documents.

Hemant Soren has in-

formed the ED that he is ready to depose before them on Wednesday at his Ranchi residence around 1 pm.

In Ranchi, a party official disclosed that all legislators from the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha-led ruling alliance in Jharkhand were instructed to stay in the state capital and attend a meeting on Tuesday to deliberate on the current political scenario in the state.

priyo Bhattacharya asked: “When the chief minister Hemant Soren called the Enforcement Directorate to record his statement on January 31, why did they reach his official residence in Delhi yesterday?”

He alleged that the BJP state president and former chief minister Babul Marandi is behind this. “They (BJP) are treating him like a criminal but I would like to state that our

CM is not afraid of anyone,” Bhattacharya said. Marandi, on the other hand, claimed that a constitutional crisis-like situation was created in the state due to the “sudden disappearance” of Soren and had announced a reward of Rs 11,000 from his side for providing information about the chief minister and posted a ‘missing’ poster of the JMM leader on X.

## Guwahati hosts bi-centenary conference to mark 200 years of Assam Tea

AGENCIES  
GUWAHATI

The two-day Bi-Centenary Assam Tea International Conference was held in Guwahati to commemorate the completion of 200 years of Assam tea. The main aim of organizing the conference known as BATIC2024 was to give a platform for the exchange of knowledge on tea and the sharing of information amongst stakeholders of the Indian and global tea industry.

On Tuesday, several sessions with different themes were held on the last day of the conference where delegates representing 25 countries participated. BATIC acts as a vital platform, uniting tea industry buyers and sellers for networking, auctions, and exhibitions.

It also nurtures global collaborations within the tea sector whereas the FAO IGG plays a pivotal role in serving as a forum for intergovernmental

consultation and exchange on trends in the production, consumption, trade, and prices of tea, regularly assessing the global market situation and short-term outlook for tea, facilitating discussions among tea-producing and tea-consuming countries, as well as other stakeholders in the tea industry, while also addressing issues related to the tea supply chain and consumption trends, aiming to provide insights and recommendations to support the sustainable development of the global tea industry.

While addressing the gathering, Assam Minister Bimal Borah acknowledged the monumental contributions made by several contemporary figures in the initial days of the establishment of the tea industry in Assam while also emphasizing the paramount importance of the tea industry and its substantial contributions to Assam’s socio-economic development and global reputation.

# DMK to hold seat-sharing talks with MDMK, Left parties

LATHA SRINIVASAN  
CHENNAI

Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) party is set to hold seat-sharing talks with the Left parties and MDMK during the first week of next month, it is learnt.

DMK will hold seat-sharing talks with the Left parties and MDMK on February 3 and 4, the sources said.

The CPI has been invited to the DMK headquarters Anna Arivalayam for talks on February 3, while the MDMK led by Vaiko would

meet the DMK on February 4. The CPIM also will meet the DMK on February 4.

News has been doing the rounds that the DMK would follow the 2019 Lok Sabha elections seat sharing formula this time around also. There may be some minor changes. In case Kamal Haasan and his party Makkal Needhi Maiam, join forces with the Congress, he could be allocated one seat.

Congress has reportedly asked the DMK for more seats. In 2019, the national party got nine seats but in

the initial seat-sharing talks with the DMK on Sunday, the party has presented a list of 21 preferable constituencies. Whether the DMK will agree to give more seats and how many more seats the Dravidian party will give is a big question. Senior DMK leaders have reportedly stated the party might not concede more than 10 seats to the Congress. Meanwhile, the Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi led by Thol. Thirumavalavan wants three seats this time around is the talk.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the DMK fielded candidates in 24 seats. There were four nominees from VCK, MDMK, and KMDK, and IKJ faced the polls in the party’s Rising Sun symbol, Congress (9), CPI-M and CPI (2 each), VCK and IUML (1 each). The DMK won all 20 of the 20 seats it contested while the Congress won eight of the nine seats contested in 2019. One thing is clear say both the Congress and DMK leaders – they want the BJP out of power.

## ‘NON-COMPLIANCE WITH ANTI-CONVERSION LAW’: ALLAHABAD HC DISMISSES EIGHT INTERFAITH COUPLES’ PETITIONS

ASHISH SINHA  
NEW DELHI

Allahabad High Court has dismissed petitions filed by eight interfaith couples seeking protection, citing non-compliance with Uttar Pradesh’s anti-conversion law.

Enacted in 2021, the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act prohibits religious

conversions through misrepresentation, force, fraud, undue influence, coercion, and allurement.

Through separate petitions, the couples had sought the high court’s direction for protection and non-interference in their matrimonial lives. The court dismissed these petitions on various dates between January 10 and 16, 2024.

Justice Saral Srivastava,

while dismissing the petitions, observed that these interfaith marriages did not adhere to legal provisions, given the non-compliance with the anti-conversion law.

Among the eight cases, five involved Muslim men marrying Hindu women, and three involved Hindu men marrying Muslim women. The court explicitly mentioned the religious affiliations of the petitioners in its

orders.

The court, while rejecting the pleas, stated, “In such a view of the fact, the relief prayed by the petitioners cannot be granted. Consequently, the writ petitions are dismissed.”

However, the court left open the possibility for the petitioners to file fresh writ petitions if they solemnized their marriages after following the due legal procedure.

# GUJARAT’S R-DAY TABLEAU WINS FIRST PLACE IN PEOPLE’S CHOICE CATEGORY

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Gujarat’s tableau on Dhordo tourism village showcased during the Republic Day parade in New Delhi has bagged first place in the people’s choice category, Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel announced on January 30. A total of 25 tableaus were presented by the states, Union Territories, and various ministries of the country during the parade on the 75th Republic Day.

Dhordo, a small village located in the Kachchh district of Gujarat on the western tip of India, has become synonymous with its rich cultural heritage. This border village is known as the gateway to the picturesque White Rann, celebrates its traditional handicrafts, folk music, and annual Rann Utsav. Dhordo has now been awarded the prestigious title



Gujarat tableau passed through the Kartavya Path during the 75th Republic Day parade in New Delhi.

of “Best Tourism Village” by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). This recognition sets the stage for the theme of the Gujarat state tableau: ‘Dhordo: A Global Icon of Gujarat’s Border Tourism.’ In a post on ‘X’, the chief minister said, “I am extremely happy to inform you that the Gujarat tableau displayed in the parade organised at Kartavyapath, New

Delhi, as part of the Republic Day celebrations has bagged first place in the people’s choice category.”

He further said that the Gujarat tableau also bagged second place in the judges’ choice category. Patel further said that the tableau, which was based on the theme ‘Dhordo: Global Identity of Gujarat’s Border Tourism’, covered interesting aspects of the

art and culture of Kutch. “It is a matter of great pride for all of us that the tableau from Gujarat has bagged the first position in the people’s choice category for the second year in a row. Hon’ble Prime Minister Narendrabhai Modi had dreamt years ago that the white desert of Dhordo would become a global tourism hub,” Patel wrote. Patel also said, “Thanks to the development of Kutch under the guidance of the prime minister, Dhordo was recently adjudged as the “Best Tourism Village” by UNWTO” and also added that the tableau reflected various cultural aspects of Kutch, such as Rann Utsav, traditional mud house called as Bhunga and handicrafts. “Congratulations to the team involved in the production and presentation of this tableau and to all Gujaratis.

# ANYONE WHO SHOWS EYES TO US WILL FACE CONSEQUENCES: RAJNATH SINGH

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Stating that the times have changed now, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday said that today if anyone shows eyes to India, they will have to bear the consequences as India has transformed into a powerful nation.

Addressing the Special Session of the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce, Rajnath Singh said, “India will keep moving forward. This is not a weak India. India has now become a powerful India. If anyone will come and show their eyes and go away, this won’t happen.

They will have to face the consequences. This is India.” Praising Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for pushing economic development in his state, Rajnath Singh said that the wheel of development is moving swiftly in UP. “I have also been the Chief Minister (of Uttar Pradesh) but I can say about the current CM that he has given a new height to Uttar Pradesh. The wheel of development is moving swiftly. Today, investors are



Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh presents Business Woman of the Year 2023 to Bina Modi, Chairperson Modi Enterprises during Indo-American Chamber of Commerce North India Council Conference on ‘Strengthening Indo-US Relationship in Amritkal - Aatmanirbhar Bharat’, in New Delhi on Tuesday.

*Praising Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath for pushing economic development in his state, Rajnath Singh said that the wheel of development is moving swiftly in UP.*

coming to Uttar Pradesh. Domestic or foreign investors do not want to come to a state that has poor governance and law and order,” he said. Defence Minister asserted that the Government has laid the groundwork for a strong and self-reliant ‘New India’, and American investments can play a vi-

tal role in realising Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision of ‘Viksit Bharat’.

Terming it as a win-win situation for both countries, he stated that India’s fast-growing economy, its demographic dividend, skilled workforce, and huge domestic market guarantee high returns to US companies.

## SC extends interim protection from arrest to SHUATS’s VC in religious conversion case

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday extended the interim protection from arrest to the Vice-Chancellor and other higher officials of Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture Technology and Science (SHUATS), accused of persuading a woman to adopt Christianity by offering her job and other allurements.

A bench of Justices Anurudha Bose and Sanjay Kumar also directed the State of Uttar Pradesh to file an affidavit within one week. The apex court has now posted the matter for hearing after three weeks. In December 2023, the top court upheld the Allahabad High Court order, which had refused to stay the FIR registered against the VC and other senior officials. The High Court, while de-

clining to quash the FIR, had asked them to surrender before the competent court on or before December 20 and seek regular bail.

Challenging the High Court order, they approached the apex court, seeking protection from arrest and stay on the High Court order.

The FIR was registered at Bewar in Hamirpur district of Uttar Pradesh against Rajendra Bihari Lal, Vice-Chancellor of SHUATS, its Director Vinod Bihari Lal, and five other officials of the Christian minority institution in a case concerning an attempt to convert people to Christianity.

The appeal before the top court stated that the FIR contains “baseless and unsubstantiated allegations.” “The present impugned FIR has been lodged with malafide intention just

in order to falsely implicate, harass, and malign the petitioners and the university,” it added. The incident so mentioned in the impugned FIR dates back to 2005, and the present FIR was registered on November 4, 2023, for which there is no plausible justification coming forward to explain this inordinate delay, the petitioners contended. The High Court on December 11, 2023, refused to quash the FIR and observed that no true religion would approve of malpractices of religious conversion by undue force by a priest or godmen. The allegations are that they persuaded a woman to adopt Christianity by offering her a job and other allurements.

In an FIR registered on November 4, 2023, lodged under Section 376D (gang rape) and other IPC sec-

tions and relevant sections of the UP Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act, 2021, and the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, 1956, in Bewar, the woman alleged that she belonged to a lower middle-class family and was trapped by another woman who took her regularly to a church. In the FIR, she also alleged that she was regularly subjected to sexual exploitation by the accused petitioners, and she was persuaded and pressured to bring other women for conversion and other illegal work. However, petitioners have submitted that the victim was offered a job at SHUATS, and when she was sacked from her service in 2022, she tailored a story, as mentioned in the FIR, just to rope in all the higher officials of SHUATS, including the Vice-Chancellor.



# Empowering women through digital financial inclusion

Efforts must be made to ensure that technologies eliminate digital gender gap.

## OPINION

PROF. RABI NARAYAN KAR

Empowering underprivileged people remains a key to bringing about financial inclusion. They have been out of the mainstream economy due to lack of financial inclusion and access to the banking system in the digital era. As exemplified by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's comment that his government aims to "put our Nari Shakti at the forefront of India's development journey," the Digital Literacy Initiative is expected to enable especially women to have savings accounts, access to credit, insurance and digital payments which are need of the hour. He further added that "these efforts will continue with even greater vigour in the coming times."

It will further give opportunities for generating income, improving livelihood, accumulating assets, and participating in economic activities, and household decisionmaking that help in promoting social and economic empowerment.

The mission of Digital India, launched in 2015, is to connect and integrate an unbanked population and bring them into the financial net with use of technology at affordable cost. The launch of

JAM Trinity services – Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, and Mobile and the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) – helped lay the groundwork for Digital India. The unique identification process of Aadhaar is linked with the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme, as a result, there has been a significant improvement in terms of accurate payments. This has been made very easy and people-friendly electronics mode of payments by replacing the dependence on cash-mode payments that has helped in weeding out fake welfare scheme beneficiaries. Today, access to banking and digital transactions is one of the remarkable success stories of India.

However, to realize their full potential, efforts must be made to ensure that these technologies eliminate digital gender gap and build a more inclusive digital world.

As part of his development agenda, Shri Modi has launched a series of national schemes for financial inclusion. His aim is to extend formal credit and savings opportunities to the weak and marginalized as well as to get rid of moneylenders. These schemes include Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT), issuance

of RuPay cards, Aadhaar-enabled unified payment interface for universal access to banking facilities, etc. The biggest fillip to the efforts of financial inclusion has come from Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) in 2015. Until 2014, the World Bank estimated that there was 21 percent adult population without a bank account.

As per the Ministry of Finance, as on 28 August 2023, more than 50 crore bank accounts have been opened. As of 2023, among these accounts, about 56 percent belong to women, and 67 percent have been opened in rural and semi-urban areas. The PMJDY accounts have enormously grown from 14.72 crore in March 2015 to 50.09 crore in 2023. Total deposits under PMJDY Accounts stand at Rs. 2,03,505 crores. It is also estimated that 33.98 crore RuPay cards have been issued to PMJDY account-holders. Similarly, the 'Mudra Yojana' scheme has reached out to 390 million small and micro women entrepreneurs through institutional credit and about 74 percent of them belong to marginalized sections.

A large number of accounts are active with zero balance. Average deposits in such accounts also increased from Rs 1,279 in 2015 to Rs 2,783 in 2019 and Rs 4,076 in 2023. Altogether, the Jan Dhan accounts hold a deposit of over Rs 2 lakh crore. With similar focus, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has been striving to extend the banking network and outreach by set-



ting up new banks, branches, ATMs and new payment banks. Banking infrastructure in rural India has been increased over the years; the public sector banks opened 316 branches in rural areas, out of the total 927 branches during 2022-23.

### DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT

Over the years, the digital technology infrastructure has been geared to focus on enabling a unique biometric identification number, low cost payments with UPI, an instant real-time payment system through various easy and convenient modes of digital payments including BHIM, Paytm, Google Pay, PhonePe, and data sharing and security through Digilocker, which aims at ensuring the goal of a secured, insured, digitalised empowered society. As per the Ministry of Finance, BHIM UPI has emerged one of the most preferred payment modes in the country. In 2017-18 the total number of digital transactions was 2,071 crore,

in 2020-21 it reached to 5,554 crore and till 31st December, 2022 it was 9,192 crore. The value of digital transactions in 2017-18 was 1,962 lakh crore and in 2020-21 it touched 3,000 lakh crore and till 31st December, 2022 it was 2,050 lakh crore. The user base and number of transactions have significantly grown since the Demonetization and the COVID 19 pandemic.

The number of mobile users in India is continuously rising. According to the Internet and Mobile Association of India and KANTAR report 2022, out of 759 million active users in the country, 360 million are from urban India and 399 million from rural India. Urban India witnessed a 6 percent growth in internet penetration, while rural India experienced a 14 percent increase. Of all the internet users, 54 percent are male and 57 percent are female in 2022. It is also projected that by 2025 the female users will to 65 percent.

Undoubtedly, over the years, India has significantly

improved the financial inclusion of the marginalised sections and enabled digital services to rural communities across the country. With the ubiquitous nature of digital technology, access to different productive resources for rural women can easily be ensured.

Despite such a huge progress, the major challenges include how to bring everyone to banking system, sustaining regular transaction by the users and providing them financial awareness. Similarly, rural women and girls suffer the costs of limited access to digital resources and opportunities due to lack of availability, adaptability as well as skills to use digital services. The affordability of internet and access to smartphones are still low in rural areas. The digital network connectivity to the most remote rural locations in India can empower and help to create large-scale employment opportunities for rural women. The government has to pay equal attention to digital literacy and its security and privacy for a better financial inclusion as well as prioritizing gender equality in the digital space. With the increase in cyber-fraud, mere digital literacy would not uphold financial inclusion of women, especially underprivileged, unless the cheating and fraudulent practices are impeded at the highest level to achieve the desired outcome.

Rabi Narayan Kar is Principal, Shyam Lal College, University of Delhi

## PERSPECTIVE MANDAL & KAMANDAL

# GOING BEYOND THE U-TURN

Nitish Kumar has done yet another U-turn and is back in the BJP fold. The key question is not so much about the Bihar Chief Minister's political trajectory as it is about the larger political landscape.

First let's talk about what this tells us about the BJP's strategy for 2024. Given the fact that the move to woo Nitish Kumar happened post the great Ram Mandir Pran Prathistha ceremony tells us that the BJP is not going to rest on the Kamandal plank alone. It is going to be seeking out votes on mandal as well and for that, who better to rope in than the person who recently resuscitated the caste survey. Apart from which the JD(U)-BJP combine complements each other's vote banks. Also it kind of takes away the steam from Rahul Gandhi espousing the cause for a caste survey, when the posterboy for the same has jumped ship.

More worrying is what Nitish Kumar's desertion signifies for the I.N.D.I.A block. One, its clear that he feels the opposition has nothing to offer him, both at the state level and at the centre. Two this is also coming at the heels of other allies acting tough with the Congress. Mamata Bannerjee has almost ruled out an alliance with the Congress, the Aam Admi Party has said okay to one in Delhi but is expecting a quid pro quo in Haryana and Gujarat and is not keen to go in for an alliance in Punjab. While in Uttar Pradesh, Akhilesh Yadav has unilaterally announced 11 seats for the Congress while the latter clearly wants a whole lot more. But can the Congress afford to talk tough at a time when its own winnability quotient is at an all time low. Indeed there are those who are wondering if the Congress tally would fall even lower in the next round of General Elections. On top of that you have a continuous high profile exodus of leaders once considered part of Rahul Gandhi's 'Camelot' - former union minister Milind Deora being the latest on that list.

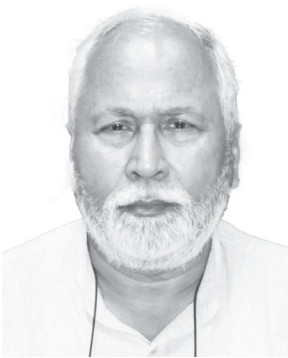
Moreover apart from leadership there is still the question of ideology. Post the Ram Mandir Pran Prathistha there has been a huge wave of hindu consolidation in the BJP's favour. The Prime Minister has delivered on a much longed for yearning not just by hardline Hindus but even the moderate ones who felt sidelined in their own country. While it is still too early to pronounce India as a theocratic state it would be stupid to deny that Narendra Modi is clearly the Hindu Hriday Samrat who has reached out to the majority community in a way no politician before him has. And that is going to be the Congress party's toughest narrative to counter in the coming polls.

PRIYA SAHGAL

# Rise and rise of Narendra Modi and the Global Acclaim

## OPINION

PROF. RAGHAVENDRA P. TIWARI



A few months back Pew Research Centre, the prestigious nonpartisan think tank of the US, stated that among Indians, PM Modi and India's rising influence are viewed favourably. About seventy-nine percent Indians hold Modi in a highly approving rate and they show confidence in Modi in making right and wider policy choices. The factual report of Pew Research Centre is based on rigorous research and hence considered thoroughly authentic; it holds Narendra Modi as India's most popular political figure. The confidence and trust level of Indians on Modi is much stronger than that enjoyed by other politicians of the country. Modi's popularity is across the socio-economic and demographic spectrum, in ur-

ban and rural areas, to both men and women, among all age groups and educational backgrounds. Actually, Modi sweats hard to stay connected with the people of all age-groups through various means like 'Man Ki Baat', 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' and MY Bharat Portal and ensures their participation, especially of youth, in the socio-economic and cultural development discourse. Modi's popularity can be gauged from the fact that his YouTube channel has surpassed twenty million subscriptions. With this, Modi has outpaced other prominent global leaders. Modi's channel records of all-time high 2.24 billion viewers is 43 times higher than that of Ukraine's Zelensky, who holds the second highest number of views globally. This popularity on the cyberspace is approval of Modi's digital prowess and his potential to appeal globally.

PM Modi, in fact, has animated politics by overcoming shibboleths and expanding the geopolitical role of the country. This has significantly improved India's global profile. Whereas previously India was considered to be a swing state,

in the emerging scenario it has become a close partner of US. Modi has succeeded in articulating policies to keep a fine balance between the diplomatic relations with the West and at the same time with the traditional ally, Russia. His resolute stand on Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Palestinian conflict is reiteration of the commitment of Bharat for the harmonious world order. A recently published article in Global Times, a prominent state-run Chinese media house, clearly portrays India's remarkable achievements over the past four years. The author Zhang, the Director of the Centre for South Asian Studies at Fudan University posits that in the last four years India's domestic and foreign affairs have improved tremendously. In the socio-economic development and cultural spheres of governance, the country has witnessed speedy reforms that have yielded tangible results and have enhanced India's reputation globally. The article praises ascendancy of India as a more strategically confident nation which has given considerable thrust to economic, social and political governance especially through "Bharat-centric narratives."

This is approval of India's rapid escape from its erstwhile status of "political dwarf", which in fact was an outcome of nearly two-century long colonial rule. Ushering from this dismal background, the country is

moving towards a status of "world-mentor", culturally, socio-economically and politically. The Chinese think-tank appreciates India's shift from multi-balancing to multi-alignment nation, which has given the country a status of world-power to be recognized by the first-world.

UK lawmaker Lord Karan Bilimoria, while heaping praises on Modi, referred to him as "one of the most powerful persons on the planet." This is because Modi's tax reforms, pro-market economic policies and defence modernization have bolstered the inner fabric of the country and enhanced prestige globally. This renewal and revival of inner structures is well synchronized with the foreign policy dynamism of the country. The feather in the cap came with the presidency of India to host G-20 Summit. British PM Rishi Sunak praised Modi's leadership just ahead of the G-20 summit by saying: "This country's scale, diversity and its extraordinary success means India is the right country to hold G-20 Presidency. I pay tribute to Prime Minister Modi's leadership over the last year and it is wonderful to see India capable for such a global leadership."

During the G-7 Summit in Hiroshima, Japan's then Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi highly appreciated Modi for his leadership in building resilient and sustainable agriculture and food systems.

Further, Yoshimasa highly praised Modi for placing economic growth as one of his top priority agenda for governance. These agenda basically include Make in India, Vocal for Local, Jai Anusandhan, Lab to Land, Digital India, Clean India, Startup India, Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat, Atma Nirbhar Bharat and cultural revivalism. Skilling, reskilling and upskilling of youth through National Education Policy, empowering them with the creative, critical thinking and entrepreneurial mind-set, promoting rural and community skills and creating an overarching ecosystem for start-ups for promoting innovations and strengthening production chain will go a long way in making India an economic superpower. This coupled with a basket of pro-poor and socio-economic welfare measures places Modi uniquely in the development discourse of India. His development narrative for India is in fact a mixed bag of both, strengthening India's traditional 'Soft Power' and the West's 'Hard Power'.

In emergence of Modi at the national and global platform, a crystal clear parallel can be drawn between a long span of political uncertainty in India prior to his party registering a comfortable mandate. Similarly, Japan's six years of political instability ultimately led to the rise of Japanese Ex-Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Modi's close friend, in

2012. Emergence of both the leaders to power was a reflection of the resolve of their respective countries to reinvent themselves as more competitive and confident nations. Modi's consistently rising graph is the telling truth of the resolve of Indians for a dynamic, assertive and a nationalistic yet global leadership skilled to revitalize country's economic fortunes, security, social fabric and culture.

Modi retained his position as the world's most popular leader with an approval rating of 76 per cent, as per the data released by US-based consultancy firm 'Morning Consult' on December 7, 2023. In fact, Modi has focused on reviving the country's economic fortunes, while simultaneously strengthening strategic partnerships with friendly states for promoting regional and global stability. This has certainly brought a paradigm shift in diplomacy with a much-needed transition from foreign-centric focus to Bharat-centric one. Under Modi's leadership, India's enhanced strategic confidence has helped shape a Bharat-centric narrative. India's departure from traditional Western-centric democratic ideals now spotlights the distinctive "Bharatiya feature" of democratic politics. In the political and cultural spheres, India has moved from emphasizing its democratic consensus with the West to highlighting the Indian feature of democratic

values. This shift signifies India's ambition to break free from its historical colonial legacy and emerge as a global leader, both politically and civilizationally.

The most acclaimed and impactful slogan in the development discourse of Bharat propounded by Modi is 'Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Prayas and Sabka Vishwas' has immense potential to metamorphose the contemporary civilizational discourse. It is this narrative which will actually help realize the vision of Modi to drive India into a 'Viksit Bharat@2047. With the decisive leadership of Modi, India is certainly poised to shape the global future. Vibrant India is a stunning manifestation of Modi's extraordinary vision. Modi's vision has led to the merging of grand ambition, scaling-up and meticulous governance and flawless execution. Modi's leadership has kindled a nationwide campaign to march forward, competing and cooperating to basically restructure the economic, political, cultural and industrial landscape of the country. In fact, Modi regime operates in a much larger canvass, both domestically and globally covering almost all spheres of human indulgence.

Even a cursory look at the statistics of the last few years depicts the remarkable achievements of the government led by PM Modi. This becomes crystal clear from the fact that since 2014, India's GDP has grown by

185%. Similarly, per capita income of average Indian has increased by stunning 165%. These achievements are unparalleled, especially considering this decade's geo-political conflicts and pandemic challenges. The image of the nation has witnessed quantum jump on the global platform. Instead of seeking a voice on a global platform, India now creates the global platform itself. The International Solar Alliance, the Green Hydrogen Innovation Centre and the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor Project at the initiative of India's G20 Presidency have set a benchmark for a more inclusive and harmonious world-order. Adding the Global South to the G20 has defined a revolutionary movement in the modern world history. Modi's leadership has reoriented India to become one of the fastest growing nations of the world and positioned her as the Global economic, social and cultural champion. Two philosophies, namely, "Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam" and "Vishwa Guru" have surely contributed most significantly in enhancing the prestige and influence of the nation on the global context. In fact, the best is yet to come with the foresight, intellect and genius of PM Modi. With Modi's vision of Viksit Bharat @2047, India of today is destined to shape the global future tomorrow. Prof. Raghavendra P. Tiwari is Vice Chancellor, Central University of Punjab, Bathinda.



# REMEMBERING MAHATMA

**Martyr's Day 2024:** Tuesday marked the 76th death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, who was assassinated by Nathuram Vinayak Godse on January 30, 1948 in Birla House, New Delhi. As mark of respect to Bapuji, we present some of the memorable quotes by Father of the Nation.



## ON ANIMALS

- The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.
- To my mind, the life of a is no less precious than that of a human being. I should be unwilling to take the life of a lamb for the sake of the human body. I hold that the more helpless a creature, the more entitled it is to protection...
- I feel that spiritual progress does demand at some stage that we should cease to kill our fellow creatures for the satisfaction of our bodily wants.



## ON LIFE

- Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.
- Truth never damages a cause that is just.
- Where there is love there is life.
- There is more to Life than Increasing its Speed.



## ON FREEDOM

- Freedom is not worth having if it does not connote freedom to err. It passes my comprehension how human beings, be they ever so experienced and able, can delight in depriving other human beings of that precious right.
- I'm a lover of my own liberty, and so I would do nothing to restrict yours.



## ON THOUGHTS

- Always aim at complete harmony of thought and word and deed. Always aim at purifying your thoughts and everything will be well.
- Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.



## ON PEACE

- I regard myself as a soldier, though a soldier of peace.
- The sacrifice which causes sorrow to the doer of the sacrifice is no sacrifice. Real sacrifice lightens the mind of the doer and gives him a sense of peace and joy. The Buddha gave up the pleasures of life because they had become painful to him.



## ON VIOLENCE

- Nonviolence is the first article of my faith. It is also the last article of my creed.
- The ideally non-violent state will be an ordered anarchy. That State is the best governed which is governed the least.
- I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary the evil it does is permanent.



The world's homage (United Nation's flag at half-mast).

### SUPREME COURT OBSERVES 2 - MINUTE SILENCE ON MARTYRS' DAY

The Supreme Court observed a two-minute silence on Tuesday in honor of those who sacrificed their lives in the struggle for India's freedom. A seven-judge Constitution bench of Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud, along with Justices Sanjiv Khanna, Surya Kant, J B Pardiwala, Dipankar Datta, Manoj Misra, and Satish Chandra Sharma were in the midst of hearing arguments regarding the minority status of the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU). At 10.59 am, the bench rose and observed a two-minute silence. Following this, all benches resumed their proceedings for the day. January 30 is commemorated as Martyrs' Day, marking the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi (2nd October 1869-30th January 1948). In accordance with the annual tradition, a circular issued by the apex court on January 25 stated, "As per practice followed every year, two minutes' silence will be observed at 11.00 am on Tuesday, January 30, 2024, in the memory of those who laid down their lives in the struggle for India's freedom."



# DELHI HIGH COURT DISMISSED PIL TO INCLUDE AYURVEDA, YOGA IN AYUSHMAN BHARAT PMJAY SCHEME

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court in the case Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay v. Union of India and Others observed and has dismissed the public interest litigation, PIL moved seeking inclusion of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy in Union Government's public health insurance scheme Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, PM-JAY.

The Division bench comprising of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Manmeet Pritam Singh Arora in the case observed and has rejected the petition filed by the BJP leader and Advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay in default due to non-prosecution. The court stated that even after the Passover, none is present for the petitioner. Dismissed in default. The court in the case observed and has issued the notice in the

matter in the month of November last year and seek response of the Union Ministries of AYUSH, Finance, Health and Family Welfare and Home Affairs as well as the Delhi Government. However, when the said matter was called twice, no counsel appeared for either side. It being the case of Upadhyay's that the Central Government's scheme is limited to allopathic hospitals and dispensaries, while India boasts

various indigenous medical systems, including Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Siddha, Unani and Homeopathy, which are rooted in India's rich traditions and are highly effective in addressing the healthcare needs of the present time. The court in the case observed and has stated that India is a country which is rich in various great traditions of sages which is also mentioned in various available scriptures, Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads, etc.

The petition reads that due to various policies created by foreign rulers and individuals with a colonial mindset, our cultural, intellectual knowledge, and scientific heritage have been systematically eroded. Therefore, the court stated that with this, these foreigners, motivated by a profit-oriented approach, have thoughtfully implemented many laws and schemes during the time of our country's independence that

have slowly undermined our rich heritage and history. It has also been submitted by Upadhyay before the court that it being the duty of the State to re-establish the country's powerful civilization, rich knowledge and cultural heritage. Adding to it, he stated that the Indian healthcare system is not covered under the Ayushman Scheme. Further, the petition stated that it is important to note that, according to the fundamental

spirit of the Constitution, Indian citizens have the right to health, and they also have the right to choose their preferred treatment and doctor. Therefore, it being the government responsibility to take steps in this direction and health services should have widespread accessibility, allowing everyone to access various types of services and ensuring the quality of these services is sufficient to improve people's health.

## Supreme Court Rebukes Lawyer For Filing ‘Misconceived’ PIL: Learn Some Law, Do Not File These Kind Of Petitions

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case observed and has admonished the lawyer to be aware of the existing nuances of law before filing such petitions. The Supreme Court in the case observed and has refused to entertain the Public Interest Litigation, PIL moved seeking directions

to State Governments to set up 'Courts Special Cells' to ensure compliance with Court Orders. The bench headed by CJI in the case observed and has rebuked the petitioner, you are back again? Last time I told you not to file such PILs...somebody will impose costs of on you. Now the said direction in PIL that all state govt and must comply with the court

orders... we were gentle on you last time, but you have persisted on filing these PILs. Please do something else. If you have a little free time, you can attach yourself to a Senior Lawyer, learn some law and not file these kinds of petitions' In the present case, the Public Interest Litigation, PIL moved seek directions to the state governments to constitute ' Courts Special

Cells' overseeing compliance of orders passed by the Courts and to issue circulars to the government departments to follow the orders of the Court. The bench headed by CJI explained that the Court need not pass any such specific directions as the remedy already lies in filing a contempt petition in a situation when the state authorities do not follow

the orders of the Court. Further, it has been stated by him that this court cannot pass a general order like this. That is the law, you have to comply with the orders passed by the Court. The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case finds the PIL to be 'misconceived'. Accordingly, the court dismissed the PIL.

12.12.2023, between 11.20 am and 12 noon, the petitioner sexually assaulted the students. In response to it, the counsel appearing for the for petitioner submitted before the court that not only was there a delay of six days in reporting the alleged incident but that the accused has been in judicial custody since 20.12.2023 and his continued detention is not required for the purpose of investigation. The court in the case observed and has imposed several conditions for bail which included that the petitioner shall not enter the limits of school premises for a period of three months or till the end of the investigation, whichever is earlier. The petitioner was also ordered not to contact the victims or their families, and shall not influence or intimidate them, either directly or indirectly. Therefore, the petitioner

in the case shall not influence or intimidate the witnesses and shall not tamper with the investigation in the case. The court also charged petitioner under section 354(1)(i) of the Indian Penal Code, IPC (Assault of criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), Section 10 read with Section 9(f) (aggravated sexual assault of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act and Section 75, the punishment for cruelty to child of Juvenile Justice, the Care and Protection of Children Act.

## SUPREME COURT AGREES TO HEAR PLEA ALLEGING ALLOTMENT OF CONTRACTS TO ARUNACHAL CM'S FAMILY

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Save Mon Region Federation And Anr v The State Of Arunachal Pradesh And Ors. observed and has agreed to issue notice in the Public Interest Litigation, PIL moved seeking directions for SIT probe into the alleged irregular allotment of public contracts to the companies owned by relatives of the incumbent chief minister of Arunachal Pradesh, Mr Pema Khandu. The bench comprising of CJI DY Chandrachud and Justice JB Pardiwala and Justice Manoj Misra was apprised of the previous pending SLP in relation to the alleged arbitrary allotments of public work contracts to the family of the Chief Minister in the state. The counsel, Advocate

Prashant Bhushan, appearing for the petitioners mentioned that a similar SLP related to the father of the present Chief Minister, Mr Dorjee Khandu was pending before the bench of Justices Anirudha Bose and Bela Trivedi. In the present case, Mr Dorjee Khandu was also accused of giving important public works contracts to his family companies. The counsel, Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for the petitioners explained that in the matter, there was an IA bringing out these contracts also before the court also which happened subsequent to the earlier proceeding, hundreds of contracts being given to the family members of the present Chief Minister. The counsel stated that in October, they have had

asked the CAG as to what are the rules regarding giving contracts to your family members etc. The CAG had given a note. It has also been alleged in the petition that partiality in giving away key tenders to the close associates of Mr Pema Khandu including the construction company 'M/s brand Eagles' belonging to Khandu's spouse. Additionally, Pema's nephew Mr. Tsering Tashi, an MLA from Tawang District owning M/s Alliance Trading Co. has been awarded work contracts without following due procedure. The petitioner in the plea prays for an investigation into the matter either by the Central Bureau of Investigation, CBI or a Special Investigation Team, SIT. The court in the case observed and has issued the

notice in the writ petition with liberty to serve the standing counsel of State of Arunachal Pradesh. Facts of the Case: The similar matter filed by an NGO named 'Voluntary Arunachal Sena' and was represented by Advocate Prashant Bhushan, wherein it was alleged that contracts were given by the state government of Arunachal Pradesh without floating any tender. Therefore, the petitioner organisation filed the petition in the Supreme Court in 2010 challenging a decision of the Gauhati High Court to dismiss a PIL filed in 2007. Dorjee Khandu, the Chief Minister during 2007-2011 term is a respondent in the petition in personal capacity. Adding to it, the petitioner in the plea stated that the incumbent Chief Minister Pema Khandu (son of

Dorjee Khandu) as an additional respondent in his personal capacity later. The court in the case observed and has expressed its intention to seek assistance from the Comptroller Auditor General, CAG in the matter without impleading him as a party, had directed to submit a report on the following points: 1. That Whether very close relative(s) to the Executive Head of the State can be awarded Government contracts; 2. In the event this question is answered in the affirmative, what would be the norms for awarding contract to such persons. Subsequently, on perusal of the CAG report as submitted. Accordingly, the court listed the matter for further consideration on February 14, 2024.

12.12.2023, between 11.20 am and 12 noon, the petitioner sexually assaulted the students. In response to it, the counsel appearing for the for petitioner submitted before the court that not only was there a delay of six days in reporting the alleged incident but that the accused has been in judicial custody since 20.12.2023 and his continued detention is not required for the purpose of investigation. The court in the case observed and has imposed several conditions for bail which included that the petitioner shall not enter the limits of school premises for a period of three months or till the end of the investigation, whichever is earlier. The petitioner was also ordered not to contact the victims or their families, and shall not influence or intimidate them, either directly or indirectly. Therefore, the petitioner

The counsel, Advocate PK Varghese, Advocate MT Sameer, Advocate KR Arun Krishnan, Advocate Dhanesh V Madhavan, Advocate Jerry Mathew and Advocate Reghu Sreedharan appeared for the Petitioner. The counsel, Advocates Public Prosecutor Vipin Narayan represented the respondent.

## MADRAS HIGH COURT: RECKONING DATE FOR LIMITATION IS THE DATE OF FILING FINAL REPORT, NOT REGISTRATION OF FIR | S.468 CRPC

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Madras High Court in the case A. Kaliyaperumal v. The Superintendent of Police observed and has held that the reckoning date for calculating the limitation period under Section 469 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, CrPC would be from the date of filing of the final report and not the date of registration of FIR. The bench headed by Justice Anand Venkatesh in the case observed and has noted that in a case emanating from the FIR, cognizance is taken by the Magistrate upon the filing of the final report. Adding to it, the court stated that the basis of the FIR is only information received by the police authorities and not a 'complaint' of which cognizance is taken. Therefore, the said court went on the discussion while hearing the petition moved seeking to transfer an investigation on the ground that police had not taken steps to complete the

*The bench headed by Justice Anand Venkatesh in the case observed and has noted that in a case emanating from the FIR, cognizance is taken by the Magistrate upon the filing of the final report.*

investigation. The court observed that in another case, the petition was moved for quashing the FIR as the final report had not been filed to date thus contending that there was a bar in taking cognizance. The counsel, Additional Public Prosecutor informed the court that in the first case, the final report had been filed but since the final report was filed much beyond the period of limitation, the court had not taken cognizance of the same and issued notice to the accused. The court in the case observed and has relied upon the decision of the Madras High Court in the case Kishore v. State, wherein it is contended that there was no requirement for condon-

ing since the complaint was lodged with the police within the period of limitation. The bench headed by single judge in the case observed that the relevant date for Section 468 CrPC was the date of filing the complaint or the date of institution of prosecution. The bench headed by Justice Venkatesh in the case observed and has opined that the single judge had misunderstood information given to the police under Section 154 CrPC as a complaint under Section 9(d). The court in the case observed that as per section 154 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the registration of FIR was based on 'information' and the same could not be equated to a 'complaint'. It has also been noted by

the said court that a complaint could be made only to the court and not to a police officer. The court also discussed the decision of the Apex Court in the case Sarah Mathew v Institute of Cardio Vascular Disease, wherein it has been held by the Apex Court that the relevant date was the date of filing of the complaint. The court also noted that Sarah Mathew arose from a complaint made to the magistrate under Section 190(1) (a) and was not based on a police report. The court in the case also looked into the decision in the case Arun Vyas v Anita Vyas, wherein the court held that cut-off date as the date on which the final report was filed and not the date of filing of the FIR. The court also noted that this decision was upheld by a three-judge bench in the case State of H.P. v. Tara Dutt and a two-judge bench in Ramesh v. State of T.N. Further, the court noted that the earlier decision of the single judge had

wrongly relied on the decision of the Apex Court in Sarah Mathew which was based on a complaint and thus did not subscribe to the view taken therein. The court in the case observed and has directed the Magistrate to grant the opportunity of hearing to the accused and dispose of the petition within six weeks. In the second case, it has been noted by the said court that though the crime was registered in 2015, no final report had been filed till date even though it should have been filed within 3 years. It has been opined by the said court that keeping the FIR pending would not serve any purpose and thus quashed the FIR. The Advocates Mr. M Mohamed Riyaz and Mr. S Thiruvengadam also assisted the bar in the discussion. The Counsel, Mr A.Damodaran Additional Public Prosecutor represented the respondent.

categorically stated that permission for live screenings and special poojas could not be denied solely based on the presence of other religious communities in any given area. The court in the case observed and has issued the notice on the BJP member's petition. The bench in the case also instructed the state to maintain a record of received applications and mandated that speaking orders, elucidating reasons for approval or denial, must be provided in all cases. The Supreme Court in its order stated that this court believe and trust that the authorities will act in accordance with the law and not on the basis of any oral instructions. The counsel, AAG Tiwari sought time to file an affidavit, but orally apprised the bench of the number of applications that were denied. It has also been argued by the counsel, AAG that the court to drop the proceedings, pointing to contemporaneous litigation pending in both Madurai and Madras benches of the high court over the same issue. Therefore, the law officer stated that, 'Let the high court consider all these issues.'

The bench headed by Justice Khanna stated that

this court will see, you file affidavit. While turning next to the petitioner, who was represented by Senior Advocate Dama Seshadri Naidu, the judge said, "You have filed an application for amendment. That we will not entertain. If there is anything further which is to be done, let the affidavit come...We may have to... Because at that time when you came before us, Mr Naidu, there was some urgency...Now that urgency is not there, so you normally go to other forums. In response to it, Naidu stated that May I pray for one small thing? Let it be kept pending. Let their counter come and then you take the call. The bench while pronouncing the hearing for 15 days stated that at the request of the counsel for the State of Tamil Nadu, 15 days' time is granted to file a short affidavit pointing out certain facts, which includes the pendency of writ petitions before two benches of the Madras High Court. Re-list after 15 days. At the end, when it has been asked by the by the petitioner's lawyer if a rejoinder could be filed on his behalf, bench headed by Justice Khanna remarked that, it not required. Event is gone now. Don't push it further. The order that was passed had its role to play.



TOP OF THE DAY

TAIWAN'S FIRST LUNAR MISSION READY FOR LAUNCH LATE THIS YEAR

TAIPEI: Taiwan's National Central University announced the country's first lunar mission on Monday, revealing that a Deep Space Radiation Probe (DSRP) developed by its faculty and students is scheduled to launch in Japan as early as the fourth quarter of this year, Central News Agency Taiwan reported on Monday. Deep space, over 2,000 kilometres from Earth, presents harsh radiation conditions, impacting both life forms and technological products, according to Loren Chang, chair of the Department of Space Science and Engineering at National Central University.

JORDANIAN SUPPORT FOR HAMAS GROWS AMIDST SYMBOLIC DISPLAYS

TEL AVIV: In a noticeable surge of solidarity, the streets of Jordan are witnessing a growing trend of support for Hamas and the ongoing conflict in the Gaza Strip. Recent developments reveal a striking manifestation of this backing through various businesses adopting names and symbols associated with the Palestinian cause. The controversially named restaurant "Seventh of October," which initially apologised for its overt homage to Hamas, turns out to be just the tip of the iceberg.

BALUCH LIBERATION ARMY LAUNCHES OP 'DARA-E-BOLAN'

QUETTA: The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) has initiated 'Operation Dara-e-Bolan' in the Mach and Bolan regions of Balochistan in alliance with the BLA's elite units, including the Majeed Brigade, Special Tactical Operations Squad, Fateh Squad, and Intelligence Wing, The Balochistan Post reported. The Balochistan Post cited Jeeyand Baloch, the spokesperson for the BLA, who advised residents in Mach city and the surrounding areas to stay indoors and avoid highways due to ongoing activities. Initial reports from Mach city indicated a massive explosion followed by intense gunfire.

ISRAELI SOLDIER WOUNDED IN ATTACK STABLE AFTER SURGERY

TEL AVIV: The Israeli soldier wounded in a car-ramping terrorist attack Monday morning is now in stable condition after completing eight hours of surgery. A spokesman for Rambam Hospital in Haifa, where the soldier was taken for treatment, said he underwent a series of orthopaedic surgeries conducted by three different teams from the hospital's orthopaedic department to treat injuries to his limbs. The soldier was transferred to the hospital's intensive care unit for observation.

ISRAELI UNDERCOVER FORCES DRESSED AS WOMEN AND MEDICS STORM WEST BANK HOSPITAL, KILLING THREE MILITANTS

The military said the militants were using the hospital as a hideout. It alleged that one of those targeted in the raid had transferred weapons and ammunition to others for a planned attack.

AGENCIES  
JENIN

Israeli forces disguised as civilian women and medical workers stormed a hospital on Tuesday in the occupied West Bank, killing three Palestinian militants in a dramatic raid that underscored how deadly violence has spilled into the territory from the war in Gaza.

The Palestinian Health Ministry said Israeli forces opened fire inside the wards of the Ibn Sina Hospital in the town of Jenin. The ministry condemned the raid and called on the international community to pressure Israel's military to halt such operations in hospitals. A hospital spokesperson said there was no exchange of fire, indicating that it was a targeted killing. The military said the militants were using the hospital as a hideout, without providing evidence. It



Palestinian mourners carry the body of Muhammad Jalamneh, draped in the Hamas militant group flag, during his funeral after he was killed in an Israeli military raid at Ibn Sina hospital in West Bank town of Jenin on Tuesday.

alleged that one of those targeted in the raid had transferred weapons and ammunition to others for a planned attack, purportedly inspired by the Hamas assault on southern Israel on October 7 that triggered the war in Gaza.

Footage said to be security camera video from the hospital that circulated on social media showed about a dozen undercover

forces, most of them armed, dressed as women with Muslim headscarves or hospital staff in scrubs or white doctor's coats. One in a surgical mask carried a rifle in one arm and a folded wheelchair in the other. The forces were seen patting down one man who kneeled against a wall, his arms raised.

Israel has come under heavy criticism for its raids on hospitals in Gaza, which

have acted as a shelter for displaced people and also as a critical yet struggling lifeline for the tens of thousands of Palestinians wounded in the war. Gaza's health care system, which was already feeble before the war, has been on the verge of collapse, buckling under the scores of patients, the lack of resources — including fuel and medical necessities blocked by Israeli restrictions — and the repeated fighting surrounding and inside hospitals.

Israel says militants use hospitals, especially in Gaza, to hide out or to launch operations from. The military has found underground tunnels in the vicinity of hospitals, and says it has located weapons and vehicles used in the October 7 attack on hospital grounds.

The war was triggered by Hamas' attack, when hundreds of militants stormed across the border, killing about 1,200 people, mostly

civilians, and abducting about 250 others.

The attack set off a blistering air, sea and ground offensive that has killed more than 26,000 people in Gaza and wounded more than 65,000, according to the Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza. The ministry court does not distinguish between fighters and noncombatants, but it says about two-thirds of the dead are women and minors.

The fighting has sparked a humanitarian catastrophe, displacing 85 per cent of the tiny coastal enclave's population, leveling vast swaths of it, and pushing a quarter of residents to starvation, according to the United Nations. That crisis may soon be exacerbated, the UN has warned, over a spate of funding freezes to the main aid provider to Palestinians in Gaza following Israeli claims that a dozen of its workers participated in the October 7 assault.

IMRAN'S POLITICAL RIVALS HAPPY OVER HIS 10-YEAR JAIL SENTENCE IN CIPHER CASE

AGENCIES  
LAHORE



Imran Khan

Major political parties, including the PML-N and PPP, on Tuesday hailed the 10-year prison sentence handed out to jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan in the cipher case even as Khan's party rejected it and decided to challenge it in the high court.

Earlier in the day, a special court set up under the Official Secrets Act handed down a 10-year jail term to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supremo Khan and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi for leaking state secrets.

The cipher case pertains to a piece of paper, purported to be a diplomatic cable -- the cipher -- that Khan had waved at a public rally on March 27, 2022, and naming the US, had claimed that it was 'evidence' of an "international conspiracy" to topple his government.

The case was filed against Khan, 71, and Qureshi, 67, on August 15 last year by the Federal Investigation Agency, which accused both of violating the secrecy laws while handling the cable sent by the Pakistan embassy in Washington in March 2022. Khan was ousted through a no-confidence motion in April 2022. Incarcerated Khan has already alleged that the powerful military establishment has favoured Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party's supremo Nawaz Sharif and that he (Khan) is being targeted to prevent him from returning to power.

LARGER BENCH TO BE FORMED IN PAKISTAN TO HEAR APPEALS ON MILITARY TRIALS

AGENCIES  
ISLAMABAD

The Pakistan Apex Court Judge Justice Sardar Tariq Masood referred a set of intra-court appeals (ICA) in the military court case back to the three judge committee for the reconstitution of a larger bench, Dawn News reported on Tuesday.

This comes after one of the petitioners argued that the present bench was not constituted by a three-judge committee under the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act, 2023.

The court was seized with a number of applications to refer the present appeals to the three-judge committee that decides benches to hear petitions under Section 2 of the SC (Practice and Procedure) Act, 2023, for the reconstitution of a bench by excluding

Justice Masood.

During the hearing, senior counsel Barrister Aitzaz Ahsan told the court that since his counsel, Sardar Latif Khosa was on a general adjournment, the present case would be heard after the February 8 general elections.

Similarly, Advocate Salman Akram Raja also furnished an application that he was on a general adjournment and, therefore, could not appear before the court.

As per the Pakistan-based news daily, Justice Masood, who was heading a six-judge bench upheld the December 13, 2023 suspension, which would continue against the operation of the court's October, 23 short order that declared as unconstitutional the trial of 103 civilians identified in relation to their alleged involvement in the May 9 violence.

NEPAL PM PAYS TRIBUTE TO MARTYRS WHO SACRIFICED LIVES FOR RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY

AGENCIES  
KATHMANDU

Nepal Prime Minister, Pushpa Kamal Dahal led his Council of Ministers in paying tribute to martyrs at the Martyrs Memorial in Lainchaur on the occasion of Martyrs' Day on Tuesday.

Dahal laid a wreath at the memorial and offered tributes to the known and unknown martyrs.

Ministers, high-ranking government officials, people's representatives, members of the security forces and members of musical bands of the security bodies also paid their respects at the memorial. The day is celebrated annually on Magh 16 (End of January), according to the Nepali calendar with various programmes in memory of the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the establishment and restoration of democracy and freedom. Nepal President Ram Chandra Paudel said respect for martyrs would be realized only when the spirit of the Constitution and the Republic were embraced and initiatives were taken for translating aspirations for sustainable peace, good governance, development and prosperity into action.

CARETAKER PAK PM SAYS POLITICAL PARTIES POLL MANIFESTOS 'LACK ECONOMIC FORESIGHT'

AGENCIES  
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar ul Haq Kakar expressed dissatisfaction over the manifestos released by the political parties for general elections and said that no political party has presented a plan to fix the economy, Dawn News reported.

It reported that PM Kakar also reassured that there was no reason to justify any delay in general elections.

He stated in an interview that political parties' candidates were canvassing, and all rumours regarding the delay in general elections would fall to rest on the evening of February 8.

PM Kakar underscored that the parties should focus on improving the economy but added that, unfortunately, no political party had yet come up with an agenda to fix the chronic economic issues.

The PM added that the



Pakistan caretaker PM Anwaar ul Haq Kakar

claims made by political parties in their campaigns regarding jobs, shelters, cheap electricity, food security, and others were contingent upon a stable economy, Dawn News reported.

"Political parties need to come up with a plan for revenue generation and widening the tax net."

He cited the example of the 91 per cent tax-to-GDP ratio in Scandinavian countries and said Pakistan's ratio stood at just 9 per cent.

GAZA CONFLICT EXPOSES CHINA'S WEAKNESS IN MIDDLE EAST

AGENCIES  
HONG KONG

China proclaims itself to be a responsible global player. The truth is, despite insistent proclamations of neutrality, it is biased in the way it relates to international crises such as the current Israel-Hamas conflict. Furthermore, this war is exposing the self-interested, mercantile qualities that China brings to all its foreign relations.

China is charting a careful path, simultaneously seeking to undermine the USA and curry favour with Arab states. Its risk-avoidance strategy can perhaps best be described as anti-Western neutrality. Approximately one million Chinese work in the Mid-

dle East, while the majority of China's oil imports originate from the Middle East - 87.5 million tonnes in 2022, with Saudi Arabia being the largest supplier of crude.

On January, 26-27, Foreign Minister Wang Yi met US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan in Bangkok. China's readout briefly stated that regional issues like the Middle East were "discussed". That was the limit of it. No mention of the Red Sea or Gaza.

In contrast, the USA said it attempted to persuade Beijing to pressure Iran to stop Houthi attacks on Red Sea shipping. According to a White House official, China agreed to "raise this with the Iranians." Nonetheless, an American official pondered, whether China

"chooses to use that leverage in that way, I think that remains to be seen".

China has done nothing to curb North Korea's nuclear aspirations, plus it has offered tacit support for Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Relying on China for anything substantive is a vain hope. China mediated a diplomatic deal between Saudi Arabia and Iran in March 2023, but Beijing has no real leverage over Teheran and certainly it cannot get it to reign in Hamas.

Interestingly, showing which side China really is on, the Houthis said Russian and Chinese ships will not be targeted in the Red Sea. The People's Liberation Army Navy has had anti-piracy task forces in the Gulf of Aden since 2008.

UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN ISRAEL TO LEARN ABOUT OCTOBER HAMAS ATTACK

AGENCIES  
TEL AVIV

Israel's First Lady, Michal Herzog Monday met at the President's Residence in Jerusalem with Pramila Patten, UN Under-Secretary-General and Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, who was visiting Israel with a team of senior UN legal and medical experts on a fact-finding mission investigating the wide-spread and systematic sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by Hamas on October 7.

PRINTING OF BALLOT PAPERS FOR PAKISTAN'S FEB 8 ELECTIONS TO BE COMPLETED BY FRIDAY

AGENCIES  
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's election authorities have said that printing of ballot papers for the February 8 general elections would be complete by Friday, according to a media report on Tuesday.

Pakistan is going to the polls for the National Assembly and four provincial legislatures next Thursday and the election campaigning is going on in full swing.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) said the delivery of ballot papers with the help of security personnel was underway simultaneously in the four provinces as the printing of ballot papers would be completed by February 2, The News International reported.

The printing of ballot papers, which is being done in three government presses, is going on satisfactorily, the report said.

"The printing work, which started on January 16 after the allotment of election symbols by returning officers (ROs),

Ahead of the meeting, the First Lady and President Isaac Herzog held a private meeting with Under-Secretary Patten.

President Herzog said: "The scenes we saw on 7th October continue to reverberate. They must be told and must be investigated, and most of all, the victims must be cared for."

First Lady Herzog said: "As a woman to a woman, I want to thank

you very much for coming to Israel with an open heart and open mind to listen and to see, and to help the survivors."

Under-Secretary Patten said: "I'm here to express my solidarity with the Government of Israel, the people of Israel, the survivors, the families of victims, and the families of hostages."

She added, "Sexual Violence used as a tactic of terrorism, as a tactic of war, is intended to destabilize, to



will be completed in the next four days, i.e. by February 2," the newspaper quoted an ECP spokesman as saying.

He said that at the same time, with the help of security agencies, ROs and district administrations, the delivery of ballot papers has started for the four provinces. These deliveries are being done both by road and air. The spokesman also pointed out that from January 29, people have been provided 8300 SMS services to get information about their polling station among other information.

Voters will have to send their identity card number to 8300 to get their vote information. All voters have been requested to get details of their and their family's vote on

time so that they do not face any problems in polling stations.

Meanwhile, the commission has so far completed the training of 970,000 polling staff out of 976,000 required polling staff, which is 96 per cent of the total required number. The training of the remaining 6,000 polling personnel will be completed in the next four days.

Separately, taking immediate notice of the news circulating in some sections of the media that a group of Ulemas in Kohistan has allegedly issued a fatwa banning women from campaigning, the commission immediately sought a report from the district monitoring officer of Kohistan Upper.

'SHORTAGE OF HANDS': ISRAELI FARMERS PRAISE HIGHER QUOTA FOR FOREIGN WORKERS

AGENCIES  
TEL AVIV

Leading figures in Israel's agricultural sector expressed their support for the government increasing the quota of foreign workers.

Addressing a severe agricultural labour shortage, the Israeli Cabinet on Sunday increased the quota of foreign workers in agriculture by 10,000.

"This decision aims to support farmers who previously relied on Palestin-

ian workers and to solve the problem of a shortage of working hands. The Farmers Federation supports this solution," Uri Dorman, Secretary General of the Israel Farmers Federation told Tazpit Press Service.

Active farmers and the processing companies to whom active farmers delegated their rights can now request foreign workers to fill the void left by the absence of Palestinian labor. This allocation is available to farmers engaged in agri-

culture in 2024, who held permits to employ Palestinian workers in 2023.

"The government's decision will let us fill the lack created by the non-employment of Palestinian workers in Israel, and end the upcoming season with minimal impact on agricultural production and the current harvest season," Agriculture Minister Avi Dichter said.

Israeli agriculture is facing staggering losses in production and manpower.



ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL



King Charles leaves the London Clinic with Queen Camilla after receiving treatment for an enlarged prostate. Image VoA

## US KICKSTARTS FIVE-WEEK H1-B VISA RENEWAL DRIVE, TO ACCEPT 20,000 APPLICATIONS

TDG NETWORK  
WASHINGTON, DC

H1B workers, including Indian nationals, can begin applying to renew their visas without leaving the US, marking a significant change after nearly two decades.

Up to 20,000 qualified non-immigrant workers can renew their H-1B visas domestically.

The announcement by the US Department of State on the pilot program for in-country renewal of certain petition-based temporary work visas, including for Indian nationals, was made in June 2023, during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US.

During the visit, PM Modi announced at an Indian American community event in Washington that the H-1B visa renewal stamping was being conducted in the US.

The joint statement released by the White House following the visit mentioned this development, indicating the commitment of both nations to streamline visa processes and facilitate the lives of temporary visa holders.

A total of 20,000 participants will be accepted for the



*A total of 20,000 participants will be accepted for the pilot over the next five weeks, split equally between workers who recently received their H-1B specialty occupation visas at consulates in India and Canada.*

pilot over the next five weeks, split equally between workers who recently received their H-1B specialty occupation visas at consulates in India and Canada.

A website released by the State Department ahead of the pilot's launch allowed visa holders to confirm their eligibility. Applicants could fill out a visa application form on the agency's website last week, although they couldn't be submitted until Monday.

"I am thrilled to see the announcement that the State

Department has officially launched the Visa Stamp initiative in the USA today. This endeavor aims to streamline and improve the visa process for legal immigrants, making it more efficient and less burdensome. This would eliminate the need for these applicants to travel abroad to renew visas," ANI quoted Ajay Bhutoria, a prominent advocate for immigration issues as saying.

"I believe this positive change will benefit thousands of the individuals invited to

work in the US and contribute to the growth of our nation's companies and economy," Bhutoria added. This pilot is one of the recommendations presented by Bhutoria of the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, which is now implemented by the State Department.

The initiative for now is limited to only H-1B workers who meet the criteria outlined in December and excludes dependent visa holders like spouses and children on H-4 visas--a source of frustration that many workers expressed when eligibility details emerged.

Bhutoria is also advocating for other important immigration reforms, including reducing the green card backlog.

The DOS has indicated that the initial launch of this state-side visa renewal process will be a limited pilot program to test out the operationality of the program. If the pilot program proves successful, the DOS has expressed its strong desire to expand the program's eligibility to other visa categories and individuals.

## MISSING INDIAN STUDENT OF PURDUE UNIVERSITY CONFIRMED DEAD

AGENCIES  
INDIANA [US]

An Indian student studying at Purdue University who was reported missing since Sunday has been confirmed dead, according to the Tippecanoe County Coroner.

According to the Tippecanoe County Coroner's Office, officials were called around 11:30 am. Sunday to 500 Allison Road in West Lafayette for a possible dead body. Upon arrival, a "college-aged male" was found deceased on Purdue's cam-

pus.

The deceased student has been identified as Neel Acharya by the authorities.

On Sunday, Gaury Acharya, mother of the deceased student, in a post on X, appealed, "Our son Neel Acharya is missing since yesterday Jan 28 (12:30 AM EST) He is studying in Purdue University in the US. He was last seen by the Uber driver who dropped him off in Purdue university. We are looking for any info on him. Please help us if you know anything."

The Consulate General of India in Chicago replied to

her post on X, saying, "Consulate is in touch with Purdue University authorities and also with Neel's family. Consulate will extend all possible support and help."

According to Purdue Exponent, a multimedia agency independent of the university, in an email written to the university's computer science department on Monday, interim CS head Chris Clifton confirmed students and faculty of Neel Acharya's death.

Earlier this week, another Indian student was brutally killed with repeated blows from a hammer by

a homeless man inside a store in Lithonia, Georgia, US.

A video of the incident went viral on social media, but the date of the incident can't be confirmed.

The man seen attacking Saini is reportedly a homeless person. A person familiar with the case told ANI that police authorities acted firmly on the visual evidence of the case, and arrests were made promptly.

The mortal remains of the victim, being an Indian citizen, were sent back to Vivek's family in India on January 24, the person added.

## Man who stole, leaked Trump's tax records sentenced to 5 years in jail

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON, DC

The man who stole and leaked former US President Donald Trump's and thousands of others' tax records has been sentenced to five years in prison, CNN reported on Tuesday.

It reported that 38-year-old Charles Littlejohn pleaded guilty to one count of unauthorized disclosure of income tax returns. According to his plea agreement, he stole Trump's tax returns along with the tax data of "thousands of the nation's wealthiest people" while working for a consulting firm with contracts with the Internal Revenue Service.

Littlejohn leaked the information to two news outlets, deleted the documents from his IRS-assigned laptop before returning it and covered the rest of his digital tracks by deleting places where he initially stored the information.

CNN reported that Judge Ana Reyes highlighted the gravity of the crime, saying multiple times that it amounted to an attack against the US and its legal foundation.

"What you did in attacking the sitting president of the United States was an



Donald Trump.

*The accused stole Trump's tax returns along with the tax data of "thousands of the nation's wealthiest people" while working for a consulting firm with contracts with the Internal Revenue Service*

attack on our constitutional democracy," Reyes said. "We're talking about someone who...pulled off the biggest heist in IRS history."

The judge compared Littlejohn's actions to those of the January 6, 2021, Capitol attack, noting that, "your actions were also a threat to our democracy."

"It engenders the same fear that January 6 does," Reyes

added.

Prosecutors said Littlejohn went through great lengths to steal the tax records undetected, exploiting system loopholes, downloading data to an Apple iPod and uploading the information on a private website he later deleted.

CNN reported that Reyes was also critical of the Justice Department's decision

to only bring one count against Littlejohn.

"The fact that he did what he did and he's facing one felony count, I have no words for," the judge said. Prosecutors argued that the one count covers the multitude of Littlejohn's thefts and leaks.

"A free press and public engagement with the media are critical to any healthy democracy, but stealing and leaking private, personal tax information strips individuals of the legal protection of their most sensitive data," prosecutors wrote in a court filing recommending Littlejohn be sentenced to the maximum of five years in prison.

## BRAZIL POLICE TARGETS BOLSONARO'S SON AS SPY PROBE HITS INNER CIRCLE

AGENCIES  
RIO DE JANEIRO

Brazil's federal police on Monday searched the homes and office of Carlos Bolsonaro, a son of former President Jair Bolsonaro and a Rio de Janeiro city councilman, an officer with knowledge of the operation told The Associated Press.

The officer spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not allowed to comment publicly about the case.

Police said in a statement that they conducted nine searches Monday as part of a broader investigation into the nation's intelligence agency and alleged spying on political opponents during Bolsonaro's term, which ended in Dec. 2022.

Carlos Bolsonaro's lawyer did not immediately respond to a request for comment from the AP. Bolsonaro has not commented publicly on the search.

Monday's operation comes days after federal police searched the office and home of the former chief of Brazil's intelligence agency under Bolsonaro, Alexandre Ramagem, and a dozen other people.

Police statements and Supreme Court documents



Former Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro

*Monday's operation comes days after federal police searched the office and home of the former chief of Brazil's intelligence agency under Bolsonaro, Alexandre Ramagem, and a dozen other people.*

show police are investigating an organized crime group that operated within the intelligence agency,

known by its Portuguese acronym ABIN, during Bolsonaro's term and that allegedly used the agency's tools and services for political use and personal gain.

The group is also suspected of seeking to interfere with ongoing police investigations, some of which targeted or involved two of Bolsonaro's sons, Jair Renan and Flvio, a sitting senator.

Police suspect ABIN under Ramagem used a software known as FirstMile, developed by Israeli company Cognite, to monitor targets and public authorities ... with the aim of creating false narratives, according to Supreme Court documents.

Monday's police statement said the latest operation sought to advance the political side of the investigation, to "identify the main recipients and beneficiaries of illegally produced information."

Sunday night, Jair Bolsonaro conducted a two and a half-hour long live broadcast on social media, along with three of his sons, including Carlos. The live was recorded in a house in the seaside city of Angra dos Reis.

In the video, the Bolsonaros defended Ramagem and criticized the investigation, with the former president

calling the idea of a parallel intelligence unit fantastical.

Local outlets including O Globo have reported on Ramagem's ties with the Bolsonaro family since the presidential campaign of 2018. Then a federal police officer, Ramagem served as one of Jair Bolsonaro's security coordinators, O Globo reported.

In one photo widely published in local media, he appears all smiles at a 2018-2019 New Year's Eve party alongside Carlos Bolsonaro and their then partners.

Bolsonaro appointed Ramagem to lead ABIN in May 2019. The right-wing leader had previously appointed him to be federal police chief, but quickly yielded to growing criticism around the nomination due to the fact that Ramagem was widely seen as too close to the president's family, and that he might give members preferential treatment.

Newspaper O Globo, based in Rio, reported that law enforcement had seized a computer that belonged to ABIN in one of the three addresses covered by the warrants for Carlos Bolsonaro. The agency's press department told The AP in an email it was investigating the claim.

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON, DC

In response to a drone attack in Jordan that claimed the lives of three US Army soldiers and left 40 injured, the White House emphasised that it is not actively seeking war with Iran but did not rule out the possibility of strikes within Iran.

In a White House press briefing, National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said, "We are not looking for war with Iran; we are not seeking a conflict with the regime in a military way. We're not looking to escalate here. This attack over the weekend was escalatory; make no mistake about it -- and it requires a response, make no mistake about that. I will not get ahead of the president's decision-making."

CNN reported the incident as a significant escalation in the already precarious situation in the Middle East, with officials suggesting the drone was fired by Iran-backed militants from Syria. The specific militia group responsible is still under investigation.

President Joe Biden pledged a response, stating from South Carolina, "The United States shall respond."



National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby.

*CNN reported the incident as a significant escalation in the already precarious situation in the Middle East, with officials suggesting the drone was fired by Iran-backed militants from Syria. The specific militia group responsible is still under investigation.*

The Defence Department has also released the names of the soldiers killed in the attack, allegedly by Iran-backed militias: Sgt William Rivers, 46, of Carrollton, Georgia; Specialist Kennedy Sanders, 24, of Waycross, Georgia; Specialist Breonna Moffett, 23, of Savannah, Georgia, according to CNN.

They were assigned to the 718th Engineer Company, a US Army Reserve unit based out of Fort Moore, Georgia.

More than 40 US service members were injured in the attack, with the number expected to fluctuate as symptoms of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) may be reported later.

Pentagon Deputy Press Secretary Sabrina Singh said, "We do expect that number to continue to fluctuate as our service members, as you know with TBI, report symptoms later on, so that number could continue

to grow." US Central Command had initially reported 34 injuries on Sunday.

Kirby insisted that the US would "continue to look at the options available" for a response but did not confirm if the administration believes the Iranian regime directly ordered the attack. The situation remains tense as the US weighs its response in the aftermath of the tragic incident.

A day ago, Iran's Foreign Ministry refuted the claims of Tehran's involvement in the attack on a US base in Jordan and said resistance groups decide and work on their own principles and priorities as well as the interests of their country and people, Iran's state news agency, IRNA reported.

The drone attack on US outpost in Jordan marks the first instance of US troops being killed by enemy fire in the Middle East since the commencement of the Gaza war.

The attack targeted Tower 22 in Jordan, near the Syrian border, escalating an already precarious situation in the region. According to US officials, the drone responsible was launched by Iran-backed militants and seemed to originate from Syria, according to CNN.



## SANDRA HULLER REVELS IN LAUGHTER OVER THE ATTENTION FOLLOWING HER OSCAR NOMINATION

TDG NETWORK  
LOS ANGELES

German actress Sandra Huller, recognized with a Best Actress Oscar nomination for her role in the legal thriller 'Anatomy of a Fall,' expresses astonishment at the attention she has garnered since the announcement, according to People magazine. The 45-year-old talked about winning the Best Actress award for her outstanding performance as Sandra Voyter in Anatomy of a Fall in an interview with Variety.

The German actress said, "I find myself giggling in the morning because it is so nice," acknowledging that she is "definitely not" used to the attention that the nod is attracting. "When I walk my dog, people are shouting congratulations at me.

People I've never seen before," she added. The 2023 French courtroom drama thriller 'Anatomy of a Fall' is helmed by Justine Triet, and as a screenplay she co-wrote with Arthur Harari. Sandra Huller plays a writer who is attempting to clear her name of any involvement in her husband's passing.

The French courtroom drama is also nominated for Best Picture at the 96th Academy Awards, as well as Best Editing, Best Director, and Best Original Screenplay by Justine Triet.

Huller's performance as Voyter, a novelist on trial for the strange murder of her husband Samuel (Samuel Theis), won her a Golden Globe nomination as well as a nomination for supporting actress at next month's BAFTA Awards. When Huller talked to



Variety earlier about creating her made-up character for 'Anatomy of a Fall'. She shared, "I think I wanted to create somebody who would be capable of doing it, I wanted certain people to be a little bit afraid of her. Because why do we always have to be sweet and good victims and all these things? I had a little fun in leaving it in the dark."

Meanwhile, Triet told The Hollywood Reporter of her own Oscar nominations, "For best director, I was surprised because there are no more women beside me. So, of course, I'm so, so lucky and very proud of all these things. Most of these people since I was a child I've admired so much, and of course to be involved in this history, it means a lot to me.

It was not a dream because I could not imagine." Triet's Best Director nomination marks the ninth time a woman has been nominated in the category. Previous nominees include Sofia Coppola for 'Lost In Translation' in 2003 and Emerald Fennell for 'Promising Young Woman' in 2021, according to People.

## KARAN JOHAR SHARES A PICTURE FROM HIS MEETING WITH GUJARAT CM BHUPENDRA PATEL



TDG NETWORK  
GANDHINAGAR

Filmmaker Karan Johar recently met with Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel. On Tuesday, Karan took to Instagram and shared a picture from his meeting with Bhupendra Patel.

The image shows Karan and Bhupendra Patel engaged in a conversation.

"Had the pleasure and privilege to meet and interact with the Honourable CM of Gujarat ...@bhupendrapatelji.

Gujarat is a symbol of growth and progress and we look forward to bringing our movies to this glorious state....," he captioned the post on Tuesday. Karan's meeting with Bhupendra Patel happened on the sidelines of Filmfare Awards 2024.

The 69th edition of Filmfare Awards was held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat last week. Karan hosted the cer-

emony along with Ayushmann Khurrana. KJo's directorial film 'Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani' received nominations in 18 categories including Best Director, Best Actor in a Leading Role (Male) and Best Actor in a Leading Role (Female).

Alia bagged Best Actor award for 'Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani'.

As the film garnered several awards at the ceremony, Karan posted a note of gratitude. "A night to remember! @filmfare...And thank you to everyone for all the love for our #RockyAurRaniKiiPremKahaani-," he wrote. 'Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani' marked his comeback to the director's chair after almost seven years. The film starred Ranveer Singh, Alia Bhatt, Dharmendra, Jaya Bachchan, and Shabana Azmi. The film turned out to be a hit. He has not announced his next directorial yet.

### PICTURE PERFECT

Stand-up Comedian Munawar Faruqui receives a grand welcome from his fans at Dongri after winning the 17th season of the reality show Bigg Boss, in Mumbai on Monday. (ANI)



## SRK OPENS UP ABOUT NERVOUSNESS RETURNING TO FILMS AFTER 4-YEAR HIATUS

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

In 2023, SRK fans rejoice as the superstar ends a 4-year break with three blockbuster releases: 'Pathaan,' 'Jawan,' and 'Dunki,' all breaking box office records. During a special fan meet in Mumbai on Monday, the 'Don' actor expressed heartfelt thanks to his fans for their overwhelming love and support.

Taking to X, Shah Rukh Khan Universe Fan Club shared a video in which King Khan said, "Because I have been working for 33 years and you take such a big gap. Normally you do feel a little nervous and you feel ki 'arrey yaar! I hope I have got the film right'.

"Usse pehle meri kuch filmlein thi jo itni achi nahi gayi to mujhe ye bhi lagne laga tha ki main achi film mein ab bana nahi raha hoon. But I think, more than my films, ek pyaar tha logo ka..jo Pathaan ke liye, Jo Jawaan ke liye and jo Dunki ke liye..This whole country and people outside this country have actu-



ally taken me to their heart, more than the films, and have said that 'arrey yaar, 4 saal ke liye mat jaya karo. 2-4 mahine theek hai'.

So I am very very thankful to all of you, to the audience and the whole world for making me realise 'jo main karta hu wo theek karta hoon aur mujhe wo baar baar karte rehna chahiye,' he added.

As per a source close to the team of 'Dunki', the makers might hold a special screening for the UK government.

«Since Dunki narrates the story of illegal immigrants who take the Donkey route to enter the cross borders, the UK government has found it to be a relevant subject in today's time.

The film has received tremendous love from the UK audience, as not only it talks about an important issue but also highlights the dangerous Dunki route, and hence now the government is also keen to watch the film, the source-based statement read.

Helmed by Rajkumar Hirani, Dunki features Shah Rukh alongside Taapsee Pannu, Boman Irani, Vicky Kaushal, Vikram Kochhar and Anil Grover. Dunki focuses on the issue of immigration.

Its title is taken from the term donkey journey, which refers to the long-winding, often dangerous routes that people across the world take to reach the places they want to immigrate to. However, SRK has still not announced his next project.

## AR Rahman: Permission granted for AI recreation of late singers' voices

TDG NETWORK  
CHENNAI

AR Rahman's recent track 'Thimiri Yezhuda' in Rajinikanth's film 'Lal Salaam' showcases vocals from the late Bamba Bakya and Shahul Hameed. Curious about the magic? Don't be astonished, as we're in the era of AI. Rahman in a post on X admitted using AI.

He also shared that he took permission from the families of the late singers to use their voices for the track. "We took permission from their families and sent deserving remuneration



for using their voice algorithms..technology is not a threat and a nuisance if we use it right...(folded hands emoticon)," Rahman wrote. He also added the hashtags respect and nostalgia in the post. While some liked the use of AI in 'Thimiri Yezhuda' song, there's a section of society that called out the makers for this move and said he could have given an opportunity to aspiring singers. Singer Bamba Bakya died in 2022 due to a cardiac arrest. Meanwhile, Shahul Hameed died in a car crash in 1997, near Chennai.

## NIKKHIL ADVANI ANNOUNCES UPCOMING SERIES 'FREEDOM AT MIDNIGHT'

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

Filmmaker Nikkhil Advani is currently working on a new series titled 'Freedom At Midnight' (FAM). On Tuesday, Nikkhil took to Instagram and shared that he has started filming the show. "A work of scholarship, of investigation, research and of significance" - The New York Times...Freedom At Midnight by Dominique Lapierre and Larry Collins...Sacrifice of many.

Ambition of one. Shoot Begins," he captioned the post. The series is adapted from the eponymous non-fiction book by Dominique Lapierre and Larry Collins. 'Freedom At Midnight' will be out on Sony LIV.



The details regarding the cast have not been disclosed yet. Nikkhil was previously attached as a creator and producer on 'Rocket Boys', which tells the story of the life

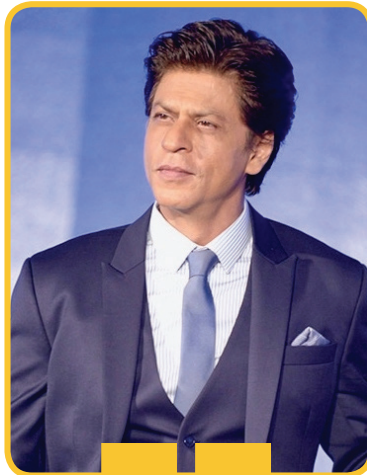
and times of physicists Dr. Vikram Sarabhai (played by Ishwak Singh) and Dr. Homi J. Bhabha (played by Jim Sarbh), and their creation of India's space and nuclear programs.

### BRAIN PICKING



Without hurting anybody, we all tend to laugh at others' discomfort. When someone slips on a banana skin and falls it's funny.

—SHAH RUKH KHAN  
(Indian actor)



## BABA RAMDEV'S WAX FIGURE UNVEILED, SET TO GRACE MADAME TUSSAUDS MUSEUM IN NEW YORK



TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Adding to the roster of global icons, yoga guru Baba Ramdev proudly joins the display at Madame Tussauds Museum in New York, with the unveiling of his wax statue on Tuesday.

On Tuesday, the Yoga guru's wax impression was unveiled at an event in Delhi in the presence of Baba Ramdev.

Baba Ramdev's wax figure has been carved in the Vrikshasana pose, which involves standing on one leg with the other leg bent and the sole of the foot resting against the inner thigh of the standing leg.

On the occasion, Baba Ramdev said, "I feel honoured that my wax statue is being installed at Ma-

dame Tussauds in New York. It's not just a piece of recognition for me but is also a recognition of yoga and ayurveda and India's eternal culture.

This also shows that not only are icons from Bollywood, Hollywood, and the world of politics celebrated and recognised but a seer can also claim similar recognition."

At the event, Baba Ramdev also put a 'tika' on the forehead of his wax impression while unveiling it.

Baba Ramdev has now joined the league of other prominent Indian personalities whose wax statues were earlier installed at Madame Tussauds Museum in New York.

His wax statue will be placed at the museum in Times Square, Manhattan.

## NORA FATEHI JOINS FORCES WITH INTERNATIONAL CHOREOGRAPHER JOJO GOMEZ FOR SINGLE 'I'M BOSSY'



TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

Nora Fatehi's single 'I'm Bossy,' which was first released in audio format on December 28, has now been accompanied by a music video choreographed by the renowned Jojo Gomez. Nora took to Instagram to share a video with Jojo, writing, "Boom ha pride Go. Quick rehearsal before the take! #ImBossy@jojogomezxo Music video out now!"

Jojo Gomez also took to Instagram to share a video, where Jojo can be seen practising a dance with Nora. She wrote, "What it looks like behind the scenes before the take."

On Monday, Nora Fatehi debuted the video for her latest international single, 'Im Bossy'.

Gomez, who has collaborated with global sensations such as Beyonce and Britney Spears, added her trademark touch to this

Afro-pop-infused dance hit. 'I'm Bossy' is a dancing hymn that also provides a musical feast with its Afro-pop sounds. Meanwhile, Nora will be next seen in the movie 'Crakk,' which is scheduled to be released on 23 February 2024. In the film, she shares the screen space with Vidyut Jammwal. The film also stars Arjun Rampal and Amy Jackson in the lead roles. 'Crakk' is a survival thriller. Aditya Datt, who helmed the film, is also known for films like Aashiq Banaya Apne (2005) and Table No. 21 (2013). As per a statement, 'Crakk' is the journey of a man from the slums of Mumbai "to the world of extreme underground sports". 'Crakk' also marks the reunion of the dynamic duo Vidyut and director Aditya Datt after Commando 3.



# WINTER'S WARM EMBRACE: REASONS TO SIP TEA & COZY UP

TDG NETWORK

Winter is the season of chilly winds, snowflakes, and the perfect excuse to indulge in the comforting ritual of tea-drinking. Beyond the delicious taste, here are seven compelling reasons why you should make tea your beverage of choice during the winter months:

### 1. INSTANT WARMTH AND COMFORT

The moment that hot liquid touches your lips, it's as if winter's chill is instantly pushed back. Tea brings immediate warmth, creating a soothing cocoon that shields you from the cold.

### 2. HYDRATION WITH A TWIST

While it's easy to forget to



stay hydrated in the cold, tea offers a delicious solution. Enjoying a variety of herbal, green, or black teas keeps you hydrated while tantalizing your taste buds.

### 3. IMMUNE SYSTEM

### BOOST

Many teas, especially those with added herbs and spices, contain antioxidants and immune-boosting properties. Regularly sipping on tea can help fortify your body against winter bugs

and viruses.

### 4. FLAVORFUL VARIETY

Winter is the perfect time to explore the rich tapestry of tea flavors. From robust chai to soothing chamomile, the diverse range of teas



provides an array of tastes to suit every mood and occasion.

### 5. A RITUAL OF RELAXATION

Create a ritual around tea-drinking to combat the winter blues. Whether it's a

quiet moment alone with a book, a shared tea time with loved ones, or a cozy evening by the fireplace, tea becomes a meditative practice that promotes relaxation and mindfulness.

### 6. GENTLE ENERGY

### BOOST

Instead of reaching for another cup of coffee, consider tea for a gentle energy lift. With varying levels of caffeine, teas like green or black tea provide a milder stimulant effect without the jitters.

### 7. NOURISHMENT FOR THE SOUL

Winter often invites introspection and moments of self-care. Tea becomes a simple yet profound way to nourish your soul. The act of holding a warm mug, inhaling the aroma, and savoring each sip becomes a mindful pause in the midst of winter's hustle.

In conclusion, the winter season offers a myriad of reasons to embrace tea-drinking. Beyond its physical benefits, tea becomes a daily ritual that warms the body, soothes the mind, and enhances the overall experience of winter's unique charm. So, grab your favorite mug, steep your preferred blend, and let tea be your companion as you navigate the wonders of winter.

## TASTING THE JAPANESE CULINARY EXPERTISE AT MENSHO IN DELHI

SANJANA CHAWLA

Situated in Delhi's famous GK 2, Mensho is a sanctuary of Japanese-inspired gastronomy, weaving a tapestry of flavors and aromas that evokes the senses. The establishment, bathed in a serene ambiance, sets the stage for a dining saga that transcends the ordinary.

Our culinary excursion commenced with an array of innovative libations. The Blue Matcha Moscow Mule, a kaleidoscope in a glass, blended hues and tastes in a dance of harmony. The Berry and Raspberry Kombuchas, effervescent and zesty, reinvented tradition with a modern twist, while the Japanese Iced Tea whispered tales of distant sweet lands with every sip.

For the appetizers, we delved into the Yasai Chips, which were a mosaic of crisp vegetable wonders and a light prelude to the feast. The Vegetable and Chicken Gyoza, meticulously sculpted, had a balanced flavor and texture in each delicate bite. The Dynamite Prawns exploded in our mouths with a fusion of succulent seafood and fiery spices, and the Kimchi Grilled Cheese Sando, was indeed a culinary magnum opus sandwich, which brought together the heartiness of cheese and the spirited zest of kimchi.

As we ventured into the main course, the Tofu Donburi Rice Bowl and Matcha Tori Paitan Ramen awaited us and our cravings. The former, was a comforting embrace of soft tofu and aromatic rice, beans, ginger, and nuts, epitomizing heartwarming nourishment, while the latter was a masterpiece of noodle artistry, laced with egg, chicken tempura, and vegetables, adding an unexpected twist to a comforting classic.

The denouement of our dining narrative was as sweet as it was zesty and sublime. The Sticky Toffee Pudding had a yummy drape of miso caramel accompanied by vanilla ice cream. It was a revelation in texture and taste and the Japanese Tart, a fusion of East and West, balanced the sweetness and tartness with its delicate pastry embrace.

This Japanese delight - Mensho in GK 2 - is more than a restaurant; it's a destination for those who seek to embark on an extraordinary



nary culinary expedition. Its inventive beverages, exquisite appetizers, and soul-satisfying main courses,

set against a backdrop of tasteful elegance, promise an unforgettable Japanese culinary adventure.

*It's a must visit and try this winter!*

## WHOLESOME DELIGHTS: NOURISHING AND DELICIOUS HEALTHY RECIPES FOR VIBRANT LIVING

TDG NETWORK

### GREEN PEA & PISTA KHEER BY CHEF SANJEEV KAPOOR

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup blanched green peas
- 1 cup American Pistachios
- ¼ cup chopped American Pistachios
- 1½ tbsps ghee
- 4½ cups milk
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ tsp green cardamom powder
- Blanched, peeled and slivered American Pistachios for garnish
- Dried rose petals for garnish

#### INSTRUCTIONS

PREPARATION TIME: 10-15 minutes

COOKING TIME: 15-20 minutes

1. Bring sufficient water to a boil in a pan. Add American Pistachios and blanch for 3-5 minutes. Drain the pistachios and put them into cold water to stop the carry over cooking to avoid discoloration.



2. Peel the pistachios.
3. Heat ghee in a non-stick pan. Add green peas and sauté for 1-2 minutes. Add the peeled pistachios and sauté for 1-2 minutes. Take the pan off the heat and allow to cool slightly.
4. Put the green peas and pistachios in a blender jar. Add 1 cup milk in two batches and blend to a coarse paste.
5. Heat remaining milk in another pan. Bring it to a boil.
6. Add the blended paste and mix till well combined. Cook for 5-6 minutes, stirring continuously.
7. Add sugar and green cardamom powder and mix well. Cook till sugar melts.
8. Add chopped American Pistachios and mix well. Switch the heat off.
9. Transfer the kheer into a serving bowl. Garnish with slivered American Pistachios and dried rose petals.

### PICK ME UP PISTA BOMB BY CHEF SANJEEV KAPOOR

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup American Pistachios
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- 1 cup rolled oats, toasted
- 1 cup puffed amaranth (rajgira)
- ¼ cup honey
- ¼ tsp cinnamon powder

#### INSTRUCTIONS

PREPARATION TIME: 15-20 minutes

COOKING TIME: 5-10 minutes

1. Dry roast American Pistachios for 3-4 minutes on medium heat. Switch the heat off and allow to cool slightly.
2. Put the roasted pistachios in a food processor jar and process to a coarse mixture.
3. Heat a non-stick pan. Add brown sugar and 2 tbsps water and cook till the sugar melts.
4. Add rolled oats, puffed amaranth, and coarsely processed pistachios. Add honey and cinnamon powder and mix till well combined. Transfer on to a plate and allow to cool slightly.
5. Take small portions of the mixture with greased hands and roll each portion into a ball.
6. Serve.

### GROUND PISTACHIO NANKHATAI COOKIES BY CHEF MARTIN YAN

#### YIELD

20

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1-1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup finely ground American pistachios
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp cardamom powder
- ½ cup softened butter
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 2 drops of rose essence



¼ cup finely chopped pistachios for garnish

#### INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 360 degrees F. Prepare a cookie sheet with parchment paper

Combine flour, ground pistachio, baking powder, cardamom and sugar. Stir to mix well. Pour melted butter into the flour mixture, you may not need all the butter. Bring the flour together to make a stiff dough.

Make 20 balls out of the dough. Slightly flatten and press with a fork lightly to make a mark. Top each cookie with some chopped pistachios. Bake for 10 minutes or until golden around the edges. Cool cookies on a wire rack. May be stored in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.

### PISTACHIO AND MANGO TERRINE BY CHEF SUBROTO GOSWAMI

#### INGREDIENTS

For Pistachio Mousse

- 100 g American Pistachio paste
- 100 g Whipped cream
- 2 Egg
- 20 g Sugar
- 20 g Gelatine
- For mango jelly
- 100 ml Mango puree
- 8 g Gelatine
- 20 g Chocolate

#### INSTRUCTIONS

- Mix egg yolk with sugar on a double boiler to make sabayon,



add this mix to whipped cream.

- Add gelatine to pistachio paste and mix.

Mix both the above mixture together and form pistachio mousse.

- Heat mango puree along with sugar and set it with gelatine in a rod shape to form mango jelly.

Put the jelly in between the mousse layer and cut slices as desired sizes then do the plating.

- Garnished with cut fruits and chocolate as desired. 20 g Sugar

For Garnishing

- 4 g each Kiwi, Plum, Mango, Pistachio

20 g Chocolate

#### INSTRUCTIONS

Mix egg yolk with sugar on a double boiler to make sabayon, add this mix to whipped cream.

- Add gelatine to pistachio paste and mix.

Mix both the above mixture together and form pistachio mousse.

- Heat mango puree along with sugar and set it with gelatine in a rod shape to form mango jelly.

Put the jelly in between the mousse layer and cut slices as desired sizes then do the plating.

- Garnished with cut fruits and chocolate as desired.





THE NEXUS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP & INNOVATION: FUELLING TOMORROW'S SUCCESS



GOVIND BHADU

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, the nexus of entrepreneurship and innovation has become the driving force behind tomorrow's success. As entrepreneurs navigate the ever-changing marketplace, it is their ability to embrace and harness innovation that sets them apart. This powerful combination fuels growth and propels businesses forward, capturing the attention and loyalty of customers.

With a keen understanding of their target audience's needs and desires, entrepreneurs who successfully innovate are able to create game-changing products, services, and experiences. They not only fill gaps in the market but also shape the future of industries by challenging traditional norms and pushing the boundaries of what is possible.

At the heart of this nexus lies the entrepreneurial spirit – the relentless drive to take risks, disrupt the status quo, and bring forth new ideas. Innovators understand that complacency is the enemy of progress

and are constantly seeking ways to improve and evolve.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION

Entrepreneurship and innovation are two sides of the same coin, each feeding off the other to drive success. While entrepreneurship is about identifying opportunities and taking calculated risks, innovation is about transforming those opportunities into tangible solutions that meet the needs of customers. Together, they form the foundation of a thriving business ecosystem.

Successful entrepreneurs understand that innovation is not just a buzzword but a strategic imperative. It is the key to staying relevant in a rapidly changing world. By constantly seeking new ways to improve products, services, and processes, entrepreneurs are able to create a competitive advantage that propels their businesses forward.

EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEURIAL VENTURES DRIVEN BY INNOVATION

Throughout history, there have been numerous examples of successful entrepreneurial ventures that have been driven by innovation. These trailblazers have not only disrupted industries but have also shaped the way we live and work.

One such example is Apple Inc., founded by Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak. Through their innovative



products like the iPhone and iPad, Apple revolutionized the way we communicate and consume media. Their relentless pursuit of innovation and focus on user experience has made Apple one of the most valuable companies in the world.

Another example is Tesla Inc., founded by Elon Musk. Tesla disrupted the automotive industry by introducing electric vehicles that are both eco-friendly and high-performance. By challenging the status quo and pushing the boundaries of what is possible, Musk has positioned Tesla as a leader in sustainable transportation.

These examples highlight the transformative power

of entrepreneurship and innovation. By embracing a mindset of constant improvement and pushing the boundaries of what is possible, entrepreneurs can create businesses that have a lasting impact on society.

HOW INNOVATION FUELS THE SUCCESS OF STARTUPS AND SMALL BUSINESSES

Innovation is particularly crucial for startups and small businesses, as it allows them to compete with larger, more established players in the market. Startups often face limited resources and fierce competition, making it essential for them to find innovative solutions that differentiate them from their competi-

tors.

By leveraging innovation, startups can create unique value propositions that resonate with customers. This could be through the development of groundbreaking products, disruptive business models, or innovative marketing strategies. By offering something different and better than what already exists in the market, startups can carve out a niche for themselves and attract a loyal customer base.

Innovation also allows startups to be agile and adaptable, enabling them to respond quickly to market changes and customer feedback. This flexibility gives them a competitive edge over larger, more bu-

reaucratic organizations that may struggle to adapt to changing market dynamics.

Strategies for Fostering Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Your Business

Fostering entrepreneurship and innovation within your business requires a deliberate and proactive approach. Here are some strategies to consider:

1. Cultivate a culture of innovation: Foster an environment where employees are encouraged to think creatively, take risks, and challenge the status quo. Create channels for idea generation and provide resources to support and develop promising ideas.
2. Encourage collaboration: Foster cross-depart-

mental collaboration and create platforms for idea sharing and feedback. Encourage employees to work together and leverage each other's strengths to drive innovation.

3. Invest in research and development: Allocate resources to research and development efforts to explore new technologies, processes, and business models. Stay informed about industry trends and emerging technologies to identify opportunities for innovation.

4. Embrace failure as a learning opportunity: Encourage a culture that views failure as a stepping stone to success. Encourage employees to take calculated risks and learn from

their failures to drive continuous improvement and innovation.

5. Stay customer-centric: Keep your finger on the pulse of your target audience's needs and desires. Regularly gather customer feedback and use it as a guide for innovation and improvement.

By implementing these strategies, you can create a culture that fosters entrepreneurship and innovation, setting the stage for future success.

Conclusion: Embracing Entrepreneurship and Innovation for Future Success

Looking ahead, the future of entrepreneurship and innovation holds immense promise.

Technological advancements, changing consumer preferences, and global challenges present numerous opportunities for entrepreneurs to create meaningful impact. By embracing entrepreneurship and innovation, businesses can shape the future and fuel tomorrow's success.

In the nexus of entrepreneurship and innovation lies the power to redefine industries, challenge traditional norms, and carve out a path to success. As the business landscape continues to evolve, entrepreneurs who embrace this powerful combination will be the trailblazers of tomorrow, capturing the hearts and minds of customers and shaping the future of industries.

The author is a Business Coach & Entrepreneur.

WINTER ART INSTALLATIONS: TEMPORARY DISPLAYS THAT TRANSFORM YOUR SPACE



SONI VIPUL

As the days shorten and the air crisps, a new yearning emerges – a longing to cosy up and discover magic in the stillness. What better way to infuse your space with wonder than through temporary winter art installations? Immerse yourself in a realm of fleeting masterpieces that breathe life into your everyday surroundings, adding layers of enchant-

ment that vanish with the frost, leaving behind only the echoes of dreams. In this article, Vipul Soni, Founder & Principal Designer at Soni Vipul Designs shares insights into these ephemeral wonders.

Winter art installations provide an exciting canvas for creative expression. Unlike permanent fixtures, they beckon playful experimentation, a dance with ephemerality that liberates imagination from the constraints of the mundane. It's an opportunity to push boundaries, embrace the raw beauty of ice and snow, and celebrate the transformative power of light in the darkest days.

Imagine more than the predictable evergreen wreath – envision cascading icicles sculpted from recycled plastic, shimmer-

ing in the moonlight. Picture a frozen forest woven from frosted branches, illuminated from within by twinkling fairy lights. Let a forgotten corner bloom with a snowdrift of sculpted paper, each flake delicately veined with gold. Play with scale; create a miniature world tucked inside a window-pane, or let a towering ice sculpture command attention in your front yard.

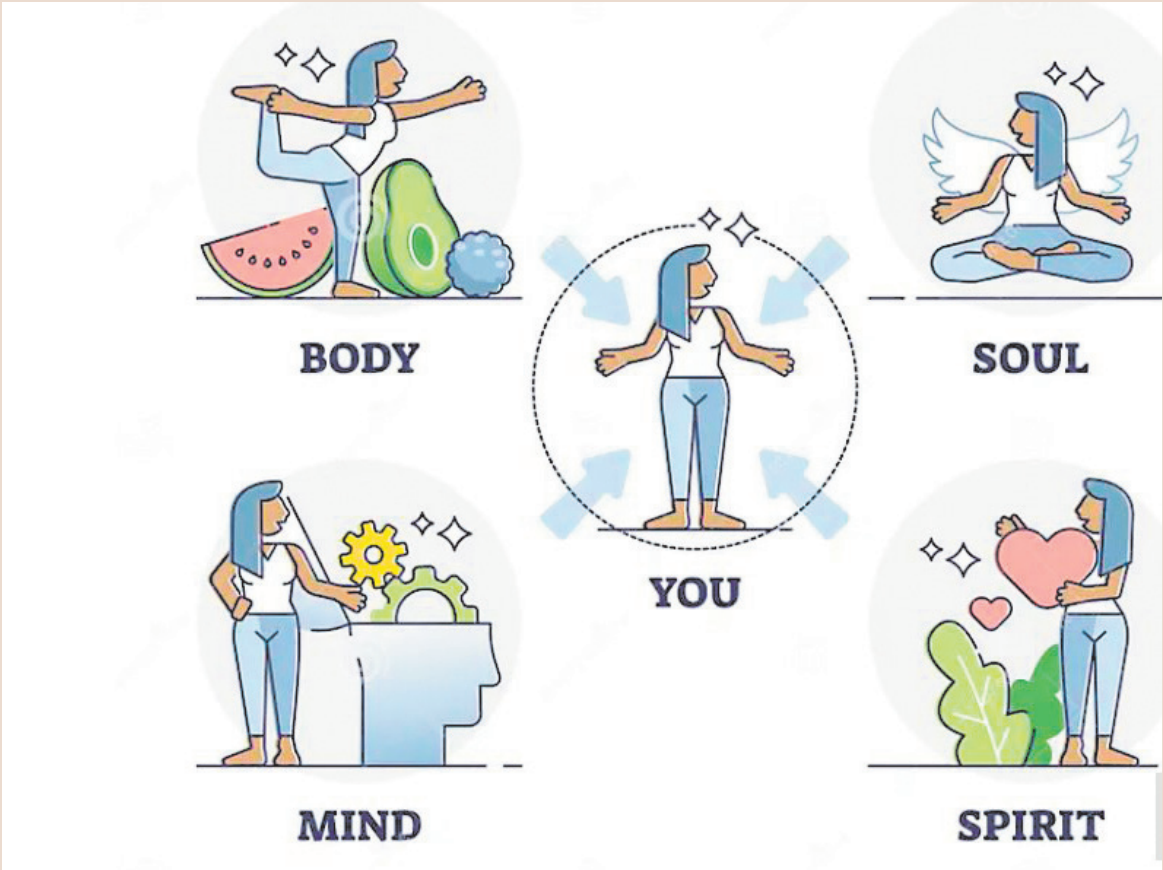
Embrace the humble cardboard box, transforming it into a luminous cityscape illuminated by LED candles. Weave tapestries from discarded twigs and fallen leaves, their textures whispering secrets of the season. Let frost paint its patterns on your windows, becoming abstract art unveiled by the morning sun. The possibilities are endless,

limited only by your imagination and the treasures unearthed from nature's winter bounty.

As the final weeks of winter melt away, so too will your ephemeral masterpiece. But fear not! Let impermanence be its charm. This fleeting beauty reminds us to savour the present, to appreciate the fleeting moments of joy. It teaches us to find magic in the ordinary, to transform the mundane with a touch of whimsy.

So, this winter, embrace the art of the temporary. Step outside, gather your materials, and weave your own story of snow and light. Let your creative spirit dance with the frost, and watch your space become a haven of temporary wonder – a testament to the magic that winter whispers into our hearts.

LINK BETWEEN SOUL, SPIRIT AND CHARACTER



RANJAN SETHI

Aristotle (384-322 BCE) defined the soul as the 'first actuality' of a naturally organized body, asserting its separate existence from the physical body. The soul encompasses the mind, character, thoughts, and feelings of the body, representing the nonphysical aspect responsible for the functions of the mind and individual personality, believed to persist after the death of the physical body. It is crucial to emphasize that the soul is not synonymous with the mind. The soul possesses its

own character and independence. Character, in this context, refers to the combination of qualities that distinguish individuals from one another, shaped by how one behaves in the face of challenges and adversities. A human being comprises soul, mind, and body, distinct yet united within the same body, communicating with each other. Knowledge may earn respect, but character commands respect.

The soul's function is to maintain the harmony between spirit and body, ensuring they uphold their proper relationship. The body, as the lowest aspect, sub-

mits to the spirit, allowing the highest aspect, the spirit, to control the body through the intermediary of the soul. The body interacts with the tangible elements of the material world through its five physical senses, serving as the external part of our being and containing the soul, which, in turn, is the vessel containing the spirit.

Character remains inseparable from the person, as actions not only reflect one's character but can also influence and shape it. The body represents world consciousness, while the soul signifies self-consciousness. Direct

control of the body by the spirit is impossible; it requires a medium. This medium is the soul, produced when the spirit touches the body, acting as the binding force between the spirit and the body. The spirit governs the body through the soul, subjecting it to God's power. Conversely, the body can influence the spirit through the soul, prompting a love for the world.

The soul is the master of a person, as man's will is part of the soul. Unless the soul yields its rule to the spirit, the spirit cannot govern. This is because the soul serves as the origin of man's personality.





# INJURIES TO RAHUL & JADEJA POSE SELECTION CONUNDRUM FOR VIZAG TEST

The duo’s unavailability adds to the woes of the home side

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Untimely injuries to Ravindra Jadeja and KL Rahul have given a major selection headache to India as they seek to bounce back in the second Test against England, following a rare defeat at home.

Both Jadeja and Rahul were among India’s main performers in the first innings of the Hyderabad Test before England turned the tables on the formidable hosts.

Jadeja sustained a hamstring injury while going for a quick single during the Hyderabad Test while Rahul has complained of pain in his right quadriceps.

The duo’s unavailability adds to the woes of the home side, which was clearly stunned by England’s ‘Baz-ball’ strategy.



Jadeja, with his exceptional all-round abilities, makes himself almost irreplaceable and Rahul too has been among India’s standout batters across the ODI and Test format since returning from a surgery in September.

Virat Kohli remains unavailable due to personal

reasons and after a shock reverse in the series opener, the management will be missing him even more in Visakhapatnam where the second Test begins on Friday.

Rohit Sharma and Rahul Dravid have enough options to choose from with selectors adding three players to

the squad — Sarfaraz Khan, Sourabh Kumar and Washington Sundar.

A straightforward selection will be Rajat Patidar, who was also a part of the 15 in Hyderabad. He could take Rahul’s place in the middle-order with Kuldeep Yadav replacing Jadeja as the third

## INJURY WOES

- Jadeja, Rahul were among India’s main performers in the first innings
- Virat Kohli remains unavailable due to personal reasons

spinner alongside R Ashwin and Axar Patel.

Another option for India is to do what England did in the opener, play only one pacer for four spin choices.

In that case, Mohammed Siraj could make way for Kuldeep and the team can accommodate either Sarfaraz Khan or Washington to solidify the middle-order.

Sourabh, who also bowls left-arm spin like Jadeja and is a decent batter with a couple of first-class hundreds to his name, can be a dark horse in that race.

# Senegal’s Cup of Nations journey ends with dignity and pride

TDG NETWORK  
YAMOUSSOUKRO

Senegal’s coach, Aliou Cisse, expressed determination for his team to exit the Africa Cup of Nations with dignity despite a controversial loss to hosts Ivory Coast.

The defeat occurred in the last 16 clash, marked by contentious refereeing decisions that shaped the outcome of the match. Senegal relinquished their early lead late in the game, conceding a penalty that allowed the Ivorians to equalize, eventually leading to a 5-4 loss in extra time and penalties.

Cisse acknowledged the peculiar nature of the match, highlighting instances where Video Assistant Referee (VAR) failed to identify a studs-up tackle from Senegal’s Sadio Mane, a situation that should have resulted in Mane’s dismissal before halftime. Additionally, a



second-half penalty was not awarded to Senegal when Ismailia Sarr was tripped, denying them an opportunity to extend their lead.

Despite the controversial decisions, Cisse chose not to delve into the specifics of the incidents, expressing his regret that his team may have lost focus after taking the lead. He emphasized the need to maintain dignity in defeat and acknowledged disappointment for the players and fans who had high expectations.

However, he also ex-

pressed pride in his team’s performance, citing their strong start in controlling possession.

Senegal, having won all of their group stage matches, seemed poised for another victory when they took the lead early in the game through Habib Diallo. Cisse suggested that the team deserved a penalty, but the referee did not consult VAR. Despite the setback, Cisse maintained a philosophical outlook on the outcome, acknowledging the unpredictable nature of football.

# Pant hits gym as he looks to regain fitness ahead of IPL

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

India batter Rishabh Pant on Tuesday provided an injury update as he looks to regain fitness ahead of the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL).

The left-handed wicket-keeper posted a story of him on Instagram, sweating it out in the gym, as he looks to make his first appearance on the field of cricket since December 2022.

Pant has been sidelined since a vehicle accident at the end of 2022, but the wicketkeeper batter is slowly regaining his fitness and is expected to return to the pitch this year. The first hint of his return to IPL came back in November when he attended a Delhi Capitals camp in Kolkata, attended by senior support staff of the team including Sourav Ganguly (director of cricket), Ricky Ponting (head coach), and Pravin Amre (assistant coach). Subsequently, Pant



“I think (I am) much better (compared to) what I was doing a few months ago.”

took part in the discussions about the retention and release of players ahead of the auction. Pant was also present in Dubai for the mini-auction of the latest edition of the IPL. During the event, he talked about his recovery.

“I think [I am] much better [compared to] what I was doing a few months ago. Still on recovery to 100 per cent, but hopefully, in a few months I

will be able to do that. It has been really amazing because whenever we are playing, we feel no one loves us. After all, there is always pressure and so many things. Yes, it is a hard time but I came to know people love us, respect us and the kind of appreciation and concern people have shown over a while because of my injury,” Pant said in a video posted by his franchise on social media.

Pant also said that the love of fans and supporters means a lot to him as he continues to go towards 100 per cent fitness.

# SELECTING SPINNERS GIVES US BEST OPPORTUNITY TO BEAT INDIA: STOKES

TDG NETWORK  
VISAKHAPATNAM

Long before debutant spinner Tom Hartley bowled England to a famous win in the first Test against India, skipper Ben Stokes had asserted that the tweekers picked for the series “give us the best opportunity” to humble the Asian giants in their own backyard.

Playing in his first Test, left-arm spinner Hartley picked up seven wickets in the Indian second innings to script a 28-run victory for the tourists, who gambled with a lone specialist pacer in Mark Wood in Hyderabad.

“I think sometimes inexperience can be looked at into a bit too much. There’s no doubt that experience makes players feel more comfortable and settled, especially in this environment,” Stokes

said in an interview with ‘JioCinema’ when asked about his approach behind selecting spinners just before the start of the series opener.

He added: “But the spinners we’ve selected on this tour are ones we think will give us the best opportunity to beat India. For me, it’s not just about the spinners but understanding the talent they have and allowing them to go out there and express that talent and giving them the platform and the best possible opportunity to not worry about the outcome too much and focus on what cricket actually is.” In the run-up to the five-match series, there was a bit of chatter around the visitors’ inexperienced spin unit, but Stokes is not one to read much into all these analysis.

# RUGBY WORLD CUP 2023 REWRITES HISTORY WITH UNPRECEDENTED VIEWERSHIP

TDG NETWORK  
DUBLIN

The 2023 Rugby World Cup, hosted in France, witnessed a remarkable 19% increase in viewership compared to the 2019 edition, establishing itself as the most-watched rugby event in history, according to World Rugby (WR). Held in September and October, the tournament amassed an impressive 1.33 billion viewing hours across both linear and non-linear broadcast platforms, marking a substantial 30% growth from the previous European-held World Cup in 2015 in England.

Of the total viewership, a significant 85% was attributed to free-to-air TV broadcasters, while streaming platforms contributed 5% to the overall viewership. World Rugby, in a statement released on Tuesday, highlighted their collaboration with free-to-air broadcast partners in most markets, aiming to



showcase the best of rugby to a widespread audience. Despite a global decline in linear TV viewership, eight out of the 11 surveyed markets reported robust growth in viewership since 2015. Italy stood out with an impressive 70% surge in viewership compared to the 2015 edition, while the U.S. experienced more than a doubling of viewership. Japan, despite hosting late-kickoff matches, secured the third-highest viewer-

ship, although it marked a decrease from the 2019 edition. Notably, Japan’s group stage matches against Argentina and Samoa, starting at 7:45 p.m. in the country, each recorded 33 million viewing hours, the highest for a domestic broadcast. World Rugby CEO Alan Gilpin emphasised the commitment to collaborating with broadcast partners to enhance the viewing experience, particularly for new audiences.

# AUSTRALIA BOUNCES BACK WITH T20 SERIES VICTORY OVER SOUTH AFRICA

SUNIL YASH KALRA  
NEW DELHI

In a stunning comeback, Australia’s women’s cricket team secured a series-deciding win against South Africa in the T20 clash at Blundstone Arena in Hobart on Tuesday. After shockingly defeating the

Proteas at Manuka Oval on Sunday, Australia claimed victory with a five-wicket final-over win, taking the three-match series 2-1.

Despite facing a challenging total of 7-162 set by South Africa, Australia successfully chased down the target with four balls to spare. Opener Beth Mooney played a crucial role, scoring 82 runs off 55 balls. Captain Alyssa Healy and Ellyse Perry fell early in the in-

nings, but Mooney’s stellar performance, her second half-century of the series, guided Australia to victory.

Winning the toss once again, Australia chose to bowl first, and their decision seemed wise as South Africa found themselves at 3-28 after the initial five overs. However, a resilient 80-run partnership between Marizanne Kapp (75 off 48) and Anneke Bosch (21 off 24) helped South Africa recover, setting their highest-ever T20I score against Australia.

Marizanne Kapp, who played her 100th T20I for the Proteas, delivered a career-best T20 innings, scoring 75 off 48 balls, including 10 fours and a six. Despite surviving a dropped catch, Kapp’s impactful innings

ended with a Talia McGrath yorker. Chloe Tryon contributed 26 off 16, and Sune Luus added an unbeaten 20 off 11, propelling South Africa to a competitive total of 162-7.

Australia’s successful run chase, led by Beth Mooney’s outstanding innings, secured the series victory. The Player of the Match rightfully went to Mooney for her match-winning performance. With the T20 series concluded, attention now turns to the upcoming three-match ODI series scheduled to start on February 3 in Adelaide. The T20 series showcased thrilling cricket, with Australia dominating the first match, South Africa bouncing back in the second, and Australia ultimate-

ly emerging victorious in the decider. Cricket enthusiasts can anticipate more exciting clashes as the two teams prepare for the ODI leg.

In a post-match press conference, Marizanne Kapp expressed, “This was the closest we have come to winning a series against Australia. It would have been brilliant if we had notched a win in Australia.”

**Scores in Brief**  
South Africa 162-7 in 20 overs (Kapp 75, Tryon 26, McGrath 1/17, Wareham 1/25)

Australia 166-5 in 19.2 overs (Mooney 82, Gardner 25\*, Klaas 1/13, Tryon 1/23)

*Sunil Yash Kalra is a women’s cricket historian and founder of Indian Sports Fans.*

# MUSHEER KHAN’S HEROICS PROPEL INDIA U19 TO VICTORY IN WORLD CUP SUPER SIX CLASH

SUNIL YASH KALRA  
NEW DELHI

In a spectacular performance, Musheer Khan, following his elder brother Sarfaraz Khan’s maiden India call-up, delivered a stunning century for the India U19 cricket team in their ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup Super Six match against New Zealand in Bloemfontein on Tuesday. With this accomplishment, Musheer joins the ranks of Shikhar Dhawan as only the second Indian to score multiple centuries in the Under-19 World Cup.

In an exclusive interview with TDG, Musheer’s father, Naushad Khan, shared insights into his coaching philosophy, stating, “I don’t talk or guide him... a good coach should know when to keep quiet... this is the time for both to perform on what they have learned.”

This marks Musheer’s second century in the ongoing World Cup, following his impressive knock of 118 against Ireland on January 25. Shikhar Dhawan achieved a similar feat with three centuries in the 2004 edition. Musheer Khan dominated New Zealand’s bowling attack with his second century of the ICC U-19 World Cup, contributing to India’s formidable total of 296 runs in their Super Six contest on Tuesday. Opening batsman Adarsh Singh added to the challenge for New Zealand with a solid 52. On the Mangang Oval’s ideal batting wicket, Musheer showcased his skills, becoming the first player in the current competition to breach the 300-run mark, surpassing Pakistan’s Shahzaib Khan. His remarkable innings of 131 included 13 fours and three sixes off just 125 balls, demonstrat-

ing admirable temperament and strategic acceleration. Musheer’s innings featured fine running between the wickets and concluded in the death overs as he aimed to accelerate further. The young cricketer’s achievement makes him the second Indian batter ever to score two centuries in the U-19 World Cup, following in the footsteps of Shikhar Dhawan’s three centuries in 2004. Sarfaraz Khan, Musheer’s elder brother, had represented India in the 2014 and 2016 U19 World Cup editions. In Tuesday’s match, Musheer reached a score of 131 before being dismissed by Mason Clarke in the 48th over. His stellar performance led India to a total of 295/8 in 50 overs after being asked to bat. Musheer currently leads the run-getters list of the 2024 U19 World

Cup, accumulating 325 runs from four matches, including 28 fours and 8 sixes. Notably, he has scored two centuries and one half-century in the tournament.

Musheer’s century against New Zealand saw him surpass West Indies’ Jewel Andrew as the leading run-scorer in this U19 World Cup. With 325 runs at an average of 81.25, Musheer holds the seventh-highest individual total by an Indian batter at a single U19 World Cup edition. Shikhar Dhawan remains at the top of the chart with his tally of 505 runs in 2004. This century also makes Musheer the second Indian batter after Dhawan to achieve multiple tons in a single U19 World Cup edition. Dhawan had three such scores during his memorable 2004 campaign. *Sunil Yash Kalra is a women’s cricket historian and founder of Indian Sports Fans.*

# West Indies pacer Shamar Joseph sidelined from ILT20 with toe injury

TDG NETWORK  
AUCKLAND

West Indies pacer Shamar Joseph has been forced to withdraw from his upcoming ILT20 stint with Dubai Capitals due to a toe injury he sustained during the second Test match against

Australia at the Gabba.

Although scans revealed no fracture after being clattered on the shoe by a Mitchell Starc yorker, Joseph overcame pain on the fourth day to produce one of the greatest Test spells in history, taking 7 for 68 to inspire the West Indies to a magical eight-run victory - their first

in Australia since 1997. He did not expect to play at the start of the day until the team physio dosed him with painkillers. Joseph bowled unaltered after being brought into the attack, ripping through Australia’s batting line and maintaining a pace of 150kph late in the stint.