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GUKESH'S DAY OF GLORY: TROPHY IN HAND, STARDOM EMBRACED

'Constitution Day is PM Modi's vision'

Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal also noted simultaneous polls were held previously

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Minister of Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal on Friday said it was Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision, stemming from his days as Gujarat's Chief Minister, to honour the Constitution. "PM Modi assumed office in 2014 and prior to this, November 26 was observed as Law Day. He proposed that this day be observed as Constitution Day," the minister said at 'Legally Speaking: 3rd Law and Constitutional Dialogue', organised by iTV Network here.

In 2015, during Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's 125th birth anniversary celebrations, a circular was issued by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment declaring that from that year onward, November 26 would annually be celebrated as Constitution Day, he said, adding that this was initiated by PM Modi, and the nation accepted it. Earlier, there was no such observance.

The first Constitution Day debate was held in Parliament in 2015, where Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha



Rajya Sabha MP Kartikeya Sharma presents a token of appreciation to Union Minister of Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal on the stage of 3rd Law & Constitution Dialogue in New Delhi.

discussed Dr. Ambedkar's invaluable contribution to drafting the Constitution. This time as well, our initial Parliamentary session agenda didn't include this debate. Opposition parties introduced issues related to events in America and began raising a ruckus. They suggested a debate on the Constitution.

"Our government has no issues with

Constitution debate: Heated exchanges in LS

NEW DELHI: The Lok Sabha on Friday witnessed heated exchanges between the Opposition and the treasury benches with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh alleging the Congress always chose power

over Constitution, drawing a sharp counter from Priyanka Gandhi Vadra who accused the BJP government of breaking the 'suraksha kavach' that the Constitution provided.

REPORTS P2

'Amendment to Specific Relief Act boosted economy'

Justice Surya Kant highlights the legal and economic implications of the changes in law

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The 2018 amendment to the Specific Relief Act aligns with India's growing position as a global economic powerhouse, Justice Surya Kant, the sitting judge of the Supreme Court.

Delivering the key note address at 'Legally Speaking: 3rd Law and Constitutional Dialogue', organised by iTV Network here, he elaborated on the significant changes introduced by the 2018 Amendment to the Specific Relief Act, 1963.

Highlighting on the legal and economic implications of these amendments, Justice Kant emphasised how they align with India's growing position as a global economic powerhouse.

He highlighted the importance of specific performance in modern contractual disputes, with an aim to foster a more efficient, predictable, and pro-business legal framework.



Rajya Sabha MP Kartikeya Sharma presents a token of appreciation to Justice Surya Kant, sitting judge of the Supreme Court, on the stage of 3rd Law & Constitution Dialogue in New Delhi.

Focussing on several critical changes brought by the 2018 Amendment to the Specific Relief Act, Justice Kant said: "Earlier plaintiffs had to explicitly state their willingness and readiness to perform the contract. But under the 2018 Amendment, while

plaintiffs still bear the burden of proof, the requirement for specific averments in pleadings was removed, streamlining the legal process."

Since the 1991 liberalisation, the state of Indian economy has transformed and it marked the begin-

ning of the country's integration into the global economy, he observed.

"The reforms of 1991 laid the foundation for India's rise as a major destination for foreign direct investment (FDI), with sectors such as software, pharmaceuticals,

Slugfest between Kharge and Dhankhar in RS

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha proceedings were adjourned until December 16 after a war of words erupted between Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar and Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday amid a row over the no-confidence motion against the Chairman. The Chairman lambasted the Opposition and said that he would "sacrifice his life for the country" and that the Opposition was insulting the Constitution.



"I am a farmer's son; I will not show weakness. I will sacrifice my life for my country. You (Opposition) have only one job 24 hours a day, why is a farmer's son sitting here...look what you are saying. I have tolerated a lot...you have the right to bring a motion but you are insulting the Constitution," the Rajya Sabha

Chairman said.

Replying to Dhankhar, Rajya Sabha leader Mallikarjun Kharge said that they have not come here to listen to his praises.

"You are encouraging the (BJP) members to speak against members of other parties... I am also a son of farmer. I have faced more challenges than you... You are insulting our party leaders; you are insulting the Congress... We have not come here to listen to your praises, we have come here for discussion,"

P3

Real-life drama for 'Pushpa' hero: Arrest, remand, bail, all in a day

AGENCIES
HYDERABAD

Telugu superstar Allu Arjun was arrested on Friday, sent to 14-day judicial custody by a local court here in connection with the death of a woman in a stampede during the premiere of his blockbuster 'Pushpa 2: The Rule' and granted interim bail by the Telangana High Court -- all in less than five hours in a dramatic turn of events.

The high-profile arrest also triggered a political slugfest with the BJP and BRS lashing out at the ruling Congress in Telangana, questioning the treatment meted out to the star and TPCC President Mahesh Kumar Goud hitting back,

saying the law is equal for everyone and it will take its course.

Some drama ensued when police descended at the residence of the national award-winning actor as visuals showed him purportedly arguing with a cop and objecting to them for coming up to his bedroom.

"It is definitely not a good thing," he was heard saying. The national award-winning actor was taken to the Chikkadpally police station in a police vehicle, in a sudden development that shocked his fans and surprised others.

He was produced before the Nampally court, which remanded him to a 14-day judicial custody. He was shifted to jail under heavy



Actor Allu Arjun at Chikkadpally Police Station after being arrested in connection with the case of death of a woman at Sandhya theatre on December 4, in Hyderabad on Friday. ANI

security. A 35-year-old woman died and her eight-year-old son was hospitalised on December 4 during a stampede-like situation at the Sandhya Theatre in Hyderabad when thousands of fans

jostled to have a glimpse of the actor at the premiere of the blockbuster movie.

Following the incident, the city police registered a case against Allu Arjun, his security team, and the

Mahakumbh will become 'Maha Yagya' of unity: PM

On December 13, 2024, Prime Minister Narendra



Modi described the 2025 Maha Kumbh as a "mahayagya of unity" that would elevate India's cultural and spiritual identity globally. During his visit to Prayagraj, he inaugurated 167 development projects worth approximately Rs 5500 crore and launched a multilingual AI chatbot, 'Kumbh SahAI'yak'.

DETAILS P4



An area is covered in a thick layer of snow after fresh snowfall, at Sonamarg in Ganderbal in J&K on Friday. ANI

Oppn moves motion to impeach HC judge

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

A group of Opposition MPs led by Kapil Sibal on Friday moved a notice in the Rajya Sabha for the impeachment of Allahabad High Court Judge Shekhar Kumar Yadav over his alleged controversial remarks at a recent event.

The notice, signed by approximately 55 members, accuses Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav of engaging in hate speech and inciting communal disharmony

during an event organized by Vishwa Hindu Parishad on December 9.

Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal said, "We have given a notice to the Rajya Sabha Secretary General to impeach Allahabad High Court judge, Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav. He had given an inflammatory speech on December 9 at the High Court premises...We believe that the judge has no right to hold that post and he should be removed... We have moved a motion to

remove the judge...This is not a political issue but an issue of protecting the Constitution and the independence of the judiciary. We urge Prime Minister Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and leaders of the ruling party to join us in protecting the Constitution... The Supreme Court should also order the removal of the judge and he should not be assigned any work until a decision is taken on the motion...55 MPs have signed the motion."

The delegation included Vivek Tankha, Digvijaya Singh, P Wilson, John Brittas, and KTS Tuli. The opposition has accused Justice Yadav of targeting minority communities through his remarks.

"On December 9, Justice Yadav made public remarks during event organised by Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) that were inflammatory, prejudiced, and directly targeted minority communities. Justice Yadav, in

Will contest from New Delhi seat, says Kejriwal

NEW DELHI:



Amid rumours of him shifting to other constituency, AAP supremo and former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday announced that he will contest from his New Delhi seat in the upcoming assembly polls.

DETAILS P5

CONSTITUTION DEBATE IN LOK SABHA SEES WAR OF WORDS

Constitution not gift of a single party: Rajnath

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday initiated a debate on the Constitution in the Lok Sabha with a sharp focus on its historical significance and its role in shaping the nation's governance and global standing. Rajnath Singh reflected on the Constitution's birth from extensive deliberations, underscored its reflection of India's civilizational values, and addressed recent efforts to politicize its legacy. The Defence Minister in a sharp remark towards the Congress criticized the party's efforts to attribute the creation of India's Constitution solely to a particular political party.

He stressed that such attempts to overlook the collective contributions of many individuals and the Constitution's deep roots in India's cultural and civilizational values. "There has always been an attempt by a particular party to hijack the work of Constitution making... Today I want to make it clear, that our



Rajnath Singh speaks in Lok Sabha during a discussion on 75th anniversary of adoption of Constitution of India.

Constitution is not the gift of a single party. The Constitution of India was made by the people of India, in accordance with the values of India... Our government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is working with the spirit of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas, our government is working in accordance with the Dharma written in the Constitution of India. Our Constitution is progressive, inclusive, transformative... This is our country where a person born in a poor family can also become the Prime Minister of the country and he can also become the President of the country,"

said Rajnath Singh. Singh emphasized that such political framing undermines the collective efforts of the Constituent Assembly and the diverse individuals who played crucial roles in shaping India's foundational document. Singh underscored that India's Constitution is not the product of one political ideology but a reflection of the nation's broad civilizational values.

He called for a more inclusive and accurate understanding of the Constitution's creation, one that recognizes the contributions of all individuals, irrespective of political affiliations, who participated in its drafting.

Constitution our security, gives us strength: Akhilesh

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Samajwadi Party (SP) Chief Akhilesh Yadav stated on Friday that the Constitution provides strength to the nation and serves as a true guardian of the rights of the oppressed and deprived sections of society. Speaking during a discussion on the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of India, the SP MP emphasised that safeguarding the Constitution is a matter of life and death. "This Constitution is our armour, our security; it provides us strength from time to time. The Constitution is the true guardian of the rights of the oppressed, neglected, suppressed, and deprived. This Constitution is a great support. For people like us and the weak in the country, especially for the PDA, saving the Constitution is a matter of life and death," he said. He alleged that individuals are imprisoned for speaking out against injustice and raised concerns over



Akhilesh Yadav speaks in Lok Sabha during the Winter Session of Parliament, in New Delhi on Friday. ANI

recent claims involving mosques and shrines. "...Until economic disparities end, people won't achieve political justice... People are jailed when they speak out against injustice. The right to express dissent is equated with treason. If you belong to a different religion, you face atrocities. Now, there are even issues around places of worship because certain elements looking for a temple under every mosque do not want this country to be at peace. They do not care about the law," Yadav remarked. The debate marked the 75th anniversary of the Constitution's adoption.

Earlier, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh initiated the debate in the Lok Sabha, highlighting the Constitution's historical significance and its role in shaping the nation's governance and global standing. Rajnath Singh reflected on the Constitution's origins in extensive deliberations, underscored its embodiment of India's civilizational values, and addressed recent efforts to politicize its legacy. The first session of the winter Parliament began on November 25, but both Houses faced early adjournments due to disruptions. The winter session is scheduled to continue until December 20.

Constitution our 'suraksha kavach', says Priyanka

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Calling the Constitution a 'Suraksha kavach' (protective shield), Congress leader and Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi on Friday in her maiden address in the Lok Sabha attacked the ruling government and said that in the last 10 years, the Union government have made all attempts to break down the 'kavach' (shield). Speaking during a discussion on the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of India, Priyanka Gandhi paid tribute to the soldiers who lost their lives while protecting Parliament in 2001. "In the struggle of crores of Indians, in their strength to battle the toughest situations, and in their hope of justice for the country, the flame of our Constitution is burning. Our Constitution is 'suraksha kavach' (safety armour). Such a 'suraksha kavach' that keeps the citizens safe - it is a 'kavach' of justice, of unity, of Right to Express. It is sad that in 10 years, colleagues of the ruling side who make big claims have made all



Priyanka Gandhi speaks in Lok Sabha during Winter Session of Parliament, in New Delhi on Friday. ANI

attempts to break down this 'kavach'. The Constitution promises social, economic and political justice. These promises are a safety armour and work to break this has begun. Through lateral entry and privatisation, this government is trying to weaken reservation," Priyanka said. Priyanka criticised the government's stance on the caste census in Lok Sabha and said that The Caste Census is essential so that we know the condition of everyone and policies can be made accordingly. The ruling party talks about the past but why are they not speaking about the present? Is all the responsibility of the country on Nehru ji? Those

who talk about Nehru, what are they doing themselves?" she asked. Wayanad MP further said, "The one, whose name you sometimes hesitate in speaking out, while speaking fluently at other times to use it to save yourself - he set up HAL, BHEL, SAIL, GAIL, ONGC, NTPC, Railways, IIT, IIM, Oil Refineries and several PSUs. His name can be erased from books, can be erased from speeches. But his role in the freedom of this nation, in building this nation can never be erased from this nation." Priyanka Gandhi Vadra criticised the central government for allegedly favouring one individual (Adani).

WHO SAID WHAT IN PARLIAMENT

WE ARE ALL SADDENED BY STATE OF DEMOCRACY IN COUNTRY: DMK MP

New Delhi: DMK MP T Siva on Friday said that the state of democracy in the state was saddening. Siva said "We are all saddened by the state of democracy in our country. At least we have got a chance to speak before you. Whatever happened in the Upper House today was not telecast properly... Whatever the members of the ruling party spoke was telecast. And on all other occasions, even when the LoP was speaking, he was not shown. Only the chair was shown." Further he said that the LoP was not being given respect according to his age and was not being heard.

OPPOSITION DOING THEIR WORK OF OPPOSING: SHIV SENA MP ON ONOP

NEW DELHI: Shiv Sena MP, Naresh Mhaske stated on Friday that the Opposition can't speak in favour of the decisions of the government a day after the Union Cabinet approved the "One Nation One Election" bill. "Opposition are doing their work of opposing and we are doing ours. We will try to bring this bill in this session," said Shiv Sena MP. "Opposition can't speak in favour of the decisions of the government," he said. Earlier today, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut slammed the "One Nation, One Election" bill, calling it the biggest threat to democracy.

Violence against Hindus in B'desh 'source of concern': Jaishankar

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday expressed concern over the treatment of Hindus in Bangladesh amidst the ongoing crisis in the country. This concern was voiced during a statement in Parliament, where Jaishankar described the violence against minorities in Bangladesh as a "source of concern." ".....With regard to the treatment of minorities in Bangladesh, it has been a source of concern. There have been multiple incidents of attacks on them. We have drawn our concern to their attention. Recently Foreign Secretary visited Dhaka. This subject came up during his meeting and it is our expectation that in its own interest Bangladesh would take measures so that its minorities are safe," said Jaishankar while

India wants 'free of terrorism' Pak ties

NEW DELHI: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Friday that India would like to have good ties with Pakistan like any other neighbour but would like to have ties free of terrorism like any other neighbour. While speaking in Lok Sabha on Friday, Jaishankar said that India has made it very clear it is for the Pakistani side

responding to a question by AIMIM MP Asaduddin Owaisi in the Lok Sabha. AIMIM Chief Asaduddin Owaisi in the Parliament asked, "We have committed USD 10 billion to the development of Bangladesh. What steps is this

government taking to ensure that Hindus in Bangladesh are protected and temples are protected?" During his visit to Bangladesh, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri told reporters in Dhaka, "We also discussed recent develop-

ments and I conveyed our concerns including those related to the safety and welfare of minorities... We also discussed regrettable incidents of attacks on cultural and religious properties... I emphasised that India desires a positive, constructive and mutually beneficial relationship with Bangladesh. I have underlined today India's desire to work closely with the interim government of Bangladesh Authority". Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Wednesday



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar speaks in Lok Sabha during the Winter Session of Parliament on Friday. ANI

'Forces reaching all patrolling points'

NEW DELHI: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said that last of the disengagement agreements between India and China pertained to Depsang and Demchok and he had mentioned it in his detailed statement on the recent developments in the India-China border areas. Responding to a question by Congress MP Manish Tewari in the Lok Sabha,

briefed members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs on the 'Future of India-Bangladesh Relationship' and conveyed that the neighbouring country has assured action against perpetrators of violence against

minorities, sources said. "Certainly we hope that with the new dispensation in Bangladesh, we will settle down to a mutually beneficial and stable relationship", added Jaishankar. The EAM also spoke about India-Myanmar ties.

GLIMPSES OF DEBATES



Selja Kumari presides over Lok Sabha



TMC MP Mahua Moitra speaks in Lok Sabha



LJP MP Shambhavi Choudhary in Lok Sabha



Rajiv Ranjan (Lalan) Singh in Lok Sabha

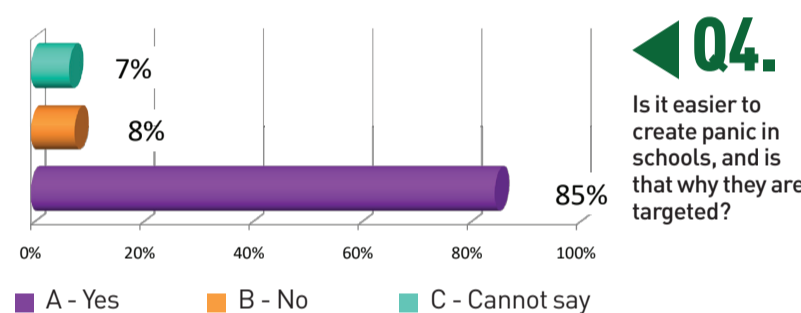
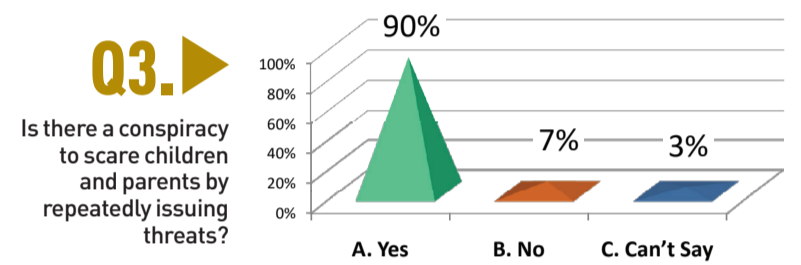
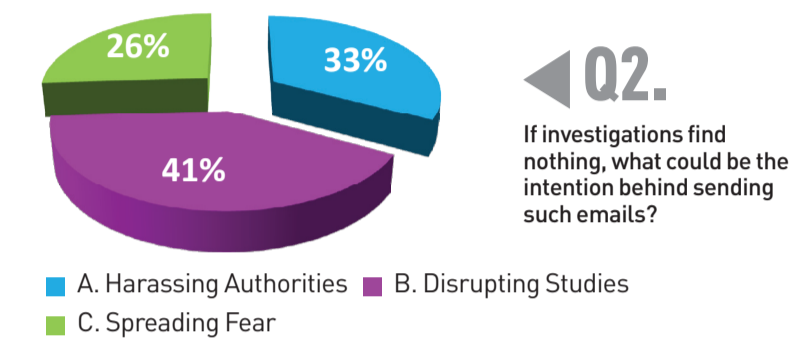
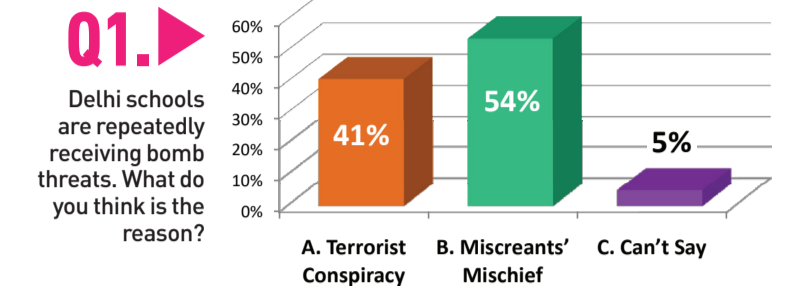


Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Kiren Rijju, Piyush Goyal and others attend proceedings of Lok Sabha during Winter Session of Parliament on Friday. ANI

DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON DELHI SCHOOL BOMB THREATS

85% believe schools are targeted because it's easy to create panic

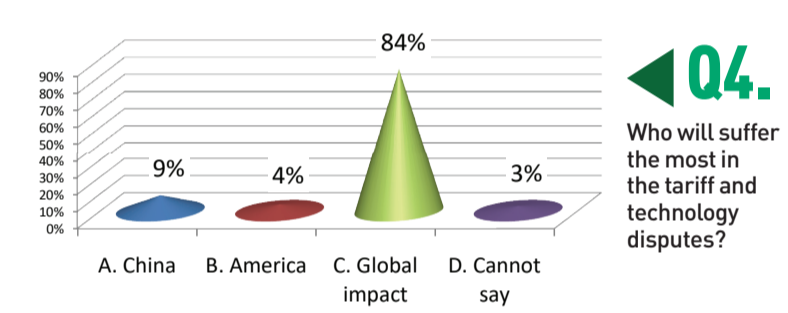
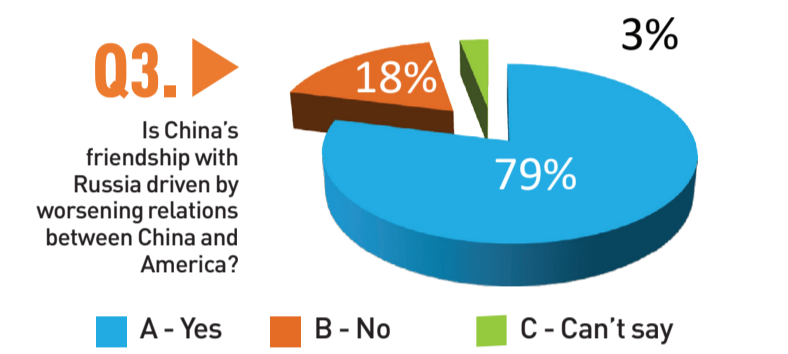
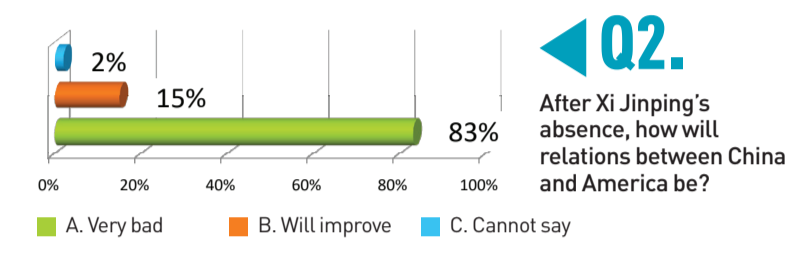
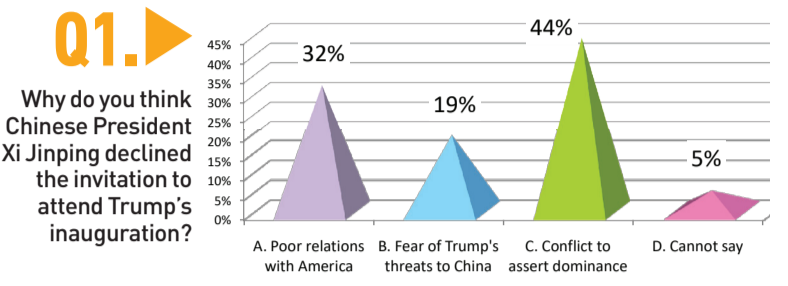
South East Delhi DCP Ravi Kumar Singh said that as many as 30 schools across Delhi received hoax bomb threat emails on Friday. The DCP said that the investigation into the fake threats revealed that the e-mails sent to the schools had been generated outside the country. Upon receiving the information, schools were evacuated and the Bomb Disposal Squad carried out checks at the locations.



DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON AMERICA-CHINA RELATIONS

79% of people believe that China's friendship with Russia driven by worsening relations between China and US

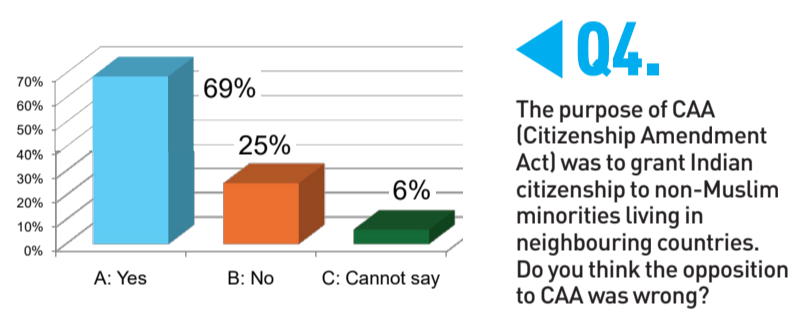
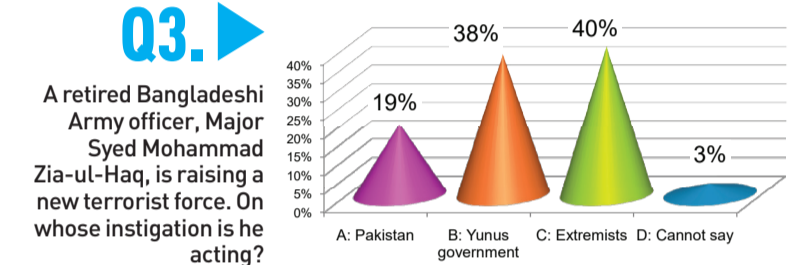
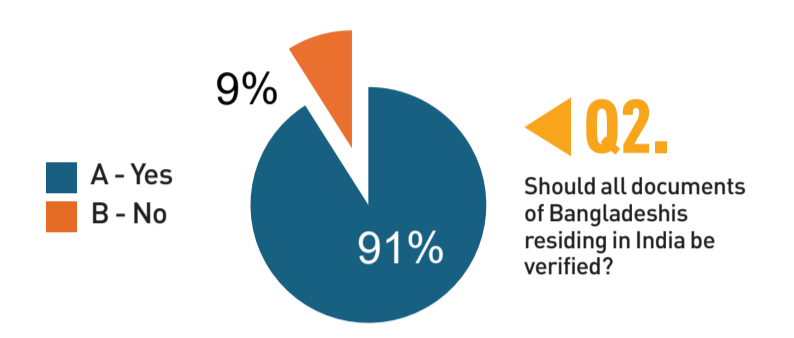
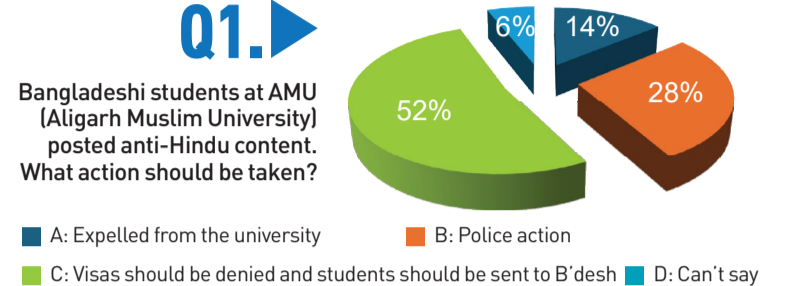
Donald Trump's inauguration invitation to Xi Jinping comes amid strained US-China relations. Despite brief stabilizing efforts during Biden's presidency, tensions remain high due to tariffs, strategic competition, and Taiwan provocations. Trump's return threatens further deterioration, risking economic disruption, military conflict, and potentially uniting citizens against escalating tensions.



DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON BANGLADESH HINDU CRISIS

91% believe documents of Bangladesh residents in India should be verified

A controversy erupted at Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) after Bangladeshi students Shamyul, Rifat Rehman, and Mahmood Hasan Arafat posted abusive social media comments, labelling ISKCON as extremist and making vulgar remarks about Indian women. The viral posts sparked protests by Hindu students, demanding the expulsion of those involved for their anti-Hindu and anti-India remarks.



'Constitution Day is PM's vision'

CONTINUED FROM P1

such a debate. We agreed, and subsequently, dates were set for discussions: November 13-14 in the Lok Sabha and November 16-17 in the Rajya Sabha. Today, Rajnath Singh Ji initiated the debate, highlighting the Constitution's glorious journey," he said. Regarding the objections to One Nation, One Election Bill, which the Cabinet recently approved, the minister simultaneous elections were held previously. The Opposition has said that instead of One Nation, One Election, the focus should be on One Nation, One Health System or One Nation, One Education System. The minister said that these are separate issues. "However, I want to highlight that from 1952-1967, Lok Sabha

and Assembly elections were held simultaneously. The cycle was broken due to mid-term polls and Article 356 misused to dismiss state governments. This disruption led to the imposition of the Model Code of Conduct, which hinders governance and development. PM Modi called an all-party meeting in 2019 on this subject, attended by leaders from all major parties except Congress. Former President Ram Nath Kovind led a committee to deliberate on this, which deemed it a positive step. Countries like Indonesia and the U.S. conduct elections in a similar manner, so why can't we? It is an electoral reform that opposition parties should support rather than oppose." On census and delimitation, he said the next Census has been announced for next year. After that, will the

delimitation exercise follow. "The delimitation process is constitutionally frozen until 2026. After 2026, a Delimitation Commission will determine which seats are reserved for women and reassign SC/ST seats based on population changes. The Women's Reservation Act, granting 33% reservation in Lok Sabha and Assemblies, will be implemented in subsequent elections." The law minister said. On maintaining Parliamentary decorum and allegations of conspiracies to destabilize India, Meghwal said: "Some entities seem agitated by India's rapid economic growth and stable government. They act through international reports or controversies, like the Hindenburg or Pegasus reports, often surfacing days before Parliament sessions. This is a pattern to disrupt our institutions."

Slugfest between Kharge, Dhankhar

CONTINUED FROM P1

Kharge said. Responding to Kharge, Rajya Sabha Chairman said, "The whole world knows whose praises you like. It is important that the House should function." The Rajya Sabha failed to function on Friday with uproar from the Treasury

and Opposition benches over the no-confidence notice against House Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar. The I.N.D.I.A bloc submitted the no-confidence motion on December 10 to the Secretary-General of the Upper House of Parliament. INDIA bloc parties held a joint press conference and said they were

forced to resort to the step to "safeguard the democracy and Constitution". The Winter Parliament Session commenced on November 25, with both Houses getting adjourned fairly early due to disruptions. The winter session is scheduled to go on till December 20.

Oppn moves motion to impeach HC judge

CONTINUED FROM P1

his lecture has asserted the country would function according to the wishes of the majority ("bahusankhyak") in India," the notice read. The opposition has stated that Justice Yadav's actions contravene the directive principles enshrined in Article 51A(e) of the Constitution of India. "Justice Yadav's actions

contravene the directive principles enshrined in Article 51A(e) of the Constitution of India, which mandate promoting harmony and renouncing practices derogatory to the dignity of individuals," the notice read. The opposition also accused Justice Yadav of violating the Constitution of India.

"Speech/lecture delivered by Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav, Judge of the Allahabad High Court, on Sunday i.e. December 9, in an event organised by Vishwa Hindu Parishad, prima facie shows that Justice Yadav, has engaged in hate speech and incitement to communal disharmony in violation of the Constitution of India," the notice read.

Changes in Specific Relief Act

CONTINUED FROM P1

and telecommunications attracting significant investment," he noted. Pointing out India's ranking in the World Bank's ease of doing business report which has improved significantly from 142nd in 2014 to 63rd in 2019, Justice Kant noted that "India's legal reforms, including the 2018 Amendment, play a crucial role in this economic transformation." He further highlighted that these amendments not only mirror India's ambitions to become a leading global economic force but also act as a driving factor for enhancing predictability in business dealings. As Justice Kant stated, the 2018 Amendment is a crucial part of a wider plan to fortify India's legal and economic framework, thereby fostering greater global trade, investment, and overall economic growth. Justice Kant reflected on the foundation of the Act, stating that the principle of "ubi jus ibi remedium" — where there is a right, there is a remedy — formed its core. Under the original Act, remedies such as specific performance, injunctions, and the recovery of possession of property were available to the aggrieved party. However, the application of specific relief was governed by the inadequacy test, which required plaintiffs to prove that monetary compensation was insufficient. This led to specific performance being granted only in exceptional circumstances, limiting its effectiveness. According to Justice Kant, this framework inadvertently incentivized parties to breach contracts, as damages were often less burdensome than performing the contract itself, a phenomenon in line with the "efficient breach theory" in law and economics. Justice Kant also highlighted several critical changes brought by the 2018 Amend-

ment to the Specific Relief Act. One of the most significant changes was the shift from making specific performance an exception to making it a matter of right. Under the previous law, specific performance was granted only when damages were deemed inadequate. The amendment, however, made it available as a default remedy, reflecting a more robust approach to enforcing contractual obligations. Furthermore, the amendment altered the burden of proof. Previously, plaintiffs had to explicitly state their willingness and readiness to perform the contract. Under the 2018 Amendment, while plaintiffs still bear the burden of proof, the requirement for specific averments in pleadings was removed, streamlining the legal process. Another major provision in the 2018 Amendment is the allowance for compensation in addition to specific performance. This enables plaintiffs to receive both the fulfillment of their contractual obligations and financial compensation for any losses incurred due to the breach. This provision ensures that the injured party is not left without adequate remedy while simultaneously enforcing the contractual promise. Justice Kant also emphasized the provision in the 2018 Amendment that empowers courts to appoint experts to help resolve complex commercial contract disputes. One of the central themes of Justice Kant's address was the impact of the 2018 Amendment on infrastructure development. The amendment places a ban on granting injunctions that could delay infrastructure projects, which are often critical for national development. By providing a clear framework for resolving disputes related to infrastructure contracts, the amendment ensures that such projects can proceed without unnecessary delays.

Rumours of paper leak erupt in Bihar

AGENCIES
PATNA

Rumours of a leak of question paper of the Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) preliminary examination erupted at an examination centre on Friday, prompting the commission to warn of police action against those involved in the "conspiracy". Around 300-400 aspirants boycotted BPSC's 70th Integrated Combined Competitive Examination (CCE) 2024 held at Bapu examination centre at Kumhrar in Patna alleging the question paper was leaked on social media even before the examination started. Chaos prevailed at the Bapu examination Centre where an additional examination superintendent, identified as Ram Iqbal Singh, died of cardiac arrest and a female candidate fell unconscious. BPSC chairman Parmar Ravi Manubhai said that examinations were held in a free and fair manner in more than 900 centres, where close to five lakh candidates appeared on Friday. "The BPSC CCE 70th pre-

liminary examination was held in a single shift from noon to 2 pm. The examination was held in 912 centres across the state, and of those, free and fair exams were held in 911 centres," Parmar told PTI. "However, in one centre in Patna, some of the candidates snatched question papers from the invigilators and stormed out of the examination hall screaming that the paper had been leaked. Snatching of question papers from invigilators and showing those to outsiders tantamount to looting public property. Police action will be initiated against these persons who seem to have acted as a part of a conspiracy... we are examining CCTV footage to identify them," he added. "Mobile phones were not allowed inside the examination centre, then how did these candidates come to know about the rumours of question paper leak? Definitely some conspiracy is at work. Police are investigating the matter... there has been no leak of the question paper at all. The examination will not be cancelled which a very few people with vested interest are demanding," he added.

Cine star Allu Arjun arrested, gets bail

CONTINUED FROM P1

remanded to judicial custody by the local court on Friday, the high court granted him a four-week interim bail and posted the case to January 21, 2025, for further hearing. Reacting to the arrest, BJP leader and Union Minister of State for Home, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, said the actor deserved better treatment, while BRS Working President K T Rama Rao

slammed the government for treating the star like a "common criminal". Responding to the criticism, Goud said: "Whether it is a common man or a celebrity, the law applies to all. Law is equal for all. Arjun should not have come without proper intimation to the police. It has claimed one precious life. The law will take its course". Adding a twist to the case,

the husband of the deceased said he doesn't find fault with Allu Arjun for the tragedy. He said he is ready to withdraw his case over the incident. While hiring a Lunch Motion moved by the actor, high court judge Justice J Sri Devi directed him to submit a surety of Rs 50,000 to jail authorities and that he should cooperate in the investigation.

THIS MAHAKUMBH WILL BECOME A 'MAHA YAGYA' OF UNITY: PM MODI

AI chatbot, youth engagement activities to enhance the Kumbh experience.

TIKAM SHARMA NEW DELHI

On December 13, 2024, Prime Minister Narendra Modi described the 2025 Maha Kumbh as a "mahayagya of unity" that would elevate India's cultural and spiritual identity globally.

Before the public meeting, PM Modi began his visit with a ceremonial puja and darshan at the holy Sangam—the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati rivers—and also took a river cruise.

PM Modi emphasized in-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in Prayagraj.

the Maha Kumbh represents India's living legacy of faith, spirituality, and culture, bringing together religion, knowledge, devotion, and art.

Prayag, according to the Prime Minister, is a place where all four pursuits of life—"Dharma", "Arth", "Kama", and "Moksha"—are present.

PM Modi also noted that

from diverse backgrounds come together, embodying the spirit of Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat. He emphasized Kumbh's significance in India's cultural and spiritual tradition, serving as a platform for saints to discuss national issues and inspire social change.

He criticized past governments for neglecting Kumbh and pilgrimages, causing difficulties for devotees.

MAHA KUMBH 2025
• Described as a "mahayagya of unity" to elevate India's cultural and spiritual identity globally.
• PM inaugurated 167 projects worth Rs 5500 crore to improve infrastructure for pilgrims.
• Emphasized the sacredness of Prayag and the Kumbh as a symbol of faith and unity.
• Focused on cleanliness initiatives and the economic boost for local communities during the event.

substantial investments in infrastructure and connectivity to ensure smooth access for pilgrims. The Prime Minister also highlighted the government's focus on development and heritage preservation through projects like the Ramayana, Krishna, Buddhist, and Tirthankar Circuits.

He mentioned key developments such as the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, Vishwanath Dham, and Mahakal Mahalok, which have garnered global recognition.

PM highlighted the development of key corridors like the Akshay Vat, Hanuman Mandir, and Bharadwaj Rishi Ashram, along with the revitalization of sacred sites such as Saraswati Koop.

SC Urges Centre, Punjab to convince Dallewal to end fast

NEERAJ MOHAN CHANDIGARH

Expressing deep concerns over the deteriorating health of Punjab farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who has been on a hunger strike for the past 18 days, the Supreme Court on Monday issues directions to the Centre and Punjab governments to provide him immediate medical aid.



medical aid to Dallewal in a peaceful manner. His fast should only be broken as a last resort to save his life.

The court directed government representatives to meet with farmer leaders immediately and convince Dallewal to accept medical help. The next hearing of the case is scheduled for December 17.

Dallewal along with farmer leader Sarwan Singh Pandher have been protesting under the banner of Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha since Feb-

ruary 13. They are demanding a legal guarantee for minimum support prices (MSP), implementation of the Swaminathan Commission's recommendations, pensions for farmers and laborers, farm loan waivers, restoration of the Land Acquisition Act of 2013, and compensation for families of farmers who lost their lives during the 2020-21 protests.

With the farmers having given a call for another attempt to launch the Delhi March on December 14, the Supreme Court emphasized, "In a democracy, peaceful protests are the right of citizens, but public inconvenience must be avoided. The Khanauri border is Punjab's lifeline. We are not commenting on whether the protest is right or wrong."

Ex-NCW chief Rekha Sharma elected unopposed to Rajya Sabha from Haryana

NEERAJ MOHAN CHANDIGARH

Rekha Sharma, former Chairperson of the National Commission for Women and BJP candidate has been declared elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha by-election from Haryana.

As the deadline for withdrawal of nominations ended on Friday, Rekha Sharma was officially declared the winner as no other political party fielded a candidate against her.



Returning Officer Ashok Kumar Meena. The BJP had fielded her as party candidate on December 10, following which she filed her nomination for the December 20 election.

In the 90-member Haryana Assembly, the BJP holds a majority as the party won 48 seats and the Congress could win only 37 seats. Also the BJP also enjoys support of three Independent legislators.

Out of the five Rajya Sabha seats from Haryana, four are now under BJP's control. Besides Rekha Sharma, Subhash Barala, Ram Chander Jangra, and Kiran

Choudhry are BJP members in the Rajya Sabha. Also independent Rajya Sabha MP Kartikeya Sharma was also elected to the Rajya Sabha with BJP's support.

This Rajya Sabha seat had fallen vacant following the resignation of BJP leader Krishan Lal Panwar, who stepped down after being elected to the Haryana Assembly and later he was elevated as cabinet minister in the Nayab Singh Saini government.

Rakesh Tikait reaches Khanauri border to meet Dallewal

NEERAJ MOHAN CHANDIGARH

Expressing solidarity with the ongoing protest by Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha, farmer leader Rakesh Tikait on Friday reached Khanauri border to meet farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal who is on fast unto death for the past 18 days.

During the visit Tikait urged all farmer unions of the country to get united saying that the country needs another 2020-21 like farmers agitation for a guaranteed MSP.

Accompanied by Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) leaders, Tikait visited Dallewal and criticized the central government, calling the Prime Minister Modi led union government as a "professional government of Kalyug" and warned that the country will witness another major farmer struggle.

Tikait emphasized that the ongoing movements at Punjab's Khanauri and Shamb-



During the visit Tikait urged all farmer unions of the country to get united saying that the country needs another 2020-21 like farmers agitation for a guaranteed MSP.

hu borders has the potential to force their government to accept their demands but asserted that such a movement would require unity among all farmer organizations. He stated that if the farmers' demands are not met the national capital may witness another agitation by farmers as farmers

of the country will not hesitate to reach Delhi again. Tikait urged all farmer organizations to unite under the SKM and devise new strategies for the movement. Tikait reiterated his support for the ongoing movement at the Khanauri border and held a discussion with the farmer leaders to

strengthen the agitation and assured the farmers of his unwavering support.

He criticized the central government, calling it "a government of capitalists" and accused it of being indifferent to the suffering of farmers.

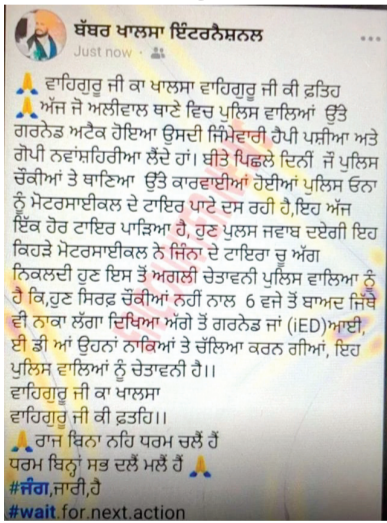
"A government born out of bloodshed cannot feel pain. Only those with compassion can understand others' agony," he said.

Tikait urged SKM and other farmer organizations to jointly work out a plan for the movement. He also warned the agitation farmers that the central government may attempt to suppress the movement and the farmers across the country must unite to make this a nationwide struggle. "We all stand together. If the government is stubborn, the farmers are also adamant", he added. Meaning another SKM leader Darshan Pal has also urged all farmer unions of Punjab and Haryana to get united in support of Dallewal on humanitarian grounds.

Babbar Khalsa international claims responsibility for Aliwal Police Station grenade attack

TARUNI GANDHI CHANDIGARH

The banned terrorist outfit Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) has claimed responsibility for the grenade attack on the Aliwal Police Station in Batala, Gurdaspur, on December 12, 2024. This marks the fourth grenade attack on police establishments in Punjab within the past three weeks and the third such incident in the Amritsar-Gurdaspur belt, raising alarm about escalating extremist activities in the region.



BKI threatened police that in future they will launch grenade attacks on road side nakas as well.

The attack, which occurred late in the night, involved a grenade hurled at the police station. While no casualties were reported, the explosion caused minor damage to the premises and triggered panic among residents. Police forces quickly secured the area,

and investigations are underway, with forensic teams examining the site for evidence.

Babbar Khalsa International, a proscribed group with a history of separatist violence, released a statement taking responsibility for the attack.

The group has been implicated in several high-profile incidents aimed at destabilizing Punjab and reviving extremist activities.

In response, Punjab's Director General of Police (DGP) has convened a high-level meeting to reassess the state's security framework. Security in border districts has been tightened, and intelligence agencies have been instructed to investigate potential cross-border links to the attacks.

The repeated targeting of police establishments has heightened concerns among citizens, with calls for stronger measures to safeguard public institutions and restore confidence in law enforcement. Authorities have urged the public to remain alert and report any suspicious activities, emphasizing their commitment to ensuring peace and stability in the state.

RBI receives bomb threat, probe underway

The Reserve Bank of India TDG NETWORK MUMBAI

(RBI) in Mumbai received a bomb threat email on Friday, police said.

Police have registered a case against an unknown accused in connection with the bomb threat and started an investigation.

"A threatening email was received on the official website of the Reserve Bank

of India. The email was in Russian language, warned to blow up the bank. A case has been registered against an unknown accused in Mata Ramabai Marg (MRA Marg) police station. Investigation into the matter is underway." Zone 1 DCP, Mumbai Police said.

In a separate incident, over six prominent schools in Delhi received bomb threats via email on Friday morning, triggering immediate

security protocols.

The schools that received the threats included the Bhatnagar Public School in Paschim Vihar, Cambridge School in Srinivaspuri, Delhi Public School in East of Kailash, Delhi Public School in Defence Colony, Delhi Police Public School in Safdarjung Enclave and Venkatesh Public School in Rohini.

The Delhi Fire Brigade and police teams swiftly re-

sponded to the alerts, conducting thorough checks of the premises to ensure the safety of students and staff.

After a meticulous search, authorities confirmed that no suspicious items were found.

Earlier, over 40 schools in the national capital received bomb threats via e-mail demanding a ransom of USD 30,000. This email came on December 8 at around 11:38 pm.

Accused in RG Kar Rape-Murder case granted bail, protests erupt

SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE KOLKATA

General citizens, as well as the parents of the girl raped and murdered in RG Kar Medical College in August, reacted with shock and horror as two accused: Sandip Ghosh, former principal of RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, and Abhijit Mondal, the former officer-in-charge of Tallah police station, were granted bail by a



CBI special court in Sealdah on Friday.

The duo was granted bail after the Central Bureau of

Investigation, which is probing the rape and murder of a postgraduate trainee doctor at the state-run health-care facility in Kolkata on August 9, failed to submit its charge-sheet within the stipulated 90 days.

CBI sleuths had arrested Ghosh and Mondal on September 14 on charges of "destruction of evidence" in the case that rocked Bengal and the country and sparked widespread protests spear-

headed by the junior doctors. While Abhijit Mondal was accused of alleged delay in filing of the FIR, Ghosh was accused of tampering of evidence in the case.

The victim's body was found in a seminar hall of the emergency building of RG Kar medical College and Hospital in north Kolkata.

On Friday, when the case came up before the Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate's court, the CBI's counsel in-

formed that the central agency would need more time to frame the charge-sheet in the case.

Following the submission, the Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate granted bail to both the accused.

Mondal's lawyer informed reporters outside the court that his client would be released from the correctional facility where he is currently held on judicial remand.

However, Ghosh will re-

main in custody due to his judicial remand in a separate case involving alleged financial misconduct at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, despite receiving bail in the rape-murder case.

The parents of the murdered girl made their displeasure public. "The CBI did not do its work properly. That is why these people got bail," the mother of the victim told mediapersons.

Lawyer and CPIM leader

Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya said: "This might be the result of some political understanding between the ruling parties in the Centre and the State." Junior doctors said that the CBI would have to take responsibility for the delay in filing the chargesheet.

"We may need to go on another round of protests to continue our fight for justice," said Dr Aniket Mahato, leader of the junior doctors' forum.

30 DELHI SCHOOLS RECEIVE HOAX BOMB THREATS

Nothing suspicious was found in any of the schools after the searches

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Around 30 schools in Delhi received bomb threats over e-mail in the early hours of Friday, triggering a multi-agency search of their premises, officials said.

Nothing suspicious was found in any of the schools after the searches, they added.

The latest threats come close on the heels of at least 44 schools receiving similar e-mails on December 9. Police had declared those threats as hoaxes.

The Special Cell of the Delhi Police has registered a case of criminal intimidation and conspiracy but it is yet to get any lead on the culprits.

In May, more than 250 schools, hospitals and other installations had received similar e-mail threats, which are yet to be solved.

Reacting to the development, former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal pointed out that it was the second such instance within a week and wondered how these bomb threats would affect the children.



Security personnel and school administration officials inside the premises of the Cambridge School at Shri Niwas Puri after it received bomb threat over email, in New Delhi. PTI

A Delhi Fire Services official said, "We received calls (regarding the threat e-mails) from the Bhatnagar International School in Paschim Vihar (4:21 am), Cambridge School in Srinivaspuri (6:23 am) and DPS Amar Colony in East of Kailash (6:35 am)." "(Calls were also received) from the South Delhi Public School in Defence Colony (7:57 am), Delhi Police Public School in Safdarjung (8:02 am) and Venkateshwar Global School in Rohini (8:30 am)," he added.

The fire department, police and bomb-detection teams, along with dog squads, rushed to the schools and conducted thorough checking, the official said. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southeast) Ravi Singh told PTI Videos that they conducted checking followed by security protocol but nothing suspicious was found and it is suspected to be a hoax.

"Investigations so far have established that the e-mail was sent from abroad but further probe is on. Around 30 schools, including in our district, have received such

e-mails," Singh said. The school authorities sent messages to guardians not to send their wards for classes and to take them back if they had already reached.

A police source said the e-mails were received at 12:54 am, with the sender mentioning "parent-teachers' meeting" and "sports day" activities in the schools.

The sender also mentioned that the "schools will face bomb blasts" on Friday and Saturday, the source said. According to the source, the content of

the e-mail reads: "This e-mail is to inform you that there are many explosives in your school premises and I am sure that you all do not check your students' bags frequently when they enter the school premises.

■ 30 Delhi schools received bomb threats on Friday, prompting security checks but no suspicious items were found.

■ Similar threats were received by 44 schools on December 9, which were declared hoaxes.

■ Police are investigating the international source of the threats but have no leads yet.

■ Emails mentioned explosives in schools and referenced events like parent-teacher meetings and sports day.

■ Schools evacuated students, with some switching to online classes. CM Kejriwal raised concerns about the impact on children.

BOMB THREATS

Will contest from New Delhi seat, says Kejriwal

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Amid rumours of him shifting to other constituency, AAP supremo and former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday announced that he will contest from his New Delhi seat in the upcoming assembly polls.

Kejriwal asserted that the contest in the New Delhi constituency will be a battle between the "CM sons and the common man".

The Congress has fielded Sandeep Dikshit, the son of three-time CM Sheila Dikshit, while the BJP may field Parvesh Verma, the son of former chief minister Minister Sahib Singh Verma, against him.

Speaking at 'Agenda Aaj Tak' programme here, Kejriwal said Delhi Chief Minister Atishi will also not shift to any other seat and contest from her Kalkaji constituency. "There will be no change. I will contest from New Delhi seat and Chief Minister Atishi from Kalkaji," he said when asked about the possibility of changing seats by them.

Kejriwal said the Aam Aad-



The Congress has fielded Sandeep Dikshit, the son of three-time CM Sheila Dikshit, while the BJP may field Parvesh Verma, the son of former chief minister Minister Sahib Singh Verma, against him.

mi Party (AAP) is contesting the Delhi Assembly elections in his name and asserted that his party will come back to power for the fourth time with a good mandate.

"This election is being fought in the name of Kejriwal and I will become the chief minister of Delhi," Kejriwal said, adding that Chief Minister Atishi was a "temporary" arrangement to fill the gap created due to his arrest in the excise policy case.

Responding to the controversy and the BJP's allegations on him of living in a "Sheeshmahal" as the chief minister, Kejriwal said the bungalow at 6, Flagstaff

Road in north Delhi was meant for the Delhi chief minister.

"I lived there as the chief minister of Delhi. If someone else becomes the chief minister of Delhi, he will live there. I did not build the bungalow. It was built by the PWD," he said and pointed out that he used to live in slum when he was an activist.

The BJP has started raising this issue since he vocally started talking about the "bad" law and order situation in Delhi and how gangsters were flourishing, said Kejriwal.

AAP announces Tarun Yadav as candidate for Najafgarh

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Friday announced Tarun Yadav as its candidate for the Najafgarh Assembly Constituency in the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections.

This announcement comes as political parties gear up for the polls expected to be held in early 2025.

AAP, in a post on X, said, "Here is our third list of candidates for the Delhi Assembly Elections 2025."

Yadav will be replacing Kailash Gahlot, who recently left AAP to join BJP.

AAP has been actively preparing for the elections. On Monday, the party released its second list of candidates, dropping 17 sitting MLAs. The party is focusing on retaining its stronghold after winning 62 out of 70 seats in the 2020 elections.

Speaking about election strategies, AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday ruled out any alliance with Congress despite both parties being part of the INDIA bloc. "Aam Aadmi Party will be fighting this election on its own strength in Delhi. There is no possibility of any alliance with



Speaking about election strategies, AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday ruled out any alliance with Congress despite both parties being part of the INDIA bloc.

Congress," Kejriwal wrote in a post on X. Meanwhile, Congress held a meeting of its Central Election Committee (CEC) on Thursday at the AICC headquarters. Key leaders, including party president Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi, discussed strategies for the polls. As part of their efforts, Congress has appointed Priyavrat Singh as the "war room" chairman for Delhi. Congress, which ruled Delhi for 15 consecutive years, is looking to regain lost ground after failing to win a single seat

in the last two assembly elections.

In a related development, AAP leader Manish Sisodia accused the BJP of manipulating electoral rolls. Sisodia alleged that the BJP had submitted numerous applications to delete voters' names, including those who have lived in the same area for years. "When it has become impossible for them (BJP) to defeat AAP, they are trying to defeat us by cutting votes," Sisodia claimed at a press conference.

BJP accuses AAP govt of sitting on 14 CAG reports

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The BJP legislators on Friday accused the AAP government of withholding over 14 CAG reports and demanded an immediate session of the outgoing Delhi Assembly to table them. Leader of Opposition Vijender Gupta, addressing a joint press conference, alleged that the AAP government had sent 10 Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) reports to the Lieutenant Governor only after the BJP leaders moved court. However, four reports remain pending, he claimed.

The Delhi government has still not sent four reports of the CAG to the Lieutenant Governor (LG) to keep it away from public domain, he said.

Gupta further alleged that the government had given

written assurance to the Delhi High Court that the session held between November 29 to December 4 was not the final of the outgoing 7th Delhi Assembly.

The Assembly will complete its five year tenure in February 2025 and the polls for the 70 member Assembly are likely to be announced soon. "The AAP government led by Arvind Kejriwal is the only government in the country that has tried to resist tabling the reports in the Assembly," the leader of opposition said.

He said that the AAP government gave written assurance to the court that the session held earlier in December was not the last and demanded that the House is convened immediately with the reports tabled in the Assembly.



Delhi BJP leader Vijender Gupta (right) in New Delhi on Thursday. ANI

1K scheme for Delhi women to start in 10-15 days: CM Atishi

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Atishi on Friday announced that the Mukhya Mantri Mahila Samman Yojana, to provide monthly assistance of Rs 1,000 to women in the city, will be rolled out in the next 10-15 days as the government is working on the registration process.

Atishi stated that before the end of the current financial year -- by March 31, 2025 -- women will receive one or two installments under this scheme.

AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal had announced the launch of the scheme on Thursday and promised that the amount would be raised to Rs 2,100 if his party returns to power.

During a press conference here, Atishi said the scheme is a fulfillment of the government's promise to empower women. "We have kept our promise of providing Rs 1,000 assistance to women. Despite all efforts by the opposition to obstruct this initiative, we have successfully ensured its rollout," she said.

The scheme aims to pro-



Delhi Chief Minister Atishi during a meeting with students of Delhi's government schools who had gone to Paris to do an advanced course in French language, in New Delhi. PTI

vide financial independence to women, ensuring they do not have to depend on family members for small personal needs, she added. Regarding eligibility, Atishi explained that permanent government employees, women who paid income tax in the last financial year and those already receiving any form of pension will not qualify for the benefits. Speaking about other measures taken by the AAP government to empower women, Atishi highlighted the improved quality of education in government schools, which are predominantly attended by

girls, ensuring equal opportunities for education.

She also mentioned the provision of free healthcare through Mohalla Clinics, allowing women to access treatment without financial constraints.

Additionally, the government provides free bus travel to women, helping them commute easily for education, jobs, or job searches, she said.

In the run for the upcoming Delhi elections, AAP is vying for a third consecutive term, having won 62 out of 70 seats in the last election.

Cong stumbles: Leadership missteps hurt strategy

AJIT MAINDOLA
NEW DELHI

The elections in Delhi again seem to be a tough nut to crack for the congress party. By releasing the first list of 21 candidates for Delhi, the party has shown it's serious about the elections. However, the central leadership has made a mistake by underestimating Delhi. If the remaining Congress candidates are announced similarly, it will benefit the BJP and cause concern for the Aam Aadmi Party.

Strong candidates have definitely appeared in the first list, but the strategists' defensive politics has made it a big challenge for them. If Congress had focused on Delhi a year ago and made a strong strategy by making former Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit an issue, then it would have been in the competition today. But as it



Strong candidates have definitely appeared in the first list, but the strategists' defensive politics has made it a big challenge for them.

has been happening till now that the central leadership does not give importance to the states, the same has happened with Delhi too. In the situation of the party's leaders, the candidate will have to try to come into the competition himself, the central leadership is not in a position

to help. The central leadership of Congress is making mistakes in every state, the consequences of which the entire party is facing. If they had learnt a lesson from Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, the situation in Haryana and Maharashtra would have been different

today. After the defeat in all these states, the party did not become serious about Delhi. Whether it is a matter of giving responsibility or making strategy, the remaining few leaders are struggling themselves. The biggest mistake of the strategists of Congress was made during the Lok Sabha elections.

The central leadership of Congress made a major mistake by compromising with Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party, which had previously weakened the Congress. As a result, Congress leaders in Delhi felt that the high command was turning Delhi into another UP or Bihar, where Congress has become a secondary player, following the lead of parties like RJD and SP. This marginalization led many prominent Congress leaders to leave the party and join BJP or AAP.

13 Bangladeshis caught in fake passport rings this year

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

This year, the Delhi Police IGI Airport Unit broke various fake passport syndicates operating across India. As of now, 19 foreign nationals, including 12 Bangladeshis, and 23 agents, including one Bangladeshi national, have been arrested for flying on fake passports or visas.

According to DCP Airport Usha Rangnani, "Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport Police have successfully dismantled multiple fake passport syndicates operating across India. These criminal networks, often involving foreign nationals from neighbouring countries, exploit India's porous borders to enter the country illegally and fraudulently acquire Indian passports using forged documents."

Fog and chill grip Delhi, no significant change in minimum temp

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi's winter chill continues, with the minimum temperature recorded at 9°C in Safdarjung and 6.3°C in Palam, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

A thin layer of fog covered parts of the city, with the morning chill lingering until around 7 am. The rise in minimum temperatures is localized, attributed to variable wind conditions, with no significant change in most parts of Northwest India.

On Wednesday, Delhi woke up to the coldest December morning as the minimum temperatures dropped to 4.9°C, while maximum temperatures reached 23°C, according to IMD.

Patiala, Karnal, Rohtak,



A layer of dense fog engulfs the area, at Raisina Hills in New Delhi, Friday, Dec. 13, 2024. PTI

Delhi, Sikar, Alwar, and Phalodi are the only remote locations in Northwest India where the temperature has increased by more than 2°C.

Over the whole Northwest India plains, only Sikar, Rohtak, Phalodi, and Safdarjung have seen a spike in temperature of more than 3°C.

Meanwhile, Delhi's air quality has dropped to the

'poor' category, with smog and fog conditions persisting. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) recorded air quality levels at 280 in Alipur, 296 in Ashok Vihar, and 228 in DTU.

Other areas such as Anand Vihar reported an AQI of 309, Dwarka Sec 8 recorded 315, Nehru Nagar had 334, and IGI Airport (T3) had 281, Rohini 329, Pusa 309 and Mundka 307.

RAJ KAPOOR: THE ARCHITECT OF BHARAT'S CULTURAL DIPLOMACY THROUGH CINEMA



SIDDHARTHA DAVE

As India establishes itself as a significant global player, the prominence of its cultural influence—what Harvard political scientist Joseph Nye termed “soft power”—has reached unparalleled heights. Introduced in Nye's seminal 1990 article in *Foreign Policy*, soft power encapsulates a nation's capacity to attract and inspire through its culture, values, and foreign policies rather than coercion. India, with its diverse cultural heritage, including Sanatan Sanskriti (Yoga and Ayurveda) and its dynamic creative industries, has emerged as a paragon of soft power. Among its early and most influential exponents was the legendary filmmaker and actor Raj Kapoor, whose works transcended borders and ideologies long before cultural diplomacy became a recognized tool in international relations.

As we commemorate the 100th birth anniversary of Raj Kapoor, it is essential to examine his extraordinary contributions to India's global cultural standing. Kapoor's cinema was not merely an artistic endeavor but a vehicle for fostering cross-cultural understanding, projecting India's values, and establishing emotional connections worldwide. His legacy underscores the role of art in shaping perceptions and uniting diverse audiences under shared human experiences.

The Indian film industry,

often synonymous with Bollywood, has historically served as one of the nation's most effective tools of soft power. With its universal themes of love, resilience, and familial bonds interwoven with rich cultural elements, Bollywood has garnered widespread global admiration. Through its narratives, Indian cinema offers a window into the country's traditions, values, and aspirations, crafting a positive and relatable image of India.

Raj Kapoor's contributions epitomized Bollywood's potential as a cultural ambassador. Films like *Awara* (1951) and *Shree 420* (1955) were not only critical successes but also resonated deeply with audiences across continents. These cinematic landmarks combined emotional depth, social commentary, and a sense of idealism, making their themes universally relatable while remaining distinctly Indian. Kapoor's talent for portraying the struggles, dreams, and humanity of the common man elevated him to a global icon of cultural diplomacy.

Kapoor's cinematic narratives were not confined to entertainment. His films often tackled pressing social issues, offering audiences a reflection of societal realities. For instance, *Awara* explored themes of justice, poverty, and morality through the lens of its protagonist's trials. Similarly, *Shree 420* delved into urbanization's challenges and corruption while celebrating India's enduring resilience. These works offered narratives of defiance and hope, solidifying Kapoor's status as a visionary artist and an instrument of India's soft power.

Among the many regions where Kapoor's influence was deeply felt, the Soviet Union remains unparalleled. During the 1950s and

60s, a period marked by strong Indo-Soviet relations, Kapoor's films achieved unprecedented popularity in the USSR. *Awara* became emblematic of the emotional bond between the two nations, with its title song, *Awara Hoon*, transcending linguistic barriers to become an anthem of hope and solidarity. Kapoor's visit to Moscow is now part of cinematic folklore. Despite arriving without a visa, he was welcomed with open arms, bypassing bureaucratic protocols—a testament to his cultural significance. The adoration reached a crescendo when fans lifted his taxi onto their shoulders, a gesture of reverence that symbolized the profound affection Russians held for him. Such moments highlighted not just Kapoor's stardom but the role his films played in nurturing cultural ties during the Hindi Rusi Bhai-Bhai era.

The reasons behind Kapoor's extraordinary popularity in the USSR are multifaceted. His films' portrayal of the struggles of the underprivileged aligned closely with the socialist ideals prevalent in the Soviet Union. His collaboration with left-leaning scriptwriters such as Khwaja Ahmed Abbas and other members of the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) imbued his works with themes of equality and justice. These ideological undertones resonated deeply with Soviet audiences, further cementing Kapoor's appeal.

The song *Mera Joota Hai Japani* from *Shree 420* exemplified Kapoor's ability to create cultural bridges. Referencing a “Russian red hat,” the song subtly reinforced the camaraderie between India and the USSR, symbolizing the shared values and goodwill of the era. Beyond its political symbolism, the song's enduring popularity reflects

the universal connection Kapoor fostered, leaving a lasting legacy in Soviet cultural memory.



While Kapoor's influence in the Soviet Union is legendary, his impact extended far beyond, reaching audiences in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and China. His films, marked by their universal themes and vibrant cultural motifs, broke down barriers and fostered mutual appreciation between India and diverse global communities.

In newly independent African nations grappling with post-colonial identities, Kapoor's narratives of perseverance and hope struck a powerful chord. His portrayal of human struggles resonated with aspirations for self-determination and dignity. In the Middle East, Kapoor's exploration of familial bonds and ethical dilemmas mirrored the region's traditional values, making Indian cinema a cherished cultural export. Meanwhile, in China, Kapoor's artistic storytelling and emotional depth were celebrated, further cementing India's cultural footprint.

Kapoor's trailblazing legacy laid the foundation for future generations of Indian filmmakers and actors to use cinema as a vehicle for cultural diplomacy. Visionaries like Satyajit Ray introduced Indian realism to global audiences, while modern icons like Shah Rukh Khan carried forward the legacy of universal appeal. Today, Bollywood's extensive reach owes much to the path Kapoor pioneered, establishing cinema as a potent am-

bassador of India's cultural and moral ethos.

SOFT POWER IN THE CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during his remarks on Kapoor's centenary, aptly noted that Kapoor had exemplified India's soft power before the term was even conceptualized. His films were not merely artistic triumphs; they were tools of public diplomacy that showcased India's cultural richness and values. Kapoor's unparalleled ability to connect with audiences across political and cultural divides embodied the essence of soft power.

Today, India's cultural influence extends beyond cinema to include the global embrace of Yoga and Ayurveda, the contributions of its diaspora, and its democratic ethos. Yet, Bollywood remains a cornerstone of India's soft power arsenal. By addressing global challenges such as climate change, gender equality, and social justice in contemporary narratives, Indian cinema engages global audiences in meaningful dialogue, further amplifying India's soft power.

Raj Kapoor's centenary is an opportunity not only to celebrate a cinematic legend but to reflect on his enduring impact on India's global identity. His films bridged cultural divides, forged emotional connections, and projected India's values with authenticity and pride. Ka-

poor's work underscores the transformative power of art in international relations, serving as a blueprint for leveraging culture as a diplomatic tool.

As India continues its rise on the global stage, Kapoor's legacy offers valuable lessons. By investing in cultural diplomacy, supporting its creative industries, and fostering international cultural exchanges, India can further enhance its influence. Kapoor's pioneering role exemplifies how a nation's cultural heritage and artistic achievements can shape its global narrative and foster goodwill.

A TRIBUTE TO A VISIONARY

Raj Kapoor's journey was one of creativity, innovation, and passion. From Bombay's studios to global acclaim, his work illuminated the potential of cinema to unite and inspire. As we honor his memory, let us embrace the ideals his films championed: empathy, resilience, and unity. Kapoor's story transcends that of a filmmaker; he was a cultural ambassador who showcased the heart and soul of Bharat to the world.

Celebrating Raj Kapoor is a celebration of art's power to transcend boundaries, the richness of India's cultural legacy, and the enduring significance of soft power in uniting humanity. His centenary serves as a poignant reminder that cultural diplomacy is not confined to history but remains a living force that continues to shape our collective future. Kapoor's legacy endures as a guiding light for India's global aspirations and cultural prominence.

*Siddhartha Dave is an alumnus of the United Nations University in Tokyo and a former Lok Sabha Research Fellow. He writes on foreign affairs and national security.

PERSPECTIVE

BANSI LAL MEHTA, THE 'HAND' MAN OF THE CONGRESS

Bansi Lal Mehta, veteran leader, who passed away on Wednesday was the man who secured the “Hand Symbol” for the Congress after the second split of the party in 1978. A member of the AICC till he remained active in politics, Mehta was aware that Indira Gandhi was looking for a new symbol after she broke away from the Congress that was headed by K. Brahma Reddy. He and the then Chief Election Commissioner, SL Shaktidhar, were close friends and he urged him to allot the symbol which the former Prime Minister wanted for her breakaway faction. Till then the Cow and Calf was the emblem of the undivided party and following the division, the question of a new identity of the Indira Gandhi faction became necessary. Many symbols including the Elephant were offered but did not get the approval of Mrs Gandhi. Finally, she appeared happy with the idea of getting the “Hand” as the symbol but the Election Commission was only willing to consider the matter at that stage. Mehta approached Shaktidhar and convinced him to allot the symbol and succeeded. The breakaway group contested first on this symbol from a municipal seat in a bye election in East Delhi and won. The maiden Parliamentary victory was from Azamgarh when Mohsina Kidwai as Indira's nominee defeated her one-time mentor, Chandrajit Yadav. Subsequently, Indira Gandhi won on the symbol from Chikamagalur in Karnataka and the Hand became her party's mascot. The 1980 Parliamentary polls victory of the Congress which once again brought Mrs Gandhi to power was fought with the “Hand” and she acknowledged Mehta's contribution in getting her that. If it was Bansi Lal Mehta who had been responsible for the symbol, it was another Congress leader, Ashok Chatterjee, a member of the Delhi Metropolitan Council from Gole Market, who had coined the famous Garibi Hatao slogan in the 1971 elections. Unfortunately, most party leaders do not have any inkling of this piece of history and are unaware how things changed for the Congress and the country for the better at that point of time. Mehta remained loyal to Indira Gandhi who ensured that he was always made a member of the AICC. She also promised to accommodate him in the Rajya Sabha. However, both HKL Bhagat, a one-time Delhi strongman and RK Dhawan, her personal secretary ganged up together to deny him the berth. It is significant to point out that after the partition, most activists amongst Punjabi refugees opted for the Bharatiya Jana Sangh. However, there were some like Bhagat. Amar Nath Chawla, Kishor Lal, Prem Chand Malhotra, Jag Parvesh Chandra, Bansi Lal Mehta and Om Prakash Maken, who became a part of the grand old party. Mrs Gandhi was aware of the rivalry between some of them and used this to further the interests of her party at different times. On being denied the Rajya Sabha, Mehta was disappointed but never shied away from his commitment towards the Congress ideology. Following Indira Gandhi's tragic assassination, Rajiv Gandhi gave him recognition by appointing him as the Chairman of the Kribhco cooperative and he did a stellar job there. He was also appointed as director to the Bank of Baroda. Mehta was amongst the very few who always knew who of politics and had friends cutting across party lines even though his loyalty was always with the Congress. Always dressed smartly with his hair properly combed back, he was a familiar figure at all major functions. He was a living encyclopedia who could fill anyone with the entire history of the Congress. In fact, he was a ready reckoner, the kind, very difficult to find in the current set-up. Although he was an AICC member, he had become a little bitter towards his last few active years. He had an uncanny manner in which he described his opponents and friends and used some Punjabi colloquial expressions to drive home his point. Any sitting with him was a revelation of sorts and he would throw light on so many unfolding events giving his own perspective. He also had this extraordinary confidence to walk into any place and mark his presence. His advantage was that he always knew most people wherever he went and also had some interesting stories to tell about their true character. A regular at the Meriden Hotel in Delhi, he would have most of his appointments there. He knew the owners and was very friendly with the staff members and senior functionaries as well. Towards the end he felt betrayed by both Bhagat and Dhawan and would speak of how he had always been of help to them but when his turn came, they played dirty thus blocking his future. But that is how politics is. Mehta remained confined to his house in New Rajinder Nagar during his last years and his son, Surinder looked after him. It was only on Sunday that Surinder had informed me that despite all his vitals being normal, he was suffering from fever. The end came soon after that. Mehta would be missed, and his kind are no longer there in the Congress, and it would have been heart-breaking for him to see the party slipping in one election after the other in the Assembly polls and thus losing its primacy. The Congress Headquarters is likely to shift to its new address on Kotla Road, later this month. Unfortunately, Mehta shall not be there at the opening.



PANKAJ VOHRA

To protect societal harmony and national security, conversions must be curbed



DR. SATISH POONIA

What Swami Vivekananda said 125 years ago still holds true today. He said that the conversion of a Hindu doesn't just mean one less Hindu, but an increase in enemies.

On April 1, 1899, in a conversation with a correspondent of Prabhuddha Bharat magazine, Vivekananda spoke about conversion, Hindutva, and the challenges faced by those who have converted to Hinduism and later returned to their original faith. He said that conversion should not be accepted in any civilized society.

The issue of conversion has been a longstanding problem in our country. Mahatma Gandhi also opposed conversion. He believed that no one should try to convert another person. He felt that

religious conversion under the guise of humanitarian work was a sign of a diseased mind. Gandhi condemned conversions that involved deceit, greed, or coercion, especially when they targeted the poor and deprived.

In our country, conversions have often been carried out under various pretexts, such as claims of humanitarian work, exploitation of poverty, or deceitful tactics like love jihad, leading to the conversion of many people.

During the Mughal and British rule in India, systematic efforts were made to forcibly convert Hindus, which led to the creation of Pakistan and Bangladesh. The consequences of these conversions are still visible today in the strained relations with our neighboring countries.

In the current context, Swami Vivekananda's statement from 125 years ago about the dangers of conversion becomes increasingly relevant. He had warned that converting Hindus doesn't just reduce their number, but also increases the number of enemies. This view resonates today as the

ongoing issue of religious conversion continues to impact Indian society.

Interestingly, while conversion is being encouraged in India in the name of secularism and democracy, it is considered illegal in many Islamic countries. In nations like Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Somalia, Jordan, and Egypt, conversion is prohibited by law, with severe punishments for those who attempt it. In the Maldives, a person who converts from Islam can even lose their citizenship. This contrast highlights the hypocrisy of allowing conversions in India while such practices are banned in other parts of the world.

To counter conversions, several states in India, including Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, and Odisha, have passed laws to prevent it. However, the effectiveness of these laws in curbing conversions remains uncertain.

The growing trend of conversions in many parts of India poses a serious threat to social harmony and national security. As a result, numerous organizations across the country are working to

raise awareness among the youth to stop the practice of conversion and protect the integrity of the nation.

Many incidents of conversion come to light in many parts of Rajasthan. You will remember how a conspiracy was hatched a few years ago for a big incident of mass conversion near the capital Jaipur. Such conspiracies have also come to the fore in the Mewat and Braj regions of the state.

Many attempts were made for an anti-conversion bill in Rajasthan, but the Congress governments suffering from prejudice and appeasement policy never tried to consider this important issue. It is good that the BJP government of the state has taken a decision and approved the bill to stop illegal conversion in the state and provide for strict punishment. The government has decided to bring “The Rajasthan Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Bill-2024”.

After this bill becomes a law, no person or institution will be able to convert a person by using misrepresentation, fraud, force, undue influence etc. If any person or institution does such an act, they will be given severe

punishment. If a person marries with the intention of converting a person against the law, then the family court can declare such marriage invalid. In this law, the crimes will be non-bailable and cognizable. Certainly this is a progressive bill.

There was a demand for such a law in the state for the last two decades. In the last session of the fifteenth assembly, a private bill with a similar draft, ‘Rajasthan Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Bill 2023’, was brought by me. But the then Speaker of the Assembly rejected it saying that it is against Article 25 of the Constitution. The then Congress government, plagued by prejudice, did not consider this bill worthy, while the BJP, playing a strong role of opposition, raised a strong voice in support of this bill from the streets to the House and demanded a ban on conversion, which is very important in the state and national interest, for which the BJP governments of states like Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh etc. and now the BJP government of Rajasthan have also taken important steps.

The ban on conversion

is not tied to any specific religion or sect; rather, it is about preserving the social fabric. A law prohibiting religious conversion is justified because it does not infringe on an individual's right to religious freedom or personal choice.

Religious conversion should not pose a social, political, or legal challenge to the country or its democracy. Therefore, there should be a law in place to prevent forced conversions. The Bharatiya Janata Party has consistently maintained that everyone has the right to follow their religion of choice, but no one should be forced to convert.

An important question arises regarding those who have converted for various reasons but now wish to return to their original faith. Swami Vivekananda, in his response to a correspondent of Prabhuddha Bharat magazine, said that such individuals should indeed be welcomed back, emphasizing that they can and should be accepted back into their original faith.

The author is BJP Haryana in-charge and former BJP Rajasthan president.



Dialogue

ROBUST DISCUSSION ON DELIMITATION AND NORTH-SOUTH BALANCE

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

At the Legally Speaking: 3rd Law and Constitutional Dialogue, event organised by iTV Network, prominent parliamentarians Kalanidhi Veeraswamy (DMK), Sasmit Patra (BJD), and P.P. Chaudhary (BJP) engaged in a robust discussion on the potential implications of delimitation on the North-South balance in India's Parliament. The dialogue delved into demographic disparities, representation concerns, and the necessity for equitable governance.

Kalanidhi Veeraswamy highlighted Tamil Nadu's demographic evolution, noting that the state's fertility rate has declined from over 3 to 1.7, a trend common among southern states. In contrast, states like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh maintain higher fertility rates around 2.7. He emphasized that the postponement of delimitation

since the Emergency era has led to imbalances in representation, underscoring the need for a census to inform the delimitation process.

"The point about the delimitation since emergency, it has been postponed for like 25 years. Census should have been conducted in 2021. 2002 Delimitation commission that after 2026 the census should be done and only after that the delimitation process should be exercised." He added.

Sasmit Patra said, "No, any govt. whether in the center from whichever party can really afford to neglect a state in federal form of govt. we have." He underscored the importance of equality as enshrined in Articles 14, 15, and 16 of the Constitution. He advocated for a caste census to accurately identify reservation proportions and inform welfare measures, noting that current programs rely on outdated data from the

2011 Socio-Economic Caste Census.

"The Biju Janta Dal and leader former hon'ble cm shri Navin Pathnaik has always battled for caste census. All welfare programmes of the country stems from which socio-economic caste census survey that was done in 2011. Today all the measures whether there is Pradhan Mantri awas yojana, various schemes still draws details from SECC. More than caste census for political reasons, caste census is essential to identify reservation and the proportions, welfare measures, social justice," he added.

P.P. Chaudhary addressed concerns about population growth, asserting that India's demographic planning should focus on effective representation. He cited disparities in voter populations across constituencies, suggesting that increasing the number of Lok Sabha MPs could enhance representation.



tation. Chaudhary stated, "This formula is required to be devised. It is for the delimitation commission and law-making authority."

Chaudhary explained, "In India the population is planning and we have to make the best for it. The statement made by Mohan Bhagwat is perfectly correct. So far is the India perspective is

concerned. Overall, there's nothing to do with the religion or anything other. So far as the population is falling so far India is concerned if you compare it with other year, so that's why it is relevant statement made in this perspective. Some of the state there are 16 lakhs voters but as far as my constituency is concerned, we

are having around 22 lakhs voters, so if you want to have the effective representation of the member of parliament it deals with the constituencies, there must be more Lok Sabha MPs, he added."

Patra raised a critical point about the lack of studies evaluating the performance of MPs relative to their constituencies' populations. He

advocated for a focus on the efficacy and effectiveness of representation rather than merely increasing numbers. "What is the right mix, ratio of a population vs one member of parliament... Instead of looking at the no. from the perspective of volumes rather looking at efficacy, and effectiveness."

Veeraswamy expressed concerns that an imbalance favoring northern states could lead political parties to neglect southern constituencies. "Whole purpose of the census exercise is to ensure the target people," he added. "The representation of the people adequately should be done where the no. of population should be counted. When we look into US system of elections they have the electoral column," Veeraswamy pointed out. The balance of 423 MPs come from northern states, and for any political party forming a govt. may not bother about the 423 MPs, they can focus on the 423

constituencies, he added.

Chaudhary emphasized the need for a balanced approach, suggesting that the delimitation commission and legislative authorities devise a formula that ensures justice for all regions.

Patra asserted that no central government can afford to neglect any state within India's federal structure. He also noted that narratives emerging from census data often serve varied political agendas. "Once you belong to SC/ST class the reservation is already there. No purpose will be served for the caste census," he said. "In the census/ caste census, many narratives would be drawn, each suiting to one selves," he added.

The discussion illuminated the complexities surrounding delimitation, highlighting the necessity for a balanced approach that upholds constitutional equality and ensures fair representation across India's diverse regions.

'Census isn't inherently a solution, it's a starting point'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

At the Legally Speaking: 3rd Law and Constitutional Dialogue, event organised by iTV Network, Lok Sabha MP Karti Chidambaram addressed the topic "Delimitation: Does India Need More MPs in Parliament?" He offered candid insights on representation, economic challenges, and the necessity for pragmatic reforms over superficial expansions.

Chidambaram criticized the divisive nature of religion-centric debates, urging a shift towards pressing economic issues. "Why should religion even matter?" he questioned. "We should be addressing the lack of opportunities and economic growth rather than fixating on one's faith, which is a private matter. Conversations centered on religion serve no practical purpose in advancing India's development."

On the caste census, he shared a balanced perspective: "Personally, I don't identify with any caste, but I see no harm in conducting a census. Collecting data is not the issue—it's how that data is used that matters. A census by itself is neutral; it's the actions taken afterward that require scrutiny."

Using a light-hearted analogy, he explained, "As someone over six feet tall, I struggle with legroom in Parliament and on flights. But just because I face this inconvenience doesn't mean airlines or Parliament will introduce broader seats. Similarly, a census isn't inherently a solution—it's a starting point."

Addressing the idea of



increasing the number of Members of Parliament (MPs), Chidambaram was clear: "We don't need more members. With 543 MPs, many already struggle to get speaking time. Expanding Parliament would turn it into a chaotic space. What we need is a more effective legislative process and stronger local governance to deliver services to the people."

He emphasized the inefficiency in the current setup: "Increasing seats won't lead to better outcomes. Instead, we should focus on enhancing the quality of discussions and legislation."

Chidambaram dismissed concerns about population decline, countering alarmist rhetoric with pragmatism: "I'd welcome a decrease in population—it's not a cause for concern. What we lack are employment opportunities for the current population, let alone a larger one."

He highlighted the regional economic divide: "What concerns me more than population growth is the economic inequality between the North and South. Bridging this gap should be our priority."

A strong advocate for gender equality in politics, Chidambaram called for greater representation of women in Parliament: "We need more

women MPs, not more MPs overall. Women bring diverse perspectives and are equally capable as men. Unfortunately, most parties, including my own, fail to nominate enough women candidates. Exceptions like the TMC and BJD have set commendable examples."

He also addressed the inefficiency of increasing Parliament seats: "Increasing the number of seats in Parliament will make it less effective. Currently, there is already limited time for debates, and MPs often struggle to get an opportunity to speak. Adding more members will only exacerbate the issue, so that is not the solution."

Chidambaram reflected on the importance of discussions about the Constitution: "Celebrating 75 years of our Constitution is not just ceremonial—it's an opportunity to acknowledge it as a living document that unites this nation and guides our democracy. Such discussions bring diverse perspectives to the forefront."

On Priyanka Gandhi's potential role in Parliament, Chidambaram expressed confidence: "She is a natural leader with strong support across the country. I believe she has a long and impactful innings ahead of her."

Spirited debate on perceived threats to Constitution

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A spirited debate unfolded on the resilience of India's Constitution and the perceived threats it faces in contemporary politics at Legally Speaking: 3rd Law and Constitutional Dialogue, event organised by iTV Network.

D. Raja, Member of Rajya Sabha from the Communist Party of India (CPI), and Rakesh Sinha, former Member of Rajya Sabha from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), presented opposing views on the Constitution's current state, political influence, and the challenges it endures.

D. Raja opened his argument by asserting that the Constitution is indeed under threat, drawing attention to the tone of discussions during the Lok Sabha elections. He warned that certain political leaders were fostering the idea that the Constitution could be replaced, which he viewed as a direct challenge to India's democracy. Raja cited Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's prescient words from January 26, 1950, the day India became a democracy, where Ambedkar had cautioned that India's democracy was fragile and could easily be undermined.

Raja stressed that Ambedkar had firmly opposed the idea of transforming India into a theocratic state, stating, "If India becomes a Hindurashtra, it will be the biggest calamity for the country." Raja emphasized the importance of safeguarding the Constitution to preserve democracy, warning that any shift away from its foundational principles



could lead to instability.

In response, Rakesh Sinha argued that the concept of a "Hindurashtra" had never been discussed in the constituent assembly, pointing out that the Constitution had been built on a foundation of secularism and democracy. Sinha accused the Communist Party (CPI) of undermining the Constitution through its actions and historical alliances with the Congress Party. He criticized the CPI for trying to weaken the Constitution's moral foundation, particularly with proposals like "one nation, one election," which he argued would dilute the Constitution's core values.

Sinha also cited instances of constitutional violations during the Emergency and under Congress rule, including the curbing of press freedom. He noted that the inclusion of terms like "socialism" and "secularism" in the Constitution was contentious, with Ambedkar opposing them because they could compromise its original spirit.

A significant portion of the debate was dedicated to comparing India with other countries. D. Raja rejected comparisons between India and China, emphasizing that India's democratic ideals and diverse

population make it unique. He contended that India's democratic structure could not be equated with China's authoritarian regime.

Sinha, however, defended India's secular identity, explaining that Hinduism, despite being the majority religion, had faced oppression in many parts of the world. He argued that India's secularism was rooted in its majority Hindu population, contrasting it with the theocratic states of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Sinha also addressed concerns about press freedom, noting that statements from the Home Minister about using force to silence dissent mirrored the press curbs seen during the Emergency. He cautioned against the manipulation of secularism for political gain and emphasized the importance of understanding India's historical context.

D. Raja raised concerns about the rights of Dalits, tribal communities, and women, questioning whether the current government was genuinely committed to upholding equality as promised by the Constitution. He also criticized the Congress's relationship with billionaire George Soros, linking it to the persistence of untouchability in Indian politics.

'Frustration with judicial delays bolsters appeal of bulldozer justice': Mittal

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

At the Legally Speaking 3rd Law and Constitutional Dialogue event by NewsX, a fiery debate unfolded on the state of India's judicial system, zeroing in on the contentious phenomenon of "Bulldozer Justice" and the growing judicial backlog. Featuring political analyst Tehsin Poonawala, BJP leader Sudhanshu Mittal, and former Delhi Police Commissioner S.N. Srivastav, the panel grappled with the challenges of balancing swift action with legal integrity.

The term "Bulldozer Justice" has risen to prominence as a symbol of swift enforcement against illegal encroachments and criminals. BJP leader Sudhanshu Mittal acknowledged the public's frustration with judicial delays, noting that these sentiments have bolstered the appeal of Bulldozer Justice. "While people must fear the law in a civilized society," he remarked, "it's essential to ensure that actions like demolitions follow legal procedures."

Mittal warned that bypassing due process risks legal overreach, potentially

undermining public faith in the judiciary. He also highlighted inconsistencies in demolition laws across states, advocating for a uniform legal framework to safeguard constitutional principles.

Tehsin Poonawala offered a staunch critique of extrajudicial practices, insisting that even the most egregious offenders must be subject to legal scrutiny. "No one should be punished outside the court system," he declared, citing a 95-page judgment that mandates a 15-day eviction notice before demolishing property.

Poonawala expressed concern over using Bulldozer Justice as a blanket solution, urging policymakers to prioritize fairness over expediency. "The separation of powers must be upheld," he stated, emphasizing the judiciary's role as a check against arbitrary governance.

S.N. Srivastav, former Delhi Police Commissioner, delved into the public's frustration with delayed justice, advocating for structural reforms to expedite case resolutions. He pointed to the case of Vikas Dubey as an example of reactive enforcement, cautioning against normalizing such measures.

LIVELY DEBATES ON SIMULTANEOUS



At the 'Legally Speaking' event organized by iTV Network, several prominent personalities from judiciary, politics and bureaucracy presented their views on different contemporary issues like One Nation, One Election, Uniform Civil Code, Minorities in Bangladesh and India, The Genocide of Kashmiri Pandits, Threat of Digital Arrests, and Places of Worship Act. Here we are giving glimpses and gists of lively discussions.

The stage had witnessed a host of speakers including former Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, Rajya Sabha Member Kartikeya Sharma, Congress National Spokesperson Supriya Shrinete, former Member of Rajya Sabha G. V. L. Narasimha Rao and Justice Sanjay Kaul among others.

They explored the topic in depth, emphasizing key points and engaging in meaningful dialogue.

Rajya Sabha MP Kartikeya Sharma bats for 'Committee of Future Affairs'

TIKAM SHARMA
NEW DELHI

Member of Parliament of Rajya Sabha Kartikeya Sharma along with former Union Minister and Advocate K.J. Alphons, Meghna Bal Director Esya center and advisor Koan and Cyber technology expert Subimal Bhattacharya share their thoughts on the topic of AI : A theater to governance, Politics and Judiciary. on the Legally Speaking event — the 3rd Law and Constitution Dialogue organized by iTV Network on Friday, December 13, 2025. Kartikeya Sharma highlighted that India faces the same issues as the rest of the world and needs to stay ahead of the curve by understanding how AI will impact the country, particularly in adversarial contexts.

Kartikeya Sharma discussed the challenges of regulating AI, noting that its evolution is difficult to predict. He referenced Justice Suryakant's warning about the dangers of AI if left unregulated. As a member of the IT committee, he stressed the need for a comprehensive framework to address these issues, acknowledging that the European Union has made progress, but it's not yet systematic or coherent. He emphasized the importance of ongoing discussions and debates before regulations can be effectively put in place, as unregulated AI could lead to serious challenges.

Sharma also proposed creating a "Committee of Future Affairs" in India to better address emerging global challenges like AI.



Audience at the event organized by the NewsX in New Delhi.



Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament Swati Maliwal receiving the certificate from Aishwarya Pandit Sharma, Chairperson of iTV Network



A panel comprising Congress Spokesperson Supriya Shrinete, Aman Sinha (Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India), G. V. L. Narasimha Rao (Former Member of Rajya Sabha BJP) and S.Y. Quraishi (Former ECI Chief).

'Genocide of Pandits needs official recognition'

SAURABH SHARMA
NEW DELHI

Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul who retired from the Supreme Court last year in 2023 on Friday said that the genocide of Kashmiri Pandits, which took place over 30 years ago, requires "official recognition".

Speaking at the 3rd Law & Constitution Dialogue hosted by iTV Network at The Imperial Hotel, New Delhi, the former Supreme Court Judge while talking about the tragic genocide of Kashmiri Pandits said that the tragedy that happened three decades ago needs acknowledgment, justice, and reconciliation.

Speaking about the exo-

odus of Kashmiri Pandits in late 1990s when militancy was at its peak in Jammu Kashmir, he said that the community does not seek a return to the past but "it does expect acknowledgment of the wrongs done to them."

This recognition, according to Kaul, is a crucial step towards addressing the pain and loss the community has endured.

Highlighting that his understanding of this issue grew stronger only after his retirement as he had limited opportunity to engage with the displaced community when in office due to several constraints, he said "after stepping down, I received many interactions from in-



Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul talking on the Genocide of Kashmiri Pandits.

dividuals who shared their stories and concerns."

"When I was in office, I was more secluded and could not engage as much, but after my retirement,

Union Cabinet okays 'One Nation, One Election Bill' this week: The Bill for simultaneous elections stirs debate. Supporters argue it enhances efficiency, while opponents claim it threatens regional representation and federalism. Aman Sinha (Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India) stated, "Only 2 articles of the constitution are required to be amended, primarily article 83, 172. For the unexpired term supposing that if house is desalt/loss of confidence in a particular leader of the house then in that scenario

the election would happen for the expired term. Election year starts one year before any election is announced. Therefore, clearly one nation, one election is an integral part of developed India." Indian National Congress National Spokesperson Supriya Shrinete, Aman Sinha (Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India), G. V. L. Narasimha Rao (Former Member of Rajya Sabha BJP) and S.Y. Quraishi (Former Chief Election Commissioner of India) delved into the topic "Does One Nation One Election Erode India's Federal Structure?"

wrong was done to them", he said. On the expectations from the displaced community, he noted that the community does not wish to revisit the past but seeks spaces where they can reconnect with their heritage and heal.

"These small yet significant steps, he argued, could provide a sense of belonging and dignity", he added.

In his comments, Justice Kaul highlighted that there is a need for both political will and public support to make progress on this issue.

Justice Kaul also stressed the importance of initiating open conversations to address the community's concerns and aspirations.

"I was tasked by the court to present facts regarding the case (RG Kar case and the safety of women doctors in hospitals). The investigation has concluded, and it's evident that one individual was responsible."

— Kapil Sibal

Veteran lawyer and
Rajya Sabha MP

"The subject (One Nation One Election) here is on the table for more than 10 years or more. The current controversy has been started when Mr. Narendra Modi became PM in 2013."

— S.Y. Quraishi

Former Election
Commission of
India Chief

The most important task was to ensure that India's diverse communities could live together peacefully without being dragged into the controversies of the past. India consensually drew the line in 1947.

— Salman Khurshid

Former Union
Minister



Veteran lawyer and Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal speaks at the event via video conferencing.

POLLS, UCC, CENSUS, WOMEN'S QUOTA



The key speakers in the panel discussion were Mr. Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, Mr. Salman Khurshid, Justice Iqbal Ansari and Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay.

The Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, remains one of India's most debated pieces of legislation. Enacted during the tenure of Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, it sought to freeze the religious character of places of worship as they existed on 15th August 1947, the day of India's independence. This Act has been at the heart of multiple discussions in the political sphere, with varying opinions on its implications for communal harmony, historical justice, and the future of India's religious landscape. Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, a prominent political leader, strongly defended the Act. His position is based on the belief that modern India must not allow the crimes of past foreign invaders—particularly those who destroyed religious sites during the Mughal Empire—to overshadow the spirit of inclusivity and peace in the present day.



At its core, the Places of Worship Act was designed to prevent disputes over religious sites and promote national integration. The Act prohibited the alteration of the religious character of any place of worship as it stood on 15th August 1947.

Is India's secular future at stake?

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, remains one of India's most debated pieces of legislation. Enacted during the tenure of Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, it sought to freeze the religious character of places of worship as they existed on 15th August 1947, the day of India's independence. This Act has been at the heart of multiple discussions in the political sphere, with varying opinions on its implications for communal harmony, historical justice, and the future of India's religious landscape.



Third Law and Constitution Dialogue event served as a platform for various stakeholders to share their perspectives on a law that continues to divide opinions and raise questions about the balance between historical justice and social peace. Among the key speak-

ers were political leader Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, Mr. Salman Khurshid, Justice Iqbal Ansari and Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay whose diverse viewpoints provided a comprehensive understanding of the nuances

surrounding the law. Each speaker brought a unique angle, drawing upon their political ideologies, legal backgrounds, and vision for India's future.

At its core, the Places of Worship Act was designed to prevent disputes over religious sites and promote national integration. The Act prohibited the alteration of the religious character of any place of worship as it stood on 15th August 1947, with a notable exception—the Ayodhya Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute, which had already been a matter of intense litigation at the time. The law effectively sought to preserve peace by freezing the status quo, preventing new

claims on religious sites and discouraging attempts to alter their character based on historical conflicts.

Naqvi, a prominent political leader, strongly defended the Act. His position is based on the belief that modern India must not allow the crimes of past foreign invaders—particularly those who destroyed religious sites during the Mughal Empire—to overshadow the spirit of inclusivity and peace in the present day. Naqvi contended that the present generation should not be held responsible for historical wrongs, and instead, it should focus on building a harmonious society free from the poison of communalism.



Dignitaries at the panel discussion at 'Legally Speaking' event in New Delhi.

Ambedkar had firmly opposed the idea of transforming India into a theocratic state. If India becomes a Hindurashtra, it will be the biggest calamity for the country. There is a need to safeguard the Constitution to preserve democracy, warning that any shift away from its foundational principles could lead to instability.

— D Raja
General Secretary
of the Communist
Party of India

No one should be punished outside the court system. Bulldozer justice should not be used as a blanket approach. Policymakers should prioritize fairness over expedience.

— Tehsin Poonawala
Political analyst

There are inconsistencies in laws governing demolition and encroachment across states, calling for a unified approach that respects the rule of law.

— Sudhanshu Mittal
BJP leader



The panel on 'Bulldozer Justice' featured political analyst Tehsin Poonawala, BJP leader Sudhanshu Mittal, and former Delhi Police Commissioner S.N. Srivastav.



Audience at the event organized by the NewsX in New Delhi.



MP Syed Nasir Hussain with Rajya Sabha MP Kartikeya Sharma.

More Women, Not More MPs

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

At the "Legally Speaking" event organized by NewsX, Lok Sabha MP Karti Chidambaram delved into the topic "Delimitation: Does India Need More MPs in Parliament?" He shared his candid views on issues ranging from representation to economic challenges, highlighting the need for pragmatic reforms rather than superficial expansions.

Karti Chidambaram criticized the divisive nature of debates centered around religion, urging a shift in focus to pressing economic issues.

"Why should religion even matter?" he questioned. "We should be addressing the lack of opportunities and economic growth rather than fixating on one's faith, which is a private matter. Conversations centered on religion serve no practical purpose in advancing India's development."

"Personally, I don't identify with any caste, but I see no harm in conducting a census. Collecting data is not the issue—it's how that data is used that matters. A census by itself is neutral; it's the actions taken afterward that require scrutiny."

Using a light-hearted analogy, he explained, "As someone over six feet tall, I struggle with legroom in Parliament and on flights. But just because I face this inconvenience doesn't mean airlines or Parliament will introduce broader seats. Similarly, a census isn't inherently a solution—it's a starting point."

DELHI HIGH COURT NOTICE TO MEA, INDIAN EMBASSY IN QATAR FOR CONSULAR ACCESS TO INCARCERATED INDIAN CITIZEN

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court in the case Kunhibava Union Of India And Anr observed and has issued notice to the Ministry of External Affairs, MEA, Union of India and the Indian Embassy in Qatar, wherein the petition is filed by the father of an incarcerated Indian citizen in Qatar.

The petitioner in the plea seek directions to facilitate consular access for his son, Muhammed Kayalvakkath Bava, who has been serv-

ing a jail sentence in Qatar since June 2016 and is due to remain incarcerated until July 2028.

The bench headed by Justice Sanjeev Narula in the case issued notice to the respondent-authorities.

In the present case, Bava was convicted for dishonour of cheques by a Qatari Court and he was sentenced to undergo 12 years imprisonment.

The petition filed states that Bava's signature was allegedly forged by his business partners to transfer shares.

The plea states that it be-



ing clear case of forgery and that Bava has been unable to pursue legal action against the individuals who defrauded him due to his imprisonment.

It has been stated before the court that the petition-

er registered a complaint about the forgery with the Qatari authorities, but they did not advance any further on the investigation.

The petitioner raised a grievance with the Consular Services Management

The petitioner in the plea prays that the MEA i.e., the respondent no 1 and the Indian Embassy at Doha, Qatar i.e., the respondent No. 2 be directed to grant consular access to Bava.

System, MADAD set up by the MEA, wherein seeking to provide assistance to Indian citizens to track Grievances pertaining to the Consular Services offered by the Indian Embassies.

The said grievance was marked as closed wherein it is stated that the Mission has extended all possible

assistance within the limits of local laws.

The petitioner approached the High Court seeking the respondent-authorities' intervention to ensure that his son is provided with legal representation and legal aid before the Foreign Court.

The petitioner argued

before the court that Bava is entitled to his rights under Article 36 of the Vienna Convention for Consular Relations, VCCR for consular access, which has been denied in the present case.

The petitioner also states that the request for consular access and for assistance in legal representation has been rejected by the MEA without any application of mind. The petitioner in the plea prays that the MEA i.e., the respondent no 1 and the Indian Embassy at Doha, Qatar i.e., the respondent No. 2 be directed to grant

consular access to Bava.

The court observed that to ensure procedural protections for Bava during his period of imprisonment such as frequent visitation rights for his family members, providing a translator or interpreter throughout the investigation or court proceedings and providing all official documents which relates to his arrest, detention, investigation and other court processes.

It has also been prayed before the court that the authorities to appoint a lawyer for Bava to enable him to prosecute the fraud case.

Supreme Court refuses to entertain PIL over voting rights of expatriate citizens: 'Do not ask us to direct Parliament to enact law'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Savya Sachi Krishnan Nigam Versus Election Commission Of India And Anr observed and has refused to entertain the Public Interest Litigation, PIL filed which relates to voting rights of expatriate

citizens. The court noted that the petitioner was essentially seeking a direction to the Parliament to enact a law.

The bench comprising of Justice Surya Kant and Justice Ujjal Bhuyan was hearing the present matter.

The bench in its order directed that, 'The petitioner, after arguing for

some time, seeks and is permitted to withdraw this petition with liberty to approach the appropriate forum.' It has been submitted by the petitioner- Savya Sachi Krishnan Nigam, who appeared in person before the court that the Public Interest Litigation, PIL which relates to exercise of voting rights by expatriate citi-

zens living in the diaspora.

The petitioner contended before the court that the Election Commission of India had written a letter to the Ministry of Law and Justice regarding the a proposal, but the file is held up since 2020.

The bench headed by Justice Kant stated to the petitioner that, 'You are

asking us to issue a direction to Parliament to enact the law. Please don't ask for that. You can raise this before another forum... there are other platforms... you may approach them... maybe you can get the issue raised in Parliament session, which is going on...'

Accordingly, the court dismissed the plea.

Calcutta High Court quashes 'false promise to marry' case against man 7 years after 'consensual' relationship with complainant under Sec 376 IPC

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Calcutta High Court in the case Kavish Shabbir Ahmed Vs. The State of West Bengal & Anr observed and has quashed a case of alleged rape filed by a woman, against a man, who she was in a consensual relationship with.

The bench headed by Justice Shampa (Dutt) Paul in the case found that the complainant had gotten into a physical relationship with the accused in the year 2013 and continued it till 2018, after which she filed a complaint in 2020.

The court in the case stated that the de facto complainant was aware that the petitioner was not interested in marriage but still the petitioner continued the relationship being a major aged about 25 years at the time of the incident. Therefore, the allegation of being put in fear has not been prima facie substantiated.

In 2013, the relationship got started and in 2020, the complaint has been lodged.

Adding to it, the court stat-



ed that there being no allegation in the FIR or Charge Sheet about any promise of marriage at the outset of their relationship in the year 2013.

The said relationship continued till 2018. There is no allegation of forcible sexual intercourse. The alleged assurance of marriage in this case was also not the only reason to enter into a physical relationship. The relationship between the parties prima facie appears to be consensual the ingredients required to constitute the offences alleged are prima facie not made out against the accused or petitioners herein.

In the present case, the case was filed against the

petitioner in the year 2020. It was alleged by the complainant before the court that she was forced into sexual intercourse on a false promise to marry by the petitioner, whom she had 'blind faith' in.

It has been submitted by the State before the court that the complainant had returned a positive pregnancy test, and had been in a relationship with the petitioner since the year 2013.

On the other hand, the complainant had objected to the petitioner's marriage which is being fixed by his parents, and had filed the after allegedly being insulted. Accordingly, the court quashed the case against the petitioner.

Atul Subhash suicide case: PIL moved in Supreme Court seeking reforms in domestic violence and dowry laws to prevent harassment of innocent husbands

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case was hearing the matter of the suicide of a man named Atul Subhash allegedly due to harassment by his wife through matrimonial cases.

In the present case, the Public Interest Litigation, PIL is filed seeking directions to ensure that husband and his family members are not harassed in cases filed under domestic violence and dowry laws.

The Public Interest Litigation, PIL is filed Advocate Vishal Tiwari seeking direction to the Union to implement the observations made by the Supreme Court in the case Preeti Gupta v. State of Jharkhand and Achin Gupta v. State of Haryana.

The Supreme Court in



In the present case, the Public Interest Litigation, PIL is filed seeking directions to ensure that husband and his family members are not harassed in cases filed under domestic violence and dowry laws.

the case Preeti Gupta v. State of Jharkhand flagged the abuse of Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code, whereby the husband and his relatives are unneces-

sarily dragged into criminal cases alleging domestic cruelty against the wife, and urged the legislature to make changes.

The Supreme Court in

the case Achin Gupta v. State of Haryana urged the Parliament to consider amending the counterpart of Section 498A of Indian Penal Code, IPC in the new criminal code (Section 85 and Section 86 Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita) to prevent its abuse. However, the BNS, which came into operation with effect from July 1, 2024, has retained the provision.

The Court in the Preeti Gupta case stated that, 'This court would like to observed that a serious re-look of the entire provision under section 498A of Indian Penal Code, IPC is warranted by the legislation. It is also a matter of common knowledge that exaggerated versions of the incident are reflected in a large number of complaints and thus, the tendency of over impli-

cation is also reflected in a very large number of cases. The petition filed also seeks the constitution of an expert committee of retired judges, eminent lawyers and legal jurists to review and reform existing dowry and domestic violence laws and suggest measures to prevent their misuse.

Further, the petitioner seeks a direction that marriage registrations should also record the articles or gifts given during marriage.

The petitioner, while citing the suicide of Atul Subhash stated that, 'The time has come to make review and reforms in existing Dowry laws and Domestic Violence Act so that its misuse and abuse could be stopped and innocent men can be saved and real purpose of the Dowry laws may not be defeated.'

Punjab and Haryana High Court directs videography of nomination paper filing in Municipal Corporation elections

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Punjab and Haryana High Court in the case Vijay Kumar And Others Versus State Of Punjab And Others observed and has directed the Punjab State Election Commission to video-graph the filing of nomination papers in the upcoming Punjab Municipal Corporation Election which is being scheduled on December 21 2024.

The Division bench comprising of Justice Sureshwar Thakur and Justice Kirti Singh was hearing the present matter.

The bench in the case directed the State Election Commission, 'that as and when municipal elections are conducted to the Municipal Corporation concerned, thereupon the concerned respondents, shall ensure that complete compliance is made to the guidelines issued by the State Election Commission, Punjab, relating to Videography of the nomination process till its withdrawal.'

It has also been directed by the said court that the Chief Secretary of Punjab Government, to circulate this order to all the Returning Officers concerned.

In the present case, the petition is filed by the candidates wherein it is contended that the Punjab



The Division bench comprising of Justice Sureshwar Thakur and Justice Kirti Singh was hearing the present matter.

Municipal Corporation Election, seeking directions to conduct videography of the entire nomination process till the completion of the withdraw process to maintain transparency and fairness in the Municipal election.

It was alleged before the court that the petitioners in the case tried to fill the nomination papers after due compliance but the workers and leaders of the ruling AAP Government in Punjab, along with the police officials were not allowing the petitioners and other candidates of Patiala district to fill the nomination papers and were harassing them.

However, 42 municipal councils and nagar panchayat s are awaiting elections and, in some municipalities, elections have not taken place since three four years.

On October 14, the High Court in the case issued a writ of mandamus to the Punjab's State Election Commission and Punjab Government to initiate the process of holding Municipal elections, within the period of 15 days without conducting the fresh exercise of delimitation.

On November 11, the Apex Court had given further 2 weeks time to initiate the election process.

On December 03, the High Court in the case granted further 15 days time to the Punjab Election Commissioner to initiate the process of conducting Municipal Corporation election in the State.

Accordingly, the court disposed of the plea.

The counsel, Advocate Mr. Ankush Verma, Advocate Mr. N.K. Verma appeared for the petitioners.

Supreme Court to hear petition against 'VIP Darshans' in temples

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Vijay Kishor Goswami Versus Union Of India And Ors observed wherein a petition is filed seeking to stop the additional fees charged by Temples to provide 'VIP Darshans' of deities.

The bench comprising of Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar was hearing the present matter.

In the present case, the writ petition is filed seeking the abolition of VIP darshan fees charged by temples across the country.

The court in the case objected to certain news reports which misrepresented its previous hearings.

Court Exchange:

CJI: Last time whatever happened in the court is completely misrepresented in the media.

Counsel: Mylords I am not aware, they have completely put it on their own



The petition filed contended before the court that the the practice of providing special or expedited 'darshan' in Temples under the additional 'VIP' darshan fees is violative of the quality principle under Article 14 and Article 21 of the Constitution of India as it discriminates against those devotees who cannot afford such fees.

Justice Kumar: it's all over the country CJI: completely misrepresented

Counsel: No communication at all, I read it in newspaper

Justice Kumar: Obviously you went to the media, there is no question of their finding out of what is happening in the court...some stray observation of CJI...

you blew out of proportion Counsel: There are correspondents keeping a regular track of what is happening.

CJI: Look sometimes, in the course of hearing, we put some questions, you on a tangent saying I am not asking for this or that.

The petition filed contended before the court that the the practice of providing special or expedited 'darshan' in Temples under the additional 'VIP' darshan fees is violative of the quality principle under Article 14 and Article 21 of the Constitution of India as it discriminates against those devotees who cannot afford such fees.

Further, the petition filed states that the charging of excess fees ranging from Rs. 400-500 to get a closer and efficient access to the temple deities lack consideration towards those ordinary devotees who face Multiple physical and financial obstacles who are unable to pay for such 'VIP Entry Charges'. Amongst

the disadvantaged devotees, women, persons with disabilities and senior citizens face a larger set back.

The petition also highlights that despite several representations to the Ministry of Home Affairs to resolve the issue, only a limited directive has been given to state of Andhra Pradesh, leaving out other states like Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

THE PLEA SEEKS

Declaration of abolition of the VIP Darshan Fees as violative of right to equality and religious freedom;

Direction for equal treatment of all devotees; framing of Standard Operating Procedures, SOPs by Union to ensure equal access to temple;

Constitution of a National Board to oversee issues regarding management of temples

Accordingly, the court listed the matter for further consideration on January 27, 2024.

TOP OF THE DAY



UAE STRENGTHENS TIES WITH GREEK

ATHENS : Humaid Obaid Abushibs, Chairman of the UAE Accountability Authority (UAEAA), led an official working visit to the Hellenic Republic, aimed at enhancing cooperation in audit and anti-corruption between the two countries. During the visit, the UAEAA Chairman held several high-level meetings, including discussions with Ntouni Sotiria, President of the Hellenic Court of Audit, to explore best practices in audit and supervision.

SRI LANKAN PARLIAMENT'S SPEAKER TO RESIGN

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's Parliament Speaker Asoka Ranwala announced his resignation on Friday following days of speculation about him falsifying his educational qualifications. "In recent days, a problem with my educational qualifications has been raised in society. I have not made any false statements about my educational qualifications," Ranwala said in a statement.



STRANDED PAKISTANIS FROM SYRIA ARRIVE

ISLAMABAD: A special chartered plane carrying 318 Pakistanis, stranded in Syria due to recent turmoil, landed at Islamabad International Airport on Thursday. The evacuation was made possible through a coordinated effort by the Pakistani government, with significant assistance from Lebanon. The passengers, who had been moved to Lebanon following the evolving situation in Syria, were greeted at the airport by Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal, alongside representatives from the Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis, and the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

14 N KOREANS INDICTED IN SCHEME TO FUND WEAPONS

ST. LOUIS: Fourteen North Korean nationals have been indicted in a scheme using information technology workers with false identities to contract with US companies - workers who then funneled their wages to North Korea for development of ballistic missiles and other weapons, the head of the FBI office in St. Louis has said. The scheme involving thousands of IT workers generated more than USD88 million for the North Korean government, Ashley T Johnson, special agent in charge of the St. Louis FBI office, said at a news conference on Thursday.

SYRIA'S NEW RULERS CALL FOR VICTORY CELEBRATIONS IN STREETS

HTS has suspended Syria's constitution, parliament for three months, planning legal reforms and the establishment of rule of law.

AGENCIES
DAMASCUS

Syria's rebel chief called on people across the country to celebrate "the victory of the revolution" on Friday, as G7 leaders looked to forge a common approach to the new government.

More than half a century of brutal rule by the Assad clan came to a sudden end on Sunday, after a lightning rebel offensive led by Abu Mohammed al-Jolani's Islamist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) swept across the country and took the capital.

Ousted president Bashar al-Assad fled Syria, closing an era in which suspected dissidents were jailed or killed, and capping nearly 14 years of war that killed more than 500,000 people and displaced millions.

"I would like to congratulate the great Syrian people on the victory of the blessed

SYRIA'S REBEL VICTORY

- Abu Mohammed al-Jolani of HTS declared the end of Assad's regime and urged Syrians to celebrate the "victory of the revolution."
- Following a rebel offensive, Bashar al-Assad fled, ending 50 years of Assad family rule and nearly 14 years of civil war.
- G7 leaders called for an inclusive government in Syria and accountability for Assad's crimes, stressing human rights protections.
- Syrians, now free from Assad's rule, are searching for loved ones lost during the regime's oppression.



Syrians attend Friday prayers at the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus. AP

revolution and I call on them to go to the streets to express their joy," Jolani said on Telegram.

Jolani, who is now using his real name Ahmed al-Sharaa, is set to attend Friday prayers at Damascus's landmark Umayyad Mosque.

During the early days of Syria's uprising in 2011, protesters would often gather after noon prayers on

Fridays, the Muslim day of prayer and rest.

Assad's overthrow has allowed Syrians to flood to prisons, hospitals and morgues in search of long-disappeared loved ones, hoping for a miracle, or at least closure.

"I turned the world upside down looking," Abu Mohammed told AFP as he searched for news of three missing relatives at the

Mazzeah airbase in Damascus.

"But I didn't find anything at all. We just want a hint of where they were, one percent." Sunni Muslim HTS is rooted in Syria's branch of Al-Qaeda and designated a terrorist organisation by many Western governments, who now face the challenge of how to approach the country's new transitional leadership.

Second impeachment vote looms for South Korean Prez

AGENCIES
SEOUL

A week after a first attempt to remove Yoon for the martial law debacle foundered, the country's National Assembly will vote Saturday around 4:00 pm (0700 GMT) on whether to impeach the president for "insurrectionary acts undermining the constitutional order".

Two hundred votes are needed for the measure to pass, meaning opposition lawmakers must convince eight ruling People Power Party (PPP) colleagues to defect.

As of noon Friday, seven ruling party lawmakers had pledged to support impeachment -- leaving the vote up in the air.

On Friday, the leader of the Democratic Party, Lee Jae-myung, implored them to support the president's removal from office.



Yoon's approval rating - never very high - has plummeted to just 11 percent, according to a Gallup Korea poll. AP

There is also precedent for the court to block impeachment: in 2004, then-president Rob Moo-hyun was removed by parliament for alleged election law violations and incompetence.

"What the lawmakers must protect is neither Yoon nor the ruling People Power Party but the lives of the people wailing out in the

freezing streets," Lee said. "Please join in supporting the impeachment vote tomorrow. History will remember and record your

Over 340 terrorists killed in first 10 months in Pakistan

AGENCIES
ISLAMABAD

At least 341 terrorists were killed by the security agencies in various actions across the country during the first ten months of this year, the Parliament was told on Friday.

Also, at least 1,566 terrorism incidents occurred in the 10 months, with highest 948 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa followed by 532 in Balochistan, leading to a total of 924 deaths.

The Interior Ministry shared the details with the National Assembly in response to a question by lawmaker Hameed Hussain of Majlis Wahdat-i-Muslimeen party of Shiite Muslims, who



had sought details of actions to improve the law and order in the country.

According to Dawn, the ministry stated that there were 2,801 intelligence-based operations (IBOs) across the country between January to October 2024. "These operations resulted in the elimination of 341 terrorists, underscoring the effectiveness of proactive measures in dismantling ter-

rorist networks and neutralising threats to national security," the ministry stated.

The ministry also said that four more "terrorist organisations" -- Zainabiyoun Brigade, Majeed Brigade, Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group and Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement -- were proscribed in the 10 months, bringing the total to 82.

It added that 800 individuals were placed on the Fourth Schedule under the Anti-Terrorism Act as part of "vigilant monitoring of individuals suspected of involvement in terrorist activities" with 400 from Punjab, 203 from Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, 173 from Balochistan, 21 from Sindh and three from Gilgit-Baltistan.

Experts stress on South Asia's green transformation at Nepal summit

AGENCIES
KATHMANDU

The South Asia Economic Summit concluded here on Friday, with experts underscoring the need to advance sustainable and inclusive development based on the green economy.

Prominent economists, policymakers, the business community and civil society leaders of the South Asian region participated in the three-day international summit with the theme "Unleashing an equitable green transformation in South Asia".

G7 to meet on Syria, government pledges 'rule of law'

AGENCIES
DAMASCUS

More than half a century of brutal rule by the Assad clan came to a sudden end on Sunday, after a lightning rebel offensive swept across the country and took the capital.

Assad fled Syria, closing an era in which suspected dissidents were jailed or killed, and capping nearly 14 years of war that killed more than 500,000 people and displaced millions.

Abu Mohammed al-Jolani, head of the Islamist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) which spearheaded the offensive, called on Syrians "to go to the streets to express their joy" on Friday to mark "the victory of the blessed revolution".

During the early days of Syria's uprising in 2011, pro-democracy protesters used to give their Friday gatherings a different name every week. The latest rally was called the "Friday of victory".



Syria's independence-era flag ripples across a mass rally in Damascus. AP

Interim prime minister Mohammed al-Bashir addressed a large congregation at Damascus's landmark Umayyad Mosque.

Thousands flocked to the mosque, some raising the three-star Syrian independence flag which none dared wave in the capital during Assad's iron-fisted rule.

Exhilarated crowds chanted "the Syrian people is one!" "I still feel like I'm dreaming," said 52-year-old Khalil Rimo. "I still can't believe

that I'm standing next to the Umayyad Mosque... and there are no government thugs" asking for ID, Rimo said.

"We are gathering because we're happy Syria has been freed, we're happy to have been liberated from the prison in which we lived," said Nour Thi al-Ghina, 38.

Thousands of people also gathered in the squares and streets in other Syrian cities, including Homs, Hama and Idlib.

Syria Kurds warm up to new leaders but fear for hard-won gains

AGENCIES
QAMISHLI

Kurdish authorities have made overtures to Islamist-led militants who seized power in Syria last week, but the long-oppressed community fears it could lose hard-won gains it made during the war, including limited self-rule.

The Kurds faced discrimination during more than 50 years of Assad family rule. They were barred, for example, from offering education in their own language.

As militants led by Islamist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) seized power, ousting president Bashar Assad, the Kurdish authorities in northeastern Syria have multiplied overtures to the new leaders, like adopting the three-starred flag used by the opposition.

Mutlu Civiroglu, a Washington-based analyst and expert on the Kurds, said that the fate of Syria's Kurdish authorities "remains uncertain," noting "the rapidly shifting dynamics on the ground."

Syria's Kurds face "mounting pressure from the Turkish government and factions under its control," he said, as Ankara-backed fighters seized two Kurdish-held areas in the north during the militant offensive.

Last week, Mazloum Abdi who heads the US-backed Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) welcomed "an opportunity to build a new Syria based on democracy and justice that guarantees the rights of all Syrians."

Syria's Kurds face "mounting pressure from the Turkish government and factions under its control," he said, as Ankara-backed fighters seized two Kurdish-held areas in the north during the militant offensive.

Minority groups suffered during the civil war that broke out in 2011, particularly after the Islamic State (IS) group overran large parts of the country three years later.

HTS, the Islamist group that led the offensive that toppled Assad, is rooted in Syria's branch of Al-Qaeda and is proscribed as a terrorist organization by many Western governments, though it has sought to moderate its rhetoric.

World Bank cancels USD 500 million loan to Pakistan

AGENCIES
ISLAMABAD

The World Bank has cancelled a budget support loan of over USD 500 million to Pakistan after Islamabad failed to meet key conditions on time, including the revision of power purchase agreements under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), as reported by The Express Tribune.

The Washington-based lender has also announced that it will not provide any new budget support loans during the current fiscal year, which could affect the government's expectation of receiving USD 2 billion in fresh loans. A key reason for this decision is that Pakistan has largely exhausted



its loan quota as reported by Express Tribune.

Government sources revealed that the World Bank had cancelled the USD 500 to 600 million loans under the Affordable and Clean Energy program (PACE-II). Initially, the bank had agreed to provide 500 million, later increasing the amount to 600 million to help bridge Pakistan's external financing gap. The Express Tribune reported.

The PACE program was approved by the World Bank in June 2021, with the first tranche of USD 400 million already released. However, the second tranche was contingent on several conditions, including negotiations with all Independent Power Producers (IPPs), notably the Chinese power plants established under CPEC.

According to the Express Tribune report Pakistani authorities said that no progress was made in renegotiating agreements with CPEC-related power plants. China has repeatedly rejected reopening these deals, including restructuring the energy debt, which totals around USD 16 billion, the sources added.

China eyes negotiations as Trump threatens new tariffs

AGENCIES
BEIJING

As Donald Trump steps up his tariff threats against China, Beijing is moving to beat the next U.S. president to the punch with its own restrictions and get Washington to the negotiating table ahead of a full-blown trade war, analysts say.

Armed with the lessons of the last trade war during

Trump's first term, China is seeking to amass bargaining chips to kick off talks with a new U.S. administration on contentious aspects of bilateral ties, including trade and investment, and science and technology. It is also concerned about the harmful effects of additional tariffs on its already fragile economy.

This week, China launched a probe into U.S. chip giant



U.S. President Donald Trump takes part in a welcoming ceremony with China's President Xi Jinping in Beijing, China. AP

Nvidia (NVDA.O), opens new tab over what it claimed

were suspected antitrust violations, which follows its

ban on U.S.-bound exports of rare minerals.

"We have to look at this as the opening bid in what will likely ultimately turn into a negotiation with the U.S. rather than just an imposition of tariffs and everyone walks away," HSBC's Chief Asia Economist Fred Neumann said.

China is better prepared to deal with almost any tariffs,

short of an "Armageddon announcement" of a 60% tariff on all Chinese goods, said George Magnus, research associate at Oxford University's China Centre.

The world's second-largest economy now globally dominates sectors such as electric vehicles and green energy, and has less need for the Boeing jets and large gasoline-fuelled cars it bought

back in 2017, having found substitutes such as Airbus airplanes and its own Comac C919.

But China is far from self-sufficient. A new trade war with the world's biggest economy would still hurt China more, analysts say, as Washington can levy ever-larger import duties on its goods and further rip China from its supply chains.

UKRAINE WAR



In response to a recent Ukraine's ATACMS missile strike on Taganrog, Russia launched a large-scale attack on Ukraine's energy infrastructure supporting its military industry, the Russian Defense Ministry stated. More than 90 missiles and 200 drones fired into Ukraine on December 12. Ukraine has since requested over 13,400 megawatt-hours of electricity from five neighboring countries, Ukrenergo reported. Ukraine intercepts 81 of 94 Russian missiles; F-16s down 11 in a powerful display of defense. X

Debate on Ukraine war without having Putin is risky: NATO chief

AGENCIES
BRUSSELS (BELGIUM)

NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte has voiced concern about the idea of holding peace negotiations on the Russia-Ukraine war without Russian President Vladimir Putin "at the table", terming the move "risky," The Hill reported.

During a discussion at Carnegie Europe think tank in Brussels on Wednesday, Rutte said, "It is crucial that whenever there is a deal that it is a good deal, with all the elements in there," according to The Hill.

He further said, "I think



these were very good considerations, but again, for me to start to discuss this, we start a sort of debate amongst ourselves, within the alliance, with our European partners, without having Putin at the table, and that is risky."

Mark Rutte said that

Ukraine should begin talks with the Kremlin. However, it must do so in a position of "strength." He reiterated his remarks from earlier this month, when he called on members of NATO to provide additional arms to Ukrainian soldiers who may be wavering on the battlefield, The Hill reported.

The NATO leader's comments echoed his remarks from earlier this month, when he encouraged members of NATO to send more arms to soldiers in Ukraine who may be wavering on the battlefield.

Canada prepares counter to US tariffs

AGENCIES
OTTAWA

As the threat of tariffs from US President-elect Donald Trump looms large, Canadian premiers have urged Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to 'respond robustly' and some suggested cutting off energy supplies and highlighted other products that the US "relies on" Canada for, CBC News reported.

Trudeau met with Canada's premiers on Wednesday to discuss Ottawa's plan to address Trump's concerns, the second meeting since Trump threatened to impose steep tariffs on Canadian imports after he will be sworn in as President in January.

Canada's Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland, who was at Wednesday's meeting, says some premiers are in favour of robust response to threatened US tariffs, CBC News reported.

She also took suggestions from premiers on which products to target if retaliatory tariffs become necessary.

"Some premiers proactively identified products that their provinces produce and export to the United States -- and which the US relies on -- and which should be considered as part of the Canadian response," she said.

Venezuela President releases 103 people imprisoned since disputed July election

AGENCIES
CARACAS (VENEZUELA)

The Venezuelan government has released 103 people who were imprisoned following the country's disputed July presidential election, which the opposition accused President Nicolas Maduro of stealing, sparking widespread protests and arrests, a middleast news agency reported.

According to the citizen security service, the release of prisoners was announced in a written statement on Thursday.

The statement explained that Maduro had instructed



the government to review "all the cases concerning acts of violence and crimes committed in the framework of the election."

The 103 prisoners were released over a 72-hour period, from Tuesday to Thursday. This move comes in addition to "precautionary

measures" granted to other detainees on November 26, as per Al Jazeera.

According to the attorney general's office, those "precautionary measures" also allowed 225 prisoners to be released but required them to appear before a court once every 30 days.

EMMANUEL MACRON NAMES FRANCOIS BAYROU AS NEW FRENCH PRIME MINISTER

Francois Bayrou replaces Michel Barnier as France's Prime Minister after a no-confidence vote triggers political turmoil.

AGENCIES
PARIS

French President Emmanuel Macron on Friday appointed the President of the Democratic Movement party (MoDem), Francois Bayrou, as reported by an international news agency.

Bayrou ran for president three times before rallying behind Macron in 2017. The 73-year-old is the mayor of the southwestern town of Pau as well as the founder of the centrist MoDem party.

Meanwhile, sharing a post on X, the MoDem party wrote, "Francois Bayrou, President of the MoDem, is appointed Prime Minister."

"Francois Bayrou has demonstrated his ability to unite to serve the general interest. We will work together to provide concrete answers to the French people," the post added.

Notably, the announcement by Macron follows the resignation of France Prime Minister Michel Barnier last week.

Barnier had stepped down



KEY POINTS

- **Bayrou named French PM:** Macron appoints Francois Bayrou as Prime Minister after Michel Barnier's resignation.
- **Barnier's record exit:** Barnier resigns after three months, the shortest tenure in modern French history.
- **Macron stands firm:** Macron vows to complete his mandate and ensure government stability.
- **No-confidence fallout:** Barnier ousted over budget powers, fueling political instability in France.

after just three months in office, marking the shortest tenure of any prime minister in modern French history, as per Al Jazeera.

On December 5, while addressing the nation from the Elysee Palace, Macron vowed to continue his five-year mandate despite the no-confidence vote that led

to the resignation of Barnier. Macron also emphasised his responsibility to ensure the continuity of the state, the proper functioning of institutions, and the protection of the French people.

"Finally, the mandate that you democratically entrusted to me is a five-year mandate, and I will exercise

it fully until its end. My responsibility requires ensuring the continuity of the State, the proper functioning of our institutions, the independence of our country, and the protection of all of you," he had said.

"I have been doing this from the beginning, at your side, through social crises, the Covid-19 epidemic, the return of war, inflation and so many trials that we have shared," Elysee said, quoting Macron.

Notably, the 331 members of the 577-seat lower house of the French parliament voted to remove Barnier's centrist minority government, throwing the country into political instability as it faces a growing budget deficit, Al Jazeera reported.

The vote was triggered by far-left and far-right opposition parties after Barnier used special powers to push through budget measures without parliamentary approval.

Barnier's government became the first in more than six decades to be toppled by a no-confidence vote.

TIME magazine names Donald Trump as 'Person of the Year' 2024

AGENCIES
NEW YORK

TIME Magazine has named US President-elect Donald Trump as the 'Person of the Year', 2024.

The magazine also shared the announcement on X.

In the post, the magazine said, "Trump's political rebirth is unparalleled in American history. His first term ended in disgrace, with his attempts to overturn the 2020 election results culminating in the attack on the U.S. Capitol. He was shunned by most party officials when he announced his candidacy in late 2022 amid multiple criminal investigations. Little more than a year later, Trump cleared the Republican field, clinching one of the fastest contested presidential primaries in history. He spent six weeks during the general election in a New York City courtroom, the first former President to be convicted of a crime - a fact that did little



to dampen his support. An assassin's bullet missed his skull by less than an inch at a rally in Butler, Pa., in July. Over the next four months, he beat not one

but two democratic opponents, swept all seven swing states, and became the first Republican to win the popular vote in 20 years. He has realigned American politics,

remaking the GOP and leaving Democrats reckoning with what went awry."

In the election rallies, Trump raised key issues of importance to the American voters. These included the American economy and illegal immigration into the country amongst others.

On the front of foreign policy, Trump aims to expand the Abraham accords and broker a peace agreement between Russia and Ukraine, the magazine noted.

During the 2020 Presidential elections, Donald Trump got over 270 threshold electoral college votes needed to win the presidency. This became the second instance of a president serving two non-consecutive terms in the White House, the first in over 100 years. Grover Cleveland served as a non-consecutive president in 1884 and 1892. Trump had earlier served as US President from 2016 to 2020.

UNDER THE HANDS OF EXTREMISTS; BANGLADESH CONTINUES WITH ATROCITIES ON HINDUS

This week, in light of the deteriorating conditions in Bangladesh regarding the treatment of Hindus and other minority groups by the extremist government, Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri expressed India's concerns regarding the safety and security of these communities. He urged the interim government to adopt a more constructive approach during a Foreign Office Consultation with his Bangladeshi counterpart, Mohammad Jashim Uddin, in Dhaka. Additionally, he met with Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus, who invited India to support his initiative aimed at revitalizing the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). This visit marks the first by a senior Indian official since the student-led uprising that compelled Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to seek refuge in India in August, a period

during which bilateral relations have significantly declined following the interim government's assumption of power.

Misri's trip to the capital of Bangladesh occurred two weeks following the arrest of Chinmoy Krishna Das, the head of a Hindu religious organization advocating for the rights of minority communities in the country. The arrest of Das has further complicated the already strained relations between India and Bangladesh. Mr. Das is currently facing charges of sedition and has been denied bail, with his trial now rescheduled for the first week of January. There are indications that legal representatives are being obstructed from providing him with defence.

Also, days after asserting that reports of attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh were exaggerated, the interim



WORLD RECAP

ANSHU JOSHI

government has now conceded that approximately 88 incidents of violence against minorities, predominantly Hindus, have occurred since the Sheikh Hasina administration was ousted in August. It is important to highlight that last week, the same interim government had stated that the Hindu minority was better protected under its rule than during the tenure of the former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Additionally, Bangladesh also conceded Indian media of conducting a widespread misinformation campaign aimed at disseminating false narratives regarding the targeting of minorities in Bangladesh. However, it can be clearly

seen how the bilateral relations between India and Bangladesh have significantly deteriorated since the interim government assumed power. In reaction to Indian government's concerns, Bangladeshi officials conveyed Dhaka's viewpoint, emphasizing that the protection of minorities is an issue that falls under Bangladesh's internal affairs (is international community even listening?). But now the officials have confessed that people from Hindu community in Bangladesh have been facing atrocities.

Amid this tense situation, instead of trying to relax the tensions, Bangladeshi officials are also indicating that they will join their

hands with Pakistan for importing essential goods. In a significant shift regarding the increasingly strained relations between India and Bangladesh, Bangladesh is considering reducing its imports of vital food products from India and is poised to source sugar from Pakistan. This decision reflects Dhaka's growing inclination towards strengthening ties with Pakistan and China, while distancing itself further from India. The latest sugar import agreement between Bangladesh and Pakistan is regarded as a critical advancement in the growing trade relations between the two countries, likely enhancing Pakistan's standing in the South Asian market. This deal can be seen as Bangladesh's strategic move to lessen its reliance on imports from India, as it seeks to distance itself from New Delhi's influence while

fostering closer ties with its competitors, Pakistan and China. I think it is the apt time its leaders should look back at the history of their beloved country and how India stood as a rock-solid support when Bangladesh was formed!

In light of the worsening security conditions, India has yet to reinstate comprehensive visa services for citizens of Bangladesh, focusing instead on the needs of medical tourists. Also, India's decision to limit visa access for Bangladeshi citizens has also left numerous students unable to travel to Delhi to secure visas for their studies in Europe. This situation has created critical uncertainty regarding their educational prospects. In response to this development, Yunus has called on European nations this week itself to relocate their visa processing centres from New Delhi to

Dhaka or to another nearby country. He suggested that relocating the visa processing offices to Dhaka or a nearby country could be advantageous for both Bangladesh and the European Union, a point he made during a discussion with European diplomats at his office in Dhaka.

The significant concern regarding minority rights in Bangladesh is not the only challenge that India faces; it also has to remain ready for additional pressing issues such as illegal migration and infiltration across its borders, as well as the ongoing situation with refugees.

India is already surrounded by politically fragile countries like Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Nepal. Afghanistan is already under the control of a terrorist organisation. Entire Europe is under one or the other kind of crisis situation. Russia-Ukraine war

does not seem to be ending any sooner. Israel-Hamas conflict is intensifying every week. Amid this all, if extremists kill democracy in Bangladesh, it would not only prove to be detrimental for the global peace and security, it would also raise a big question on mighty international organisations. Respecting sovereignty and strategic autonomy of a country is what India believes in; however, what Bangladesh is doing needs immediate international attention. I also hope people to use the same yardstick for the human rights of Hindus (read: the minorities stuck in Bangladesh that they are using for the people stuck in Gaza. Although, I am sure of one thing, Bangladesh will be the next Pakistan if it continues to be on the path of extremism!

The author is Professor, School of International Studies, JNU

REVIEW: SIKANDAR KA MUQADDAR ****

SIKANDAR KA MUQADDAR



PRAVEEN NAGDA

Neeraj Pandey is back with another crime thriller and this time with an exclusive OTT release of Sikandar Ka Muqaddar on Netflix. The film has a star cast of Jimmy Shergill, Avinash Tiwary, Tamannaah Bhatia, Divya Dutta, and Hardik Mehta among others.

It's a crime story of a diamond heist from a jewellery exhibition that was averted by the alert cops only to discover that 5 red diamonds were stolen while the cops were managing the crowds and the culprits. Jaswinder Singh (Jimmy Shergill), a decorated officer well-known for solving cases is called in. While he has a strong gut feeling (which he refers to as Mool Vritti or Basic Instinct) about the possible people behind the theft, he doesn't have conclusive evidence to nail the main culprit.

The whole film revolves around the undefeated determination of both the culprit and the cop to challenge each other running over a timeline of 15 years. Sikandar Sharma (Avinash Tiwary) is the prime suspect along with two other employees of the diamond firm in stealing the red diamonds.

While there was no conclusive evidence, Jaswinder's cop instinct was so strong that he continued to make several attempts within the law and outside of it only to break Sikandar to admit the crime. Jaswinder ensures that Sikandar is trashed everywhere, by making sure he loses his job, the media continues to damage his reputation, and a social stigma is created for being out of bail in a theft case.

Support for Sikandar comes in the way of Kamini Singh (Tamannaah Bhatia),

a single mother who was also a co-accused. Sikandar and Kamini get married and start a new life in Agra untroubled by cops and courts for two years. While everything was going on smoothly in their lives, the ghost from the past is back haunting them again repeating all the humiliation but Sikandar still doesn't give up.

The wild chase continues, and Jaswinder continues to shadow Sikandar almost everywhere in life for fifteen years, while Sikandar, more or less remaining aware of Jaswinder's moves remains unfazed, undeterred, unbroken, and unwilling to give up. Sikandar's life takes many turns from an AV operator, a computer engineer, a glass factory worker, and finally a wealthy professional in the area of real estate working in Abu Dhabi and being able to deliver a great quality of life to Kamini and her little sister and son.

Interestingly there are many twists and turns that make you believe and simultaneously change your belief about reality, as Jaswinder and Sikandar both tell their side most forcefully with absolute stubbornness. The pre-climax storytelling reveals much more that the viewers probably didn't expect at all. Sikandar's wife Kamini, was an implant of Jaswinder keeping an eye over Sikandar for 15 years, could be a bit unpalatable fact of the story, but that's what it is.

Jimmy Shergill's performance is commendable as a stubborn cop passionate towards his mission at the cost of his personal life. However, the story slows down in the mid-way from the main narrative only to come back in a shocking way as you move towards the climax.

Praveen Nagda is Festival Director of KidsCINEMA and CultureCinema Film Festivals

SHARAD KELKAR, HARLEEN SETHI TO BE SEEN IN MEDICAL DRAMA 'DOCTORS'



TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Actors Sharad Kelkar and Harleen Sethi are coming up with a new show titled 'Doctors'.

Aamir Ali, Vivaan Shah, and Viraff Patel are also a part of the project.

As per a press note, 'Doctors' delves "deep into the complexities of the medical profession, blending drama, emotion, and suspense, to promise an engaging binge-watch experience for the holiday season."

On Friday, the makers also unveiled the show's teaser, giving audience a sneak peek into 'Doctors'.

The show's logline read, "They don't believe in miracles. They make miracles happen." Directed by Sahir Raza and produced by Jyoti Deshpande (Jio Studios) alongside Siddharth P. Malhotra and Sapna Malhotra. It will be out on JioCinema on December 27. Sharad was recently seen in a Marathi film titled Raanti. In the film, Kelkar essays the role of Vishnu, a character inspired by the powerful Narasimha avatar from Hindu mythology, embodying strength, resilience, and justice. He shared screen space with Sanjay Narvekar, Santosh Juvekar, and Nagesh Bhosle in the film.

PICTURE PERFECT

Actor Naga Chaitanya with his wife Sobhita Dhulipala pose for a picture at Anurag Kashyap's daughter Aaliyah's wedding reception, in Mumbai on Thursday. (ANI)



B-TOWN CONGRATULATES D GUKESH ON MAKING HISTORY

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Indian chess prodigy D Gukesh has made history by becoming the youngest-ever World Chess Champion.

The 18-year-old sensation's stunning victory over China's Ding Liren on December 12 has sent waves of pride across India, with Bollywood celebrities among the first to congratulate him.

D Gukesh's victory in the final game of the Chess World Championship was nothing short of extraordinary.

After a tied score of 6.5-6.5 heading into the final match, Gukesh delivered a stellar performance, securing a 7.5-6.5 victory and cementing his place in the annals of chess history.



The International Chess Federation (FIDE) officially declared Gukesh as the "youngest world champion in history" via their X (formerly Twitter) handle. Gukesh's remarkable journey to the World Chess

Championship began earlier in the year when he made headlines by becoming the youngest-ever challenger in the FIDE Candidates Chess Tournament 2024.

His triumph against Ding Liren marks the pinnacle of

his career, earning him accolades from all corners of the globe.

As the news of Gukesh's win spread, Bollywood stars took to social media to express their admiration and congratulations.

Allu Arjun arrest: Varun Dhawan comes out in support of 'Pushpa' star

TDG NETWORK
JAIPUR

Allu Arjun's arrest by the police in connection with a stampede during the premiere of Pushpa 2: The Rule at Sandhya Theatre in Hyderabad has shocked his fans and members of the film industry.

Bollywood star Varun Dhawan has come out in support of Allu Arjun, stating it is not right to blame a single individual.

Speaking at the pre-release event of 'Baby John' in Jaipur, Varun said, "The actor cannot take sole responsibility for safety protocols. You can only advise the people around you... The incident was tragic. I extend my condolences, but at the same time, you cannot hold just one person accountable."

On 4 December, Allu Arjun, along with the Pushpa 2 team, visited Sandhya Theatre in Hyderabad for the



screening of the film. Fans in large numbers thronged the venue to catch a glimpse of the star. However, a stampede-like situation occurred in which a 35-year-old woman died, and her son was hospitalized.

On Friday morning, Chikadpally police in Hyderabad arrested Allu Arjun in connection with the stampede. He was taken from his residence to the Chik-

kadpally Police Station for questioning.

Allu Arjun consulted his counsel to request an urgent hearing in the High Court. Earlier, he had approached the High Court seeking to quash the FIR registered against him.

K. T. Rama Rao, working president of the Bharatiya Rashtra Samithi and former state minister, condemned the arrest on his official

social media account. He wrote, "Arrest of National Award-winning star Allu Arjun is the pinnacle of insecurity of the rulers! I totally sympathize with the victims of the stampede but who failed really? Treating @alluarjun Garu as a common criminal is uncalled for especially for something he isn't directly responsible. There is always space for respect & dignified conduct.

Shraddha Kapoor enjoys Vada Pav with rumoured beau Rahul Mody

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Actress Shraddha Kapoor has once again delighted her fans with her social media presence, sharing a playful Instagram story involving her rumoured beau, Rahul Mody.

Known for her witty and charming posts, Shraddha posted a lighthearted snap of a vada pav outing, humorously captioning the photo, "May I always bully you into taking me for vada pav," tagging Rahul Mody.

The post, which shows a delicious plate of the popular Mumbai street food, was



accompanied by the classic Kishore Kumar song 'Yeh Vaada Raha', adding an extra touch of fun to the moment.

The relationship rumours surrounding Shraddha Kapoor and Rahul Mody first began circulating when the two

were seen attending public events together, including a wedding.

In June, the 'Stree' actress seemingly confirmed her romance officially on social media.

She shared a selfie with Rahul Mody on her Instagram stories and wrote,

BRAIN PICKING



I don't think there's anybody in this world who should be required to make you feel good about yourself.



—SHAHID KAPOOR
(Indian Actor)

RANI MUKERJI TO RETURN AS FEISTY COP SHIVANI SHIVAJI ROY IN 'MARDAANI 3'



TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

In a major announcement, Yash Raj Films (YRF) has confirmed the production of 'Mardaani 3', the next chapter in the critically acclaimed Mardaani franchise.

The film will once again star Rani Mukerji as the fearless and determined cop, Shivani Shivaji Roy.

This marks the third instalment of a series that has been celebrated for its compelling narrative and powerful portrayal of a woman fighting against the odds.

The announcement was made on the release anniversary of 'Mardaani 2',

with YRF sharing the exciting news that the film will go into production in April 2025.

Over the past decade, the 'Mardaani' franchise has established itself as one of the largest solo female-led series in Hindi cinema, earning a devoted following and becoming a cult favourite among cinephiles.

Rani Mukerji, who has become synonymous with her portrayal of the daring cop, expressed her excitement about the project, and said, "I'm thrilled to announce that we are starting shooting of Mardaani 3 in April 2025! It is always special to wear the police uniform and play a character that has only given me love.

KAREENA REDEFINES MODERN ELEGANCE AT BULGARI'S 140TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT



TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Kareena Kapoor Khan turned heads at Bulgari's event in Dubai, showcasing an exquisite blend of elegance and modern glamour.

The Bollywood diva, who is known for her impeccable fashion choices, made a statement in a custom-made blush pink gown by celebrated designer Anamika Khanna, styled by Rhea Kapoor.

The actress' ethereal appearance was enhanced by Bulgari's iconic Serpenti high jewellery collection, making for an unforgettable red carpet moment.

The event marked a grand celebration of Bulgari's 140th anniversary and the launch of the brand's Aeterna high jewellery collection, a tribute to timeless beauty, craftsmanship, and the eternal city of Rome.

Kareena, who attended as a 'Friend of the Maison,' shared her excitement on Instagram, writing, "Here to witness a legacy of magnificence unfold as a Friend of the Maison. Celebrating the 140th Anniversary of eternity and timeless beauty with Bvlgari's 'Aeterna' high jewellery collection. A breathtaking tribute to heritage, craftsmanship and the eternal city of Rome."

RETURN OF THE MATRIARCH

Woman Wise



NAMRATA KOHLI

The saas bahu saga has for long dominated the Indian soap opera industry. And not without reason, as women have hardly been each other's supporters, leave alone cheerleaders. The mother-in-law had almost become the monster-in-law in desi K-dramas but like everything changes, her role is slowly but surely getting redefined- not just in reel space but also in real space.

It's the era of return of the matriarch and the joint family system with the mother-in-law being considered a key figure who makes a house a home.

And the evidence is everywhere, especially in affluent India. There are

enough examples of three generations staying together. The second generation in the late 30s or 40s - the busiest lot battling their mid life crisis plus job, kids, parents - are mostly in responsible positions in their careers, have all the money and no time. The children are also more full of activity today than ever. It's the grandparents who, as they say, are in their "bonus" years and have tremendous experience to fill in every role from being a guide to the gatekeeper and everything in between.

Real estate trends point in that direction and the latest luxury homes are being built to accommodate multi-generational families to stay under one roof. Developers are focusing on building spacious apartments (4BHK or larger) and independent villas to cater to joint families. Then there are duplex apartments and penthouses and all of these include dual kitchens (main and auxiliary) to meet the diverse needs of families. Yes, separate kitchens which allows them to maintain their preferences without compromising the main household's meal preparation. Senior members may have specific dietary needs or traditional cooking methods but most importantly, it empowers the silver citizens to retain a sense of independence, identity by managing their

meals without relying on others. They may want to pamper the grandchildren with some savouries like kheer, gajar halwa that they have been most famous for making and always made their way. They have lifts for mobility, non slippery flooring in their bathrooms and separate staff for themselves.

In particular, it's the mother figure who holds a very key role in setting the tone of the family. Why is a mother or a mother-in-law more relevant in today's day and age? Families are messy... you don't know when a child will fall ill, when the emergency call comes from school or when unexpected guests land up at home or someone falls ill. There are way too many unforeseen events especially when it comes to keeping supervision on the children, the staff. Like they say, mothers have eyes even on their back referring to how alert they are to signs and signals of some anomaly, also alluding to their third eye or intuitive power - the mother figure plays an eminent role in supporting, guiding, and shaping the family. From a psychological perspective, the mother-in-law relationship affects emotional health and family cohesion. Researchers have studied how these relationships can impact marital satisfaction and family stability, as the mother-in-

law often symbolizes an extension of the partner's identity and upbringing.

Like in everything else, the trend has started with Affluent India. Like the sustainability movement which started with HNIs wearing linen shirts and making it a style statement until it percolated down to the other sections of society. With enough money being there at everyone's disposal, it's the end of the road of petty fights between the members. Rather, the middle generation is keeping enough staff just for parents apart from their children and everything has changed for the better - Money, Moolah, Manor (luxury home) and mother-in-law - all have adapted to the changing times and have understood that united we stand and divided we fall. Culturally, matriarchal blessings are sought in many rituals, and female guardians have always played a vital role in lineage, protection, and prosperity of families.

It's a win-win situation for all. Elderly members are cared for within the family, and younger generations benefit from the guidance and support of elders. After all, after money, status, power - what you need to stay happy is a relationship. And the line from film Deewar that echoes every son's sentiment in India - 'Mere Paas Maa Hai'.



Breast Cancer Screening: Essential for Early Detection and Improved Survival Rates



DR. AAKAAR KAPOOR

Breast cancer is one of the most prevalent cancers among women, accounting for 626,679 deaths globally in 2018. Breast cancer is classified into many categories, each with its own set of clinical features and therapeutic choices.

While there have been considerable advances in breast cancer treatments, late stages of the illness have a high death rate. Catching the illness early, when cancer has not metastasized and is still limited to the breast, improves curability and overall survival rates. Surgery is advisable for early stage breast cancers, but it is not available for breast cancers that have spread. This highlights the critical importance of frequent breast cancer screenings.

This article will explore the importance of Regular Breast Cancer Screenings, the methods used, and the benefits it offers.

IMPORTANCE OF TIMELY SCREENING

Breast cancer screening and early diagnosis are critical for your overall health. Screening tests can help discover breast cancer at an early stage, when the odds of survival are greatest.

Whether you're getting your first screening mammography or want to learn more about follow-up testing after an abnormal result, understanding



breast cancer screening tests and the significance of early detection may help you take control of your health.

Mammography, professional breast examinations, and breast self-exams are the three most used Breast cancer screening methods. Mammography - It is the most commonly used screening tool for detection of breast cancer. The procedure uses low-dose X-rays to produce highly detailed pictures of the breast tissue, allowing medical practitioners to detect irregularities such as tumors or microcalcifications. For women with an average risk of breast cancer, mammography should be started at the age of 40. And for others with factors such as personal health history and family history, individual screening recommendations may vary.

Clinical Breast Exams (CBE): A clinical breast exam (CBE) involves a healthcare clinician personally inspecting the breasts for lumps, abnormalities, or changes in texture or appearance. While clinical breast tumor testing is not as sensitive as mammography, it can help in the early detection of breast cancer, especially when paired with other screening methods.

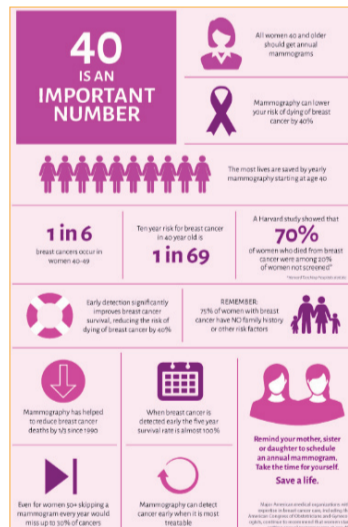
Breast Self-Exams (BSE): Breast

self-exams allow women to familiarize themselves with their breast tissue and identify changes that may require additional investigation. While BSEs are no longer suggested as a single screening approach because to concerns about their effectiveness, they can still be used to supplement conventional mammography and clinical breast examinations.

EARLY DETECTION AND DIAGNOSIS

According to a Cancer Society, if breast cancer is found early and in the localized stage, the 5-year relative survival rate is 99%. Conducting monthly breast self-examinations, as well as arranging frequent clinical breast exams and mammograms, are all part of early detection. Because early detection and diagnosis improve all women's chances of survival, you should have a mammogram every year starting at age 40, or sooner if you have a family history of the illness. You should also be cautious of serious breast cancer symptoms, such as:

- Found a new lump in your breast or underarm.
- Bloody nipple discharge.



● Changes in breast skin or appearance, including redness or inflammation.

If you notice any of these symptoms, it is time to reach out to your healthcare provider sooner than later. There is a possibility that these symptoms might have innocuous origins, but they need to be looked thoroughly.

The author is the CEO and Lead Medical Advisor at City X-Ray and Scan Clinic and Founder & Partner of City Imaging & Clinical Labs.

Redefining art with resilience and diversity

MAHIMA SAIGA

Mahima Saigal, a dynamic theater artist from New Delhi, has carved a niche for herself in New York's arts scene over the past decade. As an actor, writer, choreographer, director, and educator, she has contributed significantly to the performing arts, embodying diverse roles across multiple disciplines. Mahima's journey has been shaped by experience, embracing both successes and challenges with resilience. She highlights the importance of learning through direct involvement, sharing how working outside her learned skill set, like as a board member of the renowned National Queer Theatre, deepened her understanding of the performing arts in the US. Reflecting on her growth, Mahima notes that focusing on healing and self-awareness earlier would have sped up her process. She stresses the importance of releasing internalized fears and societal pressures, which hindered her boldness and risk-taking. Detaching from collaborators who seek comfort in their own dysregulation and instead nurturing genuine connections has been pivotal in her journey. Resilience stands out as the essential skill in her career,



particularly in navigating setbacks and industry challenges, such as bureaucratic hurdles in securing work permits as an international artist. Mahima is also committed to supporting underrepresented voices in the creative community. She emphasizes mentorship programs, accessible funding, and a broader, more inclusive approach that values diverse artistic voices.

A proponent of equal opportunities, she calls for address-

ing systemic disparities in race, gender, and nationality to ensure a thriving creative ecosystem. Books like A Fine Balance by Rohinton Mistry to films like Mr. India; all have deeply influenced Mahima's artistry, shaping her perspective on resilience, heroism, and storytelling. Her journey underscores the power of embracing vulnerability, pushing boundaries, and creating art that amplifies diverse voices and experiences.



DECLINE IN MARRIAGE RATES AMONG WOMEN IN INDIA



INDIRA VASHISHTA CARENA

SOCIAL FACTORS

In past women in Indian society have been viewed as inferior and weaker compared to a man. This perception has been in the past where men are seen as masters or even gods in the lives of women.

ECONOMIC FACTORS

The pursuit of financial independence has become a significant driving force for women today. With greater access to education and career opportunities, many women are prioritizing their

CULTURAL SHIFT

The cultural landscape in India is undergoing a transformation, with a growing acceptance of singlehood as a legitimate lifestyle choice. In the past, being unmarried was often stigmatized, but today, it is increasingly viewed



as socially acceptable. This cultural shift enables women to embrace their status as single individuals without fear of judgment or societal pressure, allowing them to focus on personal growth and fulfillment.

Prioritization of Freedom Modern women are placing a high value on their freedom and personal autonomy. The



desire to explore their passions, pursue adventures, and live independently often outweighs the traditional expectations surrounding marriage. This emphasis on self-determination empowers women to carve out their own paths, prioritizing their happiness and well-being over societal norms.

FEAR OF COMPROMISING

Many women harbor concerns about the compromises that come with marriage, including sacrificing their personal goals and independence for the sake of partnership. This fear can lead to a reluctance to enter into marriage, as

they weigh the potential limitations against the benefits of remaining single. The desire to maintain their individuality and freedom often takes precedence.

INFLUENCE OF ONLINE DATING APPS

The rise of online dating apps has significantly altered the landscape of relationships in India. These platforms provide women with opportunities to meet new people without the immediate pressure of marriage. While many women may seek companionship, they often feel less urgency to commit, allowing

them to approach dating with a more relaxed and exploratory mindset.

HOUSEHOLD DYNAMICS

In traditional Indian households, societal norms often dictate that men are not expected to share in domestic responsibilities. As a result, working women frequently carry the burden of household chores and child-rearing, leading to feelings of overwhelm.

Indira Vashishta Carena is an Ex commercial pilot on Airbus 340, a Motivational speaker and a freelance columnist.

Navigating a chaotic world with resilience



KEN O'DONNELL

Recently I was asked to do a workshop on meditation for a business school in London. In a conversation with the director, he asked me if I could help people come to grips with the so-called BANI world.

In recent years, the world has been described using various frameworks, one of which is BANI — an acronym that stands for Brittle, Anxious, Non-linear, and Incomprehensible.

This framework captures the essence of our current global challenge. In response to these conditions, many individuals and communities are turning to spirituality as a source of strength and guidance. What could be the spiritual responses to BANI and how can they help us navigate these turbulent times?

Before delving into this, we need to understand what BANI represents:

1. Brittle: Systems and structures that appear strong but can easily break under pressure. We see this immediately in the catastrophes brought about by climate change.
2. Anxious: A pervasive sense of worry and fear about the future for all age groups. Just look at the percentage of the population that suffered from anxiety due to COVID.
3. Non-linear: Events and outcomes that do not follow a predictable path, making it difficult to anticipate changes. For example, we cannot use the same solutions for economic challenges that worked twenty years ago.
4. Incomprehensible: Situations that are complex and difficult to understand, leading to confusion and uncertainty. Look at the political polarization in so many countries that defies reason.

Each of these characteristics has an impact on the other three, creating a sense of a worsening set of challenges for people everywhere. They create a landscape where traditional

methods of coping and understanding are insufficient, prompting a search for deeper, more meaningful responses. Spirituality can be defined as a personal quest for meaning, connection, and understanding beyond the material world.



Spirituality provides a framework for finding meaning in a seemingly random and chaotic world.

In the context of BANI, spirituality offers several key benefits:

In a BANI world, where events often seem random and chaotic, spirituality provides a framework for finding meaning. In

Brahma Kumaris, we emphasize the importance of purpose and connection to the Divine and the wisdom that flows from this source.

This perspective helps us make sense of our experiences, fostering resilience in the face of adversity.

The practice of meditation cultivates a sense of inner peace, which helps us manage anxiety and stress, which are prevalent in a BANI environment. By fostering a calm mind, we can approach challenges with clarity and com-

posure. In Brahma Kumaris, we are encouraged to build community and support networks. In times of crisis, having a supportive community can be invaluable. It can provide a space for individuals to share their experiences, offer support, and collectively navigate the uncertainties of life.

Spirituality can enhance resilience by promoting a growth mindset. We learn that everything that happens is an opportunity for growth and learning.

One of the main teachings is that life is an incredible drama in which everything happens for a reason. Thus, we emphasise acceptance of the flow of life. In a BANI world, where unpredictability is the norm, embracing uncertainty can be liberating. Spirituality

encourages us to trust the process and remain open to new possibilities, rather than clinging to rigid expectations.

Spirituality can enhance resilience by promoting a growth mindset. We learn that everything that happens is an opportunity for growth and learning. This perspective can empower us to face difficulties with courage and determination, viewing setbacks as part of the spiritual journey.

As we navigate the complexities of a BANI world, spirituality offers a vital response that can help us find meaning, cultivate resilience, and foster community. By embracing spiritual practices, we can better manage the challenges of brittleness, anxiety, non-linearity, and incomprehensibility. Ultimately, spirituality not only provides comfort but also empowers us to thrive in the face of uncertainty, guiding us toward a more hopeful and connected existence.

Ken O'Donnell is an author and the director of Brahma Kumaris' services in South America.

Understanding karma



B.K. GEETA

Consider a school with hundreds of students. Suppose there are thirty students in the graduating class. All of them study the same subjects, from textbooks that have the same content, and are all taught by the same teachers. Yet they do not score the same marks in exams. Of course, everyone does not have the same capacity for learning, so some difference in academic performance is to be expected. In addition, commitment to learning varies among students, and two students with the same intellectual capacity may score vastly different grades if one is studious and the other is negligent. The careless student may admire his teachers and adulate them, but if he does not study, will he learn all that he is supposed to? And when

he fails his exams at the end of the final term, would it be right for him to blame the teachers for the result — the same teachers, some of whose students passed with distinction?

Many people act like the lax student when it comes to facing the tests of life. They pray to God, extol His virtues, supplicate before Him, and consider their job done. They think it is now God's duty to ensure that their life goes smoothly, even if they are doing things that yield the opposite results. Just as a student's grades are determined not by their teacher or school, but by their academic work, the course of our life is decided by what we do, not by God or supernatural forces that we imagine create our destiny. This is what the concept of karma teaches us.

Karma refers to the principle of cause and effect, wherein our actions, thoughts, and intentions influence our future experiences. Every action, whether good or bad, has a corresponding reaction. Positive actions generate good karma, while negative actions result in bad karma. Karma is not just about actions but also about the intentions behind them. Even a good deed done with selfish motives



Our destiny is in our hands.

may not generate good karma. Karma also emphasises personal responsibility. Each individual is responsible for their actions and the consequences that arise from them. It is an impersonal

law of nature, a natural outcome of actions, unfolding over time, rather than something governed by a deity.

The scriptures underline this fact. In the Bhagavad Gita, God

tells Arjuna: "He who does not perform his duties and abandons them to engage in rituals, does not attain liberation. Rather, he lives in vain." The Gita says righteous actions,

selfless conduct, and fulfilling one's duty are key to spiritual development.

The Bible contains the consistent theme that good deeds — especially justice, mercy, humility,

and care for the vulnerable — are far more important to God than empty rituals. Prayer, fasting, and other rituals are insufficient on their own if they are not accompanied by genuine transformation in how we live and treat others.

Accepting this truth empowers us, as we realise that we are the creators of our destiny, not its hapless victims. This encourages us to live ethically and take responsibility for our actions. It also frees us from the unhelpful habit of blaming others for our woes, because there is now the recognition that each experience in life is a fruit borne by seeds sown in the past. I, the immortal soul, carry a record of all that I have done, even in past lives, and the results of my actions may manifest themselves any time in the future. God does not reward or punish anyone. Like a teacher, He shows us the way to a happy life. If we choose to walk the path shown by Him, we reap the fruits thereof. If we go astray, then again, the consequences are for us to bear.

It pays to be a good student in the school of life.

B.K. Geeta is a Rajyoga teacher at the Brahma Kumaris headquarters in Abu Road, Rajasthan

It is your choice how you live life



CHIRYA RISELY

Life is all about choices. In every situation there is a choice to be made. We choose how people affect our mood. We choose to be in a good mood or bad mood. It is our choice how we live our life. We have to choose to get to a point where our mood does not vacillate because of situations or the insignificant actions of someone else. We do not need to give others the power to control our lives. We do not need to allow our emotions

to overpower our intelligence. Strength comes with self-control. A state of calm is mastery of the mind.

The outside world presents us with myriad choices if we spend time looking. Our desires will increase and we will chase after things that once obtained, quickly lose their appeal and fascination. So, on we go to the next sparkling thing, slowly we begin to lose our self-worth. Our conscience bites and our inner cheer is lost. We berate ourselves and subtly shape a nature of sorrow. Being hard on the self does us great harm — it is much more effective to handle the self and others with love.

Unconditional love is always our choice. Love is our inherent nature, our natural state of being. It has nothing to do with others. When we remain in constant awareness and connection with our own energy of love, then the feelings of love for other people are not dependent on their be-



Deep inside our consciousness is an oasis of peace and love.

haviour, even when their words or behaviour are not right. Love means accepting and respecting people as they are and caring about their well-being, no matter how they behave with us.

Unconditional love starts with the self. We need to love our-

selves, for all the inner beauty we possess and all the endeavours we are making; taking time to enjoy our own company by first returning to the centre of the self. It is a journey of one second. Deep inside our consciousness is an oasis of peace and love. This mol-

ten core of the soul is not hot like the Earth's centre, it is cool. It is a source of inner power to fuel our mind and intellect, so we can create powerful thoughts, make accurate decisions, and learn to do everything in a worthwhile way. When we choose to go within to this centre, we can easily connect with God's power. Peace and love become our companions, positivity our partner, and we are able to chill out in one second, anywhere, anytime.

When I choose to spend the time looking within, I get to know myself better. I maintain a continuity with my inner self and realize where I need to change. Wanting others to change is of no use; they are not in our control. Choose to have no expectations of others. The only person we can choose to change is ourselves.

Chirya Risely is a Rajyoga meditation teacher based at the Brahma Kumaris Peace Village Retreat Center, USA.

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

A tightrope artist maintains perfect balance high above the ground. The slightest imbalance results in a fall. It does not matter which side of the rope they fall from, it is still a fall. As I strive to balance myself in daily living, I walk a fine line between extremes. Even an extreme of something good can pull me off balance. There are no right or wrong sides to fall from, just the aim to stay balanced. Today let me walk the fine line of balance with ease and dignity.

GUKESH'S DAY OF GLORY: TROPHY IN HAND, STARDOM EMBRACED

D. Gukesh, 18, became the youngest World Chess Champion, defeating Ding Liren

AGENCIES
SINGAPORE

His eyes were expectedly burning after a sleepless night but the adrenaline kept D Gukesh going as he smiled through a plethora of engagements, including signing hundreds of autographs, before finally getting his hands on the world chess championship trophy a day after becoming its youngest owner.

The 18-year-old Chennai lad got the better of defending champion Ding Liren of China on Thursday for the historic triumph that made him the 18th overall and only the second Indian after Viswanathan Anand to win the crown that came with a whopping prize of USD 1.3 million.

The morning after began with getting a glimpse of the trophy, which he refused to touch as he wanted to wait till the closing ceremony in the evening. He finally held it after it was presented to him by FIDE (International Chess Federation) President Arkady Dvorkovich.

In his introduction, the FIDE presenters spoke of his "brilliant poise" and "performance for the ages" that he delivered against an older and more experienced rival.

"I mean this moment, it feels like I have lived it a million times. Every morning when I woke up, this moment was the reason I



Before that, he sat down to meet and greet a seemingly never-ending stream of fans, both the young and old, even toddlers.

woke up. To hold this trophy and this reality means more than anything else in my life," the graceful teenager said in his acceptance speech after being presented with his gold medal and the trophy that came with a USD 1.3 million reward.

Before that, he sat down to meet and greet a seemingly never-ending stream of fans, both the young and old, even toddlers.

Those who lined up included not just the Indian diaspora but also local Singaporeans, carrying chess boards which became priceless memorabilia after Gukesh scribbled his name on them.

The youngster admitted that his eyes were burn-

ing due to lack of sleep but he felt great and why wouldn't he, the world was literally at his feet in just the 18th year of his existence.

"This journey has been nothing short of a dream. There have been many ups and downs, many challenges, but I wouldn't change a single thing that has happened and it has been beautiful because of the kind of people I have had with me," he said in the FIDE closing ceremony.

He reiterated his gratitude towards his opponent for challenging him, his parents for being there for him, his team, the host country, the many new fans he acquired over the

course of past three weeks and the almighty.

"When I couldn't see the solution, God was the only one who could pull me through and show me the way," he said.

In between, he had another round of media engagements despite the elaborate press conference on Thursday.

"18th @ 18," he posted on X. The financial windfall also continued with Tamil Nadu chief minister M K Stalin announcing a cash prize of Rs five crore for the lanky teen, who is based in Chennai and was shaped by city's now famous Velammal Vidyalaya and the Westbridge-Anand Chess Academy.

"The boy who would be King," said Anand in admiration of his protege, who has never missed a chance to express gratitude for the legend's contribution to his growth as a player.

At the closing ceremony, Dvorkovich congratulated Gukesh and Liren for their performance and defended the quality of competition in the event, which has been criticised by greats such as Vladimir Kramnik among others.

"Sports is about mistakes, without mistakes, there would be no goals in football. Every sportsman makes mistakes but that's what we are excited about, whether the opponent can find the way to use a mistake," he said.

There's definitely pride in winning in Australia: Cummins ahead of Brisbane Test

AGENCIES
BRISBANE

Ahead of the third Test of the ongoing Border-Gavaskar Trophy against India at the Gabba, Australia skipper Pat Cummins said that it's a matter of pride of winning a Test match on the Australian soil.

The third Test of the series is set to begin on December 14 at the Brisbane Cricket Ground. Following a resounding 295-run defeat to the visitors at Perth's Optus Stadium--where standout performances from Jasprit Bumrah, KL Rahul, Virat Kohli, and Yashasvi Jaiswal were on display--the hosts bounced back strongly.

With the series now level at 1-1, the next encounter takes place at "The Gabba," a venue where an inexperienced Indian side handed

Viswanathan Anand recalls meeting young Gukesh

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Five-time World Chess Champion Viswanathan Anand took to social media and shared a photo of him with young D Gukesh recalling the moment when he met him as a young boy.

"The boy who would be King @FIDE_chess @WacaChess," Viswanathan Anand wrote on X.

Earlier the former World Champion congratulated D Gukesh on his phenomenal victory, "Congratulations! It's a proud moment for chess, a proud moment for India, a proud moment for WACA, and for me, a very personal moment of pride.



Ding played a very exciting match and showed the champion he is."

Gukesh made history on Thursday by becoming the youngest-ever champion in the history of the sport after defeating China's Ding Li-

Overwhelmed with emotions after his victory, Gukesh termed it the "best moment of his life" during the post-match press conference.

ren in the final game of their FIDE World Championship tie.

The championship, which saw the scores tied at 6.5-6.5 heading into the final game, culminated with Gukesh delivering a stellar performance to secure a historic

7.5-6.5 victory over Ding Liren, according to FIDE's official website.

The official X handle of FIDE declared, "Gukesh D is the YOUNGEST WORLD CHAMPION in history!"

In April, Gukesh had already made headlines by winning the FIDE Candidates Chess Tournament 2024, becoming the youngest-ever challenger to Ding's world title.

Overwhelmed with emotions after his victory, Gukesh termed it the "best moment of his life" during the post-match press conference. Reflecting on his loss, Ding Liren remarked, "I was totally in shock when I realised I made a blunder.

A push for equal rewards in sports

RUPINDER SINGH
NEW DELHI

Gukesh, the youngest world champion in Indian chess, has been on the rise ever since Viswanathan Anand became the World Chess Champion. Anand's victory inspired a wave of young players, particularly in Tamil Nadu, to take up the game. Many of these stars recently helped India win the Chess Olympiad. Now, Gukesh has followed this with his historic achievement of becoming the youngest World Champion. He defeated the reigning World Champion, Ding Liren, in a best-of-14 games championship clash in Singapore. Both players played aggressive chess, and the scores were tied before the final 14th game. Gukesh overcame Liren's resistance to win the

Now, Gukesh has followed this with his historic achievement of becoming the youngest World Champion.

title. While Gukesh's remarkable feat is worth celebrating, it's time for a movement toward equal rewards in Indian sports. To make a point to corporates: isn't Gukesh's victory worthy of an award of 28 crores? You might know why I mention 28 crores, but the more important point is equal rewards for athletes, regardless of whether their sport is popular or not. I look forward to a more equitable reward system in Indian sports.

Hazlewood replaces Boland in Australia's XI for Brisbane Test

AGENCIES
BRISBANE

Right-arm seamer Josh Hazlewood replaced Scott Boland in the bowling line-up as Australia on Friday announced their playing XI for the third Test of the ongoing Border-Gavaskar Trophy 2024-25 against India at The Gabba.

Hazlewood has been battling a side injury and was forced to miss out as Australia levelled the five-match series for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy at 1-1 with a decisive 10-wicket victory in the second Test in Adelaide.

But Hazlewood has recovered in time to play at the Gabba and will replace the unlucky Scott Boland in Australia's line-up for the third Test.

"Josh comes back in ... had



no hiccups. Had a really good bowl yesterday, had another good bowl in Adelaide a few days previous. He and the medical team are super confident," Cummins told reporters in Brisbane on Friday as quoted by the ICC.

Cummins said it was difficult to leave Boland out of the XI, though he expects the right-arm to play a part at some stage later in

the series.

"It's tough, he (Boland) was fantastic in Adelaide. He's unfortunately spent a fair bit of time on the bench over the past 18 months. And whenever he's played, he's been fantastic.

A shame for Scotty, but still a fair bit to play out this series. I would be surprised if he doesn't get another crack at some point," Cummins said.

England announce team XI for Hamilton Test against NZ

AGENCIES
HAMILTON

Right-arm seamer Matthew Potts replaced Chris Woakes in the squad as England on Friday announced their playing XI for the third and final Test match of the series against New Zealand at Seddon Park, reported ICC-Cricket.

Skipper Ben Stokes told reporters on Friday that England will make one change to their line-up for the third ICC World Test Championship contest in Hamilton, with seamer Matthew Potts winning a recall to replace fellow pacer Chris Woakes.

It means Ollie Pope will continue in the role as keeper as England attempt a clean sweep of the New



Latham was tight-lipped when asked whether Southee would get the chance for a fairytale finish to his Test career in Hamilton.

Zealand series having won the opening two matches in Christchurch and Wel-

lington. New Zealand captain Tom Latham failed to reveal his

XI on Friday, with the skipper suggesting he will wait until Saturday morning before announcing whether veteran quick Tim Southee will get the chance to play a final Test prior to his retirement from Test cricket.

Southee is in a battle with fellow seamers Will O'Rourke, Nathan Smith and Matt Henry for three fast bowling positions, with left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner a chance to return to the line-up for his first appearance of the series.

Top-order batter Will Young is certain to play for the Black Caps, with the right-hander to open the batting with Devon Conway staying in Wellington for the birth of his first child. Young was named



Australia their first Test loss in over 32 years during the 2020-21 tour.

"I think there's definitely pride in winning in Australia. These are our home conditions. These are the conditions we grew up playing with. I think the hardest thing in cricket nowadays is winning Test Series away from home. To make that World Test Championship,

you've kind of got to win everything at home and try and pick up some wins overseas where you can. We definitely go into every home series here expecting to win.

That's what we grew up watching and that is the kind of the standards we set ourselves," Cummins said in the pre-match press conference.

Sandhu wins Vishwa Samudra Open by five shots

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Chandigarh's Ajeetesh Sandhu registered a thumping five-shot win after carding a confident one-under 71 in the last round to clinch the inaugural Vishwa Samudra Open title here on Friday.

Sandhu (69-67-69-71), who totalled 12-under 276 for the week, took home an impressive prize money cheque of Rs 30 lakh for his effort.

It happened to be Sandhu's first win in five years and seventh professional title overall. It was also Ajeetesh's first triumph at the historic Delhi Golf Club



(DGC).

"It's very special to win here at the DGC, one of the best golfing venues in the country with so much history. I've seen the greats of Indian golf win here, so I too wanted to win here. It's one of my favourite courses," Sandhu said.

"It's been a tough year on the international stage for me. It's the tough times when you rely on people who are close to you and I'm fortunate that those close to me understand the highs and lows of the game. I thank my family for their support."