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TN BJP CHIEF WHIPS HIMSELF IN PROTESTS OVER STUDENT RAPE



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AS TENSIONS BREW, SYRIA'S NEW RULERS WARN AGAINST INCITEMENTS



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BGT 2024-25: AUSTRALIA IN COMMANDING POSITION

MANMOHAN SINGH'S FUNERAL AT NIGAMBODH GHAT TODAY

State funeral with full military honours

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The last rites of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh are to be performed at the Nigambodh Ghat in the national capital on Saturday afternoon.

"Dr Manmohan Singh, former Prime Minister passed away at 9.51 PM on December 26, 2024 at AIIMS Hospital, New Delhi. It has been decided by the Government that State funeral will be accorded to Dr Manmohan Singh. The funeral will take place at 11:45 AM on December 28, 2024 at Nigambodh Ghat, New Delhi. The Ministry of Defence is requested to make arrangements for State funeral with full military honours," the Ministry of Home Affairs stated.

Manmohan Singh passed away at AIIMS, Delhi, on Thursday evening at the age of 92 due to age-related medical conditions. He had a sudden loss of consciousness at home after which he was rushed to the AIIMS Delhi.

Manmohan Singh was born on September 26, 1932. Apart from being an economist, Manmohan Singh served as Reserve Bank of India governor from



Prime Minister Narendra Modi pays his last respects to the mortal remains of former PM Dr Manmohan Singh at the latter's residence in New Delhi on Friday. ANI

Cabinet condoles demise

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, passed a condolence resolution in memory of former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh.

According to an official release, the Cabinet paid homage to Dr Singh by observing a two-minute silence. A seven-day state mourning has been declared until January 1, 2025.

During this period, the National Flag will be flown at half-mast across India and in all Indian Missions and High Commissions abroad. Dr Manmohan Singh will also be accorded a state funeral. On the day of the funeral, a half-day holiday will be declared for all Central Government offices and CPSUs.

The Cabinet expressed profound sorrow over the passing of Dr Manmohan Singh, who died on December 26, 2024, at the All India

In Kolkata, kin remember their 'silent guardian'

SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA

In Kolkata, close relatives of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, are distraught at the death of their "guardian". The families of both sisters of the late Prime Minister are long-time residents of Kolkata. Singh's sisters Pritam Kaur and Gobind Kaur have spent almost their entire adult lives in the city.

Manmohan Singh's

nephew Gurdeep Singh, the son of his sister Gobind Kaur, spoke fondly about the late leader's close bond with his family, recalling that despite his towering political stature, he was always available to guide his loved ones, though in his characteristic reticent manner. They remembered his down-to-earth, fatherly persona which instantly put everybody at ease.

Highlighting Manmohan Singh's

Cong slams Centre on last rites of MMS at Nigambodh Ghat

Wants last rites at a place where a memorial can be built

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Congress party on Friday slammed the central government for performing the last rites of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at Nigambodh Ghat and said that this is nothing but a "deliberate insult" to the first Sikh PM.

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said that the people of the country are simply unable to understand why the government could not find a location for his cremation.

"Earlier this morning, the Congress President had written to the Prime Minister, suggesting that the cremation of the former Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, take place at a location where a memorial could be built to honour his legacy. The people of our country are simply unable to understand why the Government of India could not find a location for his cremation and memorial that is befitting of his global stature, the record of outstanding achievements, and exemplary service to the nation for decades. This is nothing but a deliber-



Congress Parliamentary Party leaders attend the CWC meeting convened to pay tribute to former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, in New Delhi on Friday. ANI

ate insult to the first Sikh Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh," Jairam Ramesh posted on X.

Congress leader Manish Tewari the cremation of Manmohan Singh at Nigambodh Ghat is "extremely unfortunate."

"If what is appearing in the Public Space is correct that

the cremation of Former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh will be held at Nigambodh Ghat, it is extremely unfortunate. If Late Dr Manmohan Singh's family wanted it that way then it is a different matter otherwise he should be cremated where the last rites of other Former

'My friend, philosopher and guide': Sonia on former PM

NEW DELHI: Calling former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh her "friend, philosopher and guide," Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP) Chairperson Sonia Gandhi on Friday mourned the death of former PM and said that he was the "epitome of wisdom, nobility and humility."

"In Dr Manmohan Singh's passing, we have lost a leader who was the epitome of wisdom, nobility

and humility, who served our country with all his heart and mind. A luminous and beloved guiding light for the Congress party, his compassion and vision transformed and empowered the lives of millions of Indians," Sonia Gandhi stated. She said Manmohan Singh was loved by the people of India because of his "pure heart and mind."

Eight dead in Bathinda bus crash

TARUNI GANDHI
CHANDIGARH

Eight people lost their lives on Friday when a bus plunged off a bridge without railings into a nullah amid heavy rainfall. The tragic accident occurred on the route from Talwandi Sabo to Bathinda. The vehicle was carrying over 20 passengers. Local residents, police, and administrative teams swiftly reached the site to carry out rescue operations. The injured passengers were

rushed to the hospital for treatment. Officials confirmed the fatalities and stated that investigations are underway to determine if the heavy rain contributed to the driver losing control of the bus. Concerns have been raised about the lack of railings on the bridge, which might have prevented the accident. Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief over the incident. "Saddened by the loss of lives in the bus accident in Bathinda, Punjab.

Condolences to those who lost their loved ones. May the injured recover soon," he said in a post on X.

Modi also announced an ex-gratia amount of Rs 2 lakh each from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF) for the next of kin of the deceased and Rs 50,000 each for the injured. According to the officials, the weather in the area was inclement. However, the exact cause of the accident is yet to be ascertained and investigations

Air quality improves after rains, curbs revoked

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Centre's air quality monitoring panel on Friday revoked Stage III measures of the revised Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) due to a marked improvement in Delhi's air quality.

Favourable weather conditions, including continuous rainfall, have brought the Air Quality Index (AQI) down to 334 as of 7 PM on December 27.

"Delhi's air quality has shifted from the 'severe' category to the 'poor' range. As a result, measures under Stage III, implemented earlier, are now being with-



AQI down to 334 (poor category) as of 7 PM Friday

drawn," the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in NCR and adjoining areas said in a

Former Suzuki chief Osamu passes away

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Osamu Suzuki, the former President Chairman & CEO of Suzuki Motor Corporation, passed away at the age of 94 on Wednesday afternoon due to malignant lymphoma, the company announced on Friday.

According to Kyodo News, Japan, Suzuki's leadership spanned over four decades, during which he transformed the Japanese automaker into a global powerhouse, especially cementing its dominance in India's car market. Suzuki helmed the company as president, chair-



man, and CEO from 1978 until stepping down in 2021 at the age of 91. Under his stewardship, Suzuki Motor's consolidated sales skyrocketed from around 300 billion yen (USD 1.9 billion) in 1978 to over 3 trillion yen in fiscal 2006, a tenfold growth that underscored his vision and leadership.

Ahead of Trump's return, India, US review ties

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar held a meeting with his US counterpart Antony Blinken in Washington, DC on Thursday. The two leaders reviewed the advancement of India-US partnership over the past four years and agreed that cooperation has strengthened in many sectors.

Jaishankar expressed confidence that ties between India and US will serve mutual interests and global good.

In a post on X, Jaishankar stated, "Delighted to meet @SecBlinken yesterday evening in Washington D.C. Reviewed the advancement of India - US partnership over the last four years. Agreed that our cooperation has strengthened in many domains, just as our comfort levels have grown correspondingly. Confident that India-US relationship will serve our mutual interests as well as global good."

Jaishankar is currently on an official visit to the



People throng Lal Chowk Clock Tower amid first snowfall of the season, in Srinagar on Friday. ANI

China plans world's biggest dam on Brahmaputra river in Tibet

AGENCIES
BEIJING

China on Friday defended its plan to build the world's largest dam on the Brahmaputra River in Tibet, saying the project will not "negatively affect" lower riparian states and that safety issues have been addressed through decades of studies.

Chinese Foreign Ministry

spokesperson Mao Ning played down apprehensions about the massive project to dam the Brahmaputra River, which is called Yarlung Zangbo in Tibet. The project estimated to cost around USD 137 billion is located in the ecologically fragile Himalayan region, along a tectonic plate boundary where earthquakes occur

frequently.

Mao said China carried out in-depth studies for decades and took safeguard measures.

China has always been responsible for the development of cross-border rivers, Mao told a media briefing here in response to a question on the concerns related to the dam.

She said the hydropower

development there has been studied in depth for decades, and safeguard measures have been taken to ensure the project's security and ecological environment protection.

"The project will not negatively affect the lower reaches," she said referring to the concerns in India and Bangladesh which are the

INDIA MOURNS LOSS OF HER MOST ILLUSTRIOUS SON



Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi pays her last respects to the mortal remains of former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh. ANI



Telangana CM Revanth Reddy pays his last respects to the mortal remains of former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh. ANI



Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge pays floral tribute to former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh during the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting, in New Delhi on Friday. ANI



Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar pays his last respects to the mortal remains of former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh. ANI



AAP Convenor Arvind Kejriwal lays a wreath as he pays his last respects to the mortal remains of former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh. ANI



Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin pays his last respects to the mortal remains of former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh. ANI



Andhra Pradesh CM N Chandrababu Naidu offers his condolence to Gursharan Kaur as he pays his last respects to the mortal remains of former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh. ANI



Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra pays her last respects to the mortal remains of former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh. ANI

A monumental loss to India



“Former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh ji was one of those rare politicians who also straddled the worlds of academia and administration with equal ease. In his various roles in public offices, he made critical contributions to reforming Indian economy.

- President Droupadi Murmu

“He (Manmohan Singh) as PM, upheld secular and democratic values in contrast to the present situation...nobody can question his sincerity and dedication to serving the interest of the country. Therefore, it is a great loss for the nation”

- Prakash Karat, CPI(M) leader



A Padma Vibhushan awardee and architect of India's economic liberalisation in 1991, he boldly steered our nation through a critical transition, opening new pathways for growth and prosperity. His profound understanding of economy, gentle demeanor and unwavering commitment to India's progress will forever be etched in my memory.

- Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar



Supreme Court judge Justice Surya Kant on Friday paid tribute to former prime minister Manmohan Singh on behalf of top court and its judges. According to a Supreme Court official, Justice Kant paid homage to the former prime minister.



Deeply saddened by the passing of former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, a statesman whose intellect and leadership steered India's economic transformation. His tenure marked an era of steady growth, social progress, and reforms that improved the lives of millions...

- MK Stalin, Tamil Nadu CM

The entire nation is extremely saddened by the demise of former Prime Minister of Bharat and senior leader of the country Dr. Sardar Manmohan Singh. Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh expresses its deepest condolences to his family and countless loved ones and admirers. Renowned economist, Dr Singh's contribution to Bharat will always be remembered and cherished.

-RSS on X

Manmohan Singh's Assam connection and the house he rented in Guwahati

RS MP from Assam, Singh, wife had their names transferred as voters from Delhi to Dispur



TDG NETWORK
GUWAHATI

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's remarkable political journey took him to Assam, which unexpectedly became his second home. As a Congress Rajya Sabha member from Assam, which started as an 'outsider' but came to be the northeastern state's very own prime minister.

In 1991, when then Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao chose him as his finance minister, Manmohan Singh became a Rajya Sabha member from Assam, which was ruled by a Congress government at the time. House no. 3989, Nandan Nagar, Sarumtria, Guwahati, remained his address until his fifth Rajya Sabha term ended in 2019. After that, he was nominated from Rajasthan until he retired earlier this year.

The 2 BHK apartment in the premises of the personal home of former Assam chief

minister Hiteswar Saikia became Dr Singh's rented accommodation. Later, Dr Singh and his wife also had their names as voters transferred from Delhi to Assam, to a polling station in Dispur.

Speaking to TDG, Hemoprabha Saikia, wife of Hiteswar Saikia and owner of the house said, "I think there is no such person as humble, as honest like Dr. Manmohan Singh and other way academically. We remember his these associations with us. His wife also came with him and he took the lunch with us. And he told my granddaughters they were also here at that time that I am coming home, coming to my home."

The 84-year-old went on to share interesting anecdotes on the former prime minister, who died at 92 on Thursday evening. For one, she revealed, he was particular about rent payments. "He always used to pay the rent in time and by cheques. Once, when he was prime

minister, he sent the rent by cheque but we forgot to encash it, so he wrote a letter and attached a fresh cheque, asking us to encash immediately. Even as a prime minister he was diligent as a tenant. There are a lot of things for politicians of this generation to learn from Dr Singh," Ms Saikia further remarked.

The family members of Hiteswar Saikia have fond memories of the former PM Manmohan Singh. Speaking to TDG, the granddaughter of Hiteswar Saikia, Divyani recalled the humble nature of Dr Manmohan Singh. "Yes, the whole nation knows about his political contribution. But today I will share a few of my personal experiences with him. And yes, I do remember him coming often to our place. And as kids, you know, we always had this happiness because we could speak. Like we had a personal relationship with the entire family," added Divyani.

WWW.THEDAILYGUARDIAN.COM

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON TRAI NEW RULES FOR RECHARGE

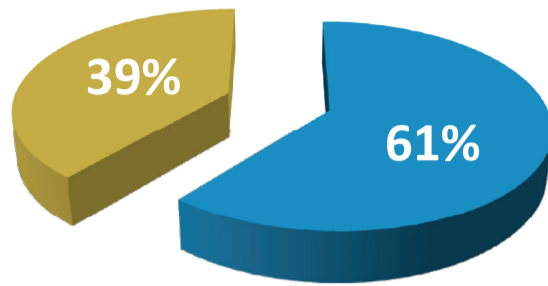
80% believe that the current tariffs of telecom companies are expensive

According to the survey, a significant 80% of respondents feel that the current tariffs imposed by telecom companies are expensive. This highlights widespread dissatisfaction among users regarding the affordability of mobile plans. The high cost of tariffs has become a pressing concern, as many users believe these rates are not justified, especially when compared to the benefits provided. This feedback underscores the need for more cost-effective plans in the telecom sector.

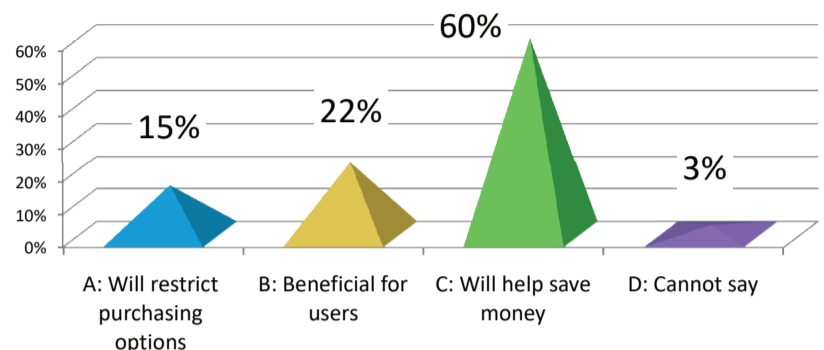
tion among users regarding the affordability of mobile plans. The high cost of tariffs has become a pressing concern, as many users believe these rates are not justified,

especially when compared to the benefits provided. This feedback underscores the need for more cost-effective plans in the telecom sector.

Q1. TRAI has directed telecom companies to launch cheaper recharge plans. What is your opinion?

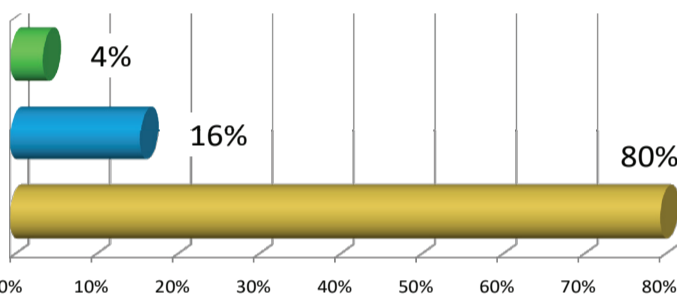
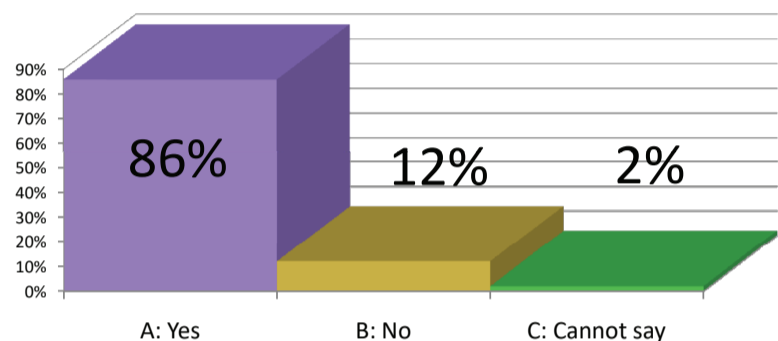


● A: Big relief for mobile users
● B: Will curb telecom companies' monopoly



Q2. Now mobile users can recharge only for calling and SMS. What is your opinion?

Q3. Will TRAI's non-data plans benefit dual-SIM users?



Q4. What is your opinion on the current tariffs of telecom companies?

● A: Expensive plans
● B: Affordable plans
● C: Cannot say

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON BANGLADESH PREPARATION FOR WAR

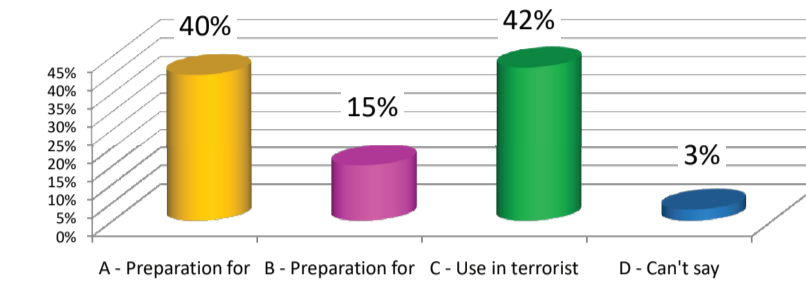
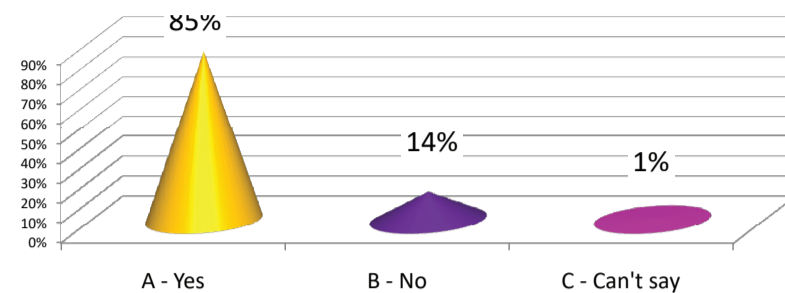
6% believe Pakistan's cargo ship reached Chittagong to spread terror in Northeast

Amid rising New Delhi-Dhaka tensions, Bangladesh-Pakistan ties appear to have strengthened. Sources reveal Pakistan's cargo ship recently transported RDX and AK-47s concealed in 720 tonnes of cattle feed and vegetables from Karachi to Bangladesh.

transported RDX and AK-47s concealed in 720 tonnes of cattle feed and vegetables from Karachi to Bangladesh.

Indian officials report the weapons were secretly unloaded at Chittagong port before the remaining cargo reached Chandipur.

Q1. A ship loaded with 250 kg of RDX and 100 AK-47s was sent from Karachi to Bangladesh. Is this a matter of concern for India?

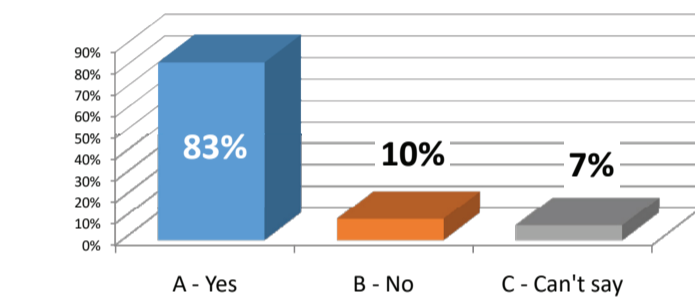
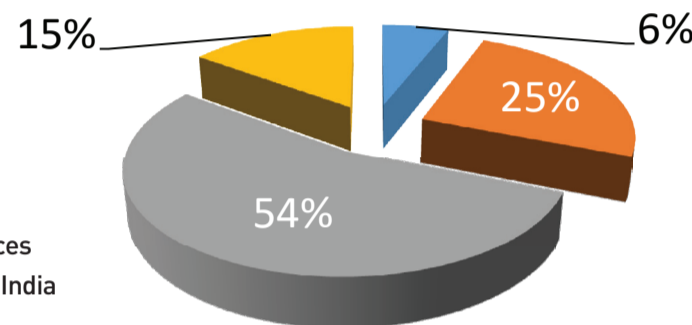


Q2. RDX and AK-47s were transported on a ship concealed in fodder. What does this mean?

Q3. Why did the Pakistani RDX-laden ship reach Chittagong instead of Dhaka?

Why did the Pakistani RDX-laden ship reach Chittagong instead of Dhaka?

● A - A plot to spread terror in the Northeast
● B - To deliver RDX to Rohingya forces
● C - To launch explosive attacks on India
● D - Can't say:



Q4. Are terrorist training camps being prepared in Bangladesh, similar to those in PoK?

Funeral at Nigambodh Ghat

CONTINUED FROM P1

1982-1985. He was the 13th PM of India with his tenure from 2004-2014.

He spent five years between 1991 and 1996 as India's Finance Minister and his role in ushering in a comprehensive policy of economic reforms is

recognized worldwide. In the popular view of those years in India, that period is inextricably associated with the persona of Singh.

Manmohan Singh's government also introduced the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), which later

came to be known as MGNREGA.

The Right to Information Act (RTI) was passed in 2005 under the Manmohan Singh government, which made the transparency of information between the government and the public better.

Kin remember their 'silent guardian'

CONTINUED FROM P1

han Singh's family-oriented nature, Gurdeep described him as a "family man," even while holding prestigious roles such as Finance Minister and Prime Minister of India.

"He was the Finance Minister and later the Prime Minister of the country. But beyond his political achievements, he was a family man. He was always there for us, offering guidance and support whenever we needed it. No matter how busy he was, he made time for everyone in the family in his own quiet way," Gurdeep Singh said. The late leader was readily accessible for advice, even on seemingly minor matters, he added. Having climbed the ladder of success, he was still down-to-earth and never let his success go to his head, they stressed.

The family received the news of Manmohan Singh's passing late at night but decided not to inform his sister immediately due to her fragile health.

"We didn't share the news with my mother at night. We waited until morning to tell her,

as her health was unstable. The doctors had advised us against letting her travel to Delhi," he added.

Gurdeep Singh and his wife will be present at the former Prime Minister's funeral since his sister is too ill and heartbroken to travel.

He said that all through his life, his mother had held up the example of her brother and said that the economist-turned-politician's biggest asset was that he never let his learning or success go to his head.

Gobind Kaur's daughter-in-law Kuljit Kaur said: "We still cannot believe that he is no more. We had not broken the news to my mother-in-law last night. Since we told her this morning, all she has been saying is that she wants to see her brother for one last time, but her health is such that she cannot travel."

Sharing memories of the late Prime Minister, Kuljit Kaur said he was the eldest of his siblings and a fatherly figure to all of them. "He always enquired about the children, their studies. He was a man of few words, but very caring and very emotional," she recalled.

Cabinet condoles demise

CONTINUED FROM P1

Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi.

The Cabinet extended heartfelt condolences on behalf of the Government and the nation to the bereaved family.

The mortal remains of the

former Prime Minister will be placed at the All India Congress Committee (AICC) headquarters in Delhi for public viewing. According to Congress Party sources, a 'last darshan' is scheduled for Saturday from 8:00 to 10:00 am.

Several politicians and

eminent personalities from various walks of life have expressed their sorrow over his demise. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Thursday night, condoled the passing of Dr Manmohan Singh, stating that India mourns the loss of one of its most distinguished leaders.

Air quality improves after rains

CONTINUED FROM P1

statement.

However, the CAQM confirmed that actions under Stages I and II of GRAP would remain in force to prevent a reversal in air quality gains. "We are taking every precaution to ensure AQI levels do not deteriorate. Vigilance and strict implementation of Stage I and II measures will continue," Agrawal added.

The Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) is a

set of emergency measures implemented in Delhi-NCR to tackle air pollution based on the severity of the Air Quality Index (AQI).

The Supreme Court had earlier directed that GRAP's Stage III measures must be implemented if the AQI exceeds 350 and Stage IV measures reintroduced if it surpasses 400. Stage III and Stage IV were activated on December 16 after AQI levels hit 401.

Stage IV measures were later revoked on December

24 as conditions began to improve.

"Thanks to continuous rain and favorable weather, the AQI is expected to stay within the 'poor' category (200-300) over the next few days," noted the Subcommittee.

Despite the rollback of Stage III measures, the CAQM has clarified that construction and industrial activities previously halted for violations will remain suspended unless specifically permitted.

'My friend, philosopher and guide'

CONTINUED FROM P1

"His advice, wise counsel and views were eagerly sought and deeply valued across the political spectrum in our country. Respected and admired by leaders and scholars all over the world, he was hailed as a statesman of immense wisdom and stature. Dr Manmohan Singh brought brilliance and distinction to every high office that he held. And he brought pride and honour

to India," she added. Sonia Gandhi said Manmohan Singh's death was a "deeply personal loss" for her. "He was my friend, philosopher and guide. He was so gentle in his manner but so resolute in his deeply held convictions. His commitment to social justice, secularism and democratic values was deep and unwavering. To spend any time with him, was to come away enlightened by

his knowledge and sagacity, moved by his honesty and integrity, and awed by his genuine humility. He leaves a void in our national life that can never be filled," she said. Sonia Gandhi said that the Congress Party and the people of India will forever be "proud and grateful" that we had a leader like Dr Manmohan Singh whose contributions to "India's progress and development are immeasurable."

Cong slams Centre on last rites of MMS

CONTINUED FROM P1

Prime Ministers have taken place," Manish Tewari posted on X.

"This great son of Punjab who was respected across the world for his erudition, knowledge and sagacity needs to be given a final send-off befitting his stewardship of India for ten long years. That is the least that must be done to honour his memory," he added.

Congress leader Alka Lamba accused the government of disrespecting Manmohan Singh and said that the decision of the government is "very unfortunate." "Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji, this decision of your government is very unfortunate - Manmohan Singh ji's funeral and memorial should have been done with respect without any controversy - What sort of revenge is being taken from Sardar Manmohan Singh ji, the son of Mother India, even after his death?" Lamba posted on X.

Earlier, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge urged PM Narendra Modi to conduct the last rites of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at a place where a memorial can be

built. "I am writing this in the context of the sad demise of Dr. Manmohan Singh, former Prime Minister of India. Apropos our telephonic conversation this morning, wherein I requested to hold Dr Manmohan Singh's last rites, which will take place tomorrow i.e. 28th December 2024, at his final resting place that would be a sacrosanct venue for the memorial of the great son of India. This is in keeping with such tradition of having memorials of statesmen and former Prime Ministers at the very place of their funerals," Kharge said.

The Congress chief said that Manmohan Singh holds a highly revered place in the psyche of the country and the people of this nation. "While his contributions and achievements are phenomenal, I would like to dwell here on some of his very significant accomplishments. His erudition on economic and fiscal matters comes from his vast experience as Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, Chief Economic Advisor to the Government of India and various other capacities in several organizations," he said.

Eight dead in Bathinda bus crash

CONTINUED FROM P1

are on. The drain in which the bus fell is currently a carrier of sewage water, which made the rescue operations difficult. Bathinda Deputy Commissioner Showkat Ahmad Parry, who reached the spot to supervise the rescue operations, said medical teams and ambulances were rushed to the spot. While five people were

killed on the spot, three succumbed to their injuries in the hospital.

More than 20 people were injured in the accident, police said. Bathinda Urban MLA Jagroop Singh Gill visited the civil hospital here, where the injured were taken.

Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, in a post on X, said a team of the state administration reached the spot after

the accident and the injured were rushed to a hospital.

"I pray to God for peace to the departed souls and a speedy recovery of the injured passengers," Mann said. Former Punjab chief minister and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Amarinder Singh, in a post on X, said: "Deeply saddened by the tragic bus accident in Bathinda, that has claimed 8 lives and injured 26.

China plans world's biggest dam

CONTINUED FROM P1

lower riparian states.

"China will continue to maintain communication with countries at the lower reaches through existing channels and step up co-operation on disaster prevention and relief for the benefit of the people by the river," she said.

She said China's hydropower development in the lower reaches of the Yar-

lung Zangbo River aims to speed up the development of clean energy and respond to climate change and extreme hydrological disasters. China on Wednesday approved the construction of the world's largest dam, stated to be the planet's biggest infra project on the Brahmaputra River in Tibet close to the Indian border, raising concerns in India and Bangladesh.

The hydropower project will be built in the lower reaches of the Yarlung Zangbo River, the Tibetan name for the Brahmaputra River, an official statement here said.

The dam will be built at a huge gorge in the Himalayan reaches where the Brahmaputra River makes a huge U-turn to flow into Arunachal Pradesh and then to Bangladesh.

India, US review ties

CONTINUED FROM P1

US. During his visit, he met India's Ambassador to US, Vinay Kwatra and Consul Generals based in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Seattle, Houston and Atlanta. Discussed opportunities for deepening India-US partnership, focusing on technology, trade and investments.

The officials discussed opportunities for deepening India-US partnership, focusing on technology, trade and investments. "A productive day with

team@IndianEmbassyUS and our Consul Generals based in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Seattle, Houston and Atlanta. Discussed opportunities for deepening India-US partnership, focusing on technology, trade and investments. Also shared views on better serving the Indian community in the USA," Jaishankar wrote on X.

SC DIRECTS PUNJAB TO ENSURE MEDICAL AID TO FARMER LEADER DALLEWAL

SC pulls up govt over law and order, asks it to deal with situation strictly

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

Expressing deep concerns over the health of farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who is on an indefinite hunger strike at the Khanauri border for the past 32 days, the Supreme court again directed the Punjab government to immediately provide medical assistance to Dallewal and handle any law and order situation arising out of farmers' protest strictly. Hearing a contempt plea against the Punjab chief secretary for non-compliance with the order on medical aid to farm leader Dallewal, the vacation bench comprising Justice Surya Kant and Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia reprimanded the Punjab government for failing to

CONTEMPT NOTICE TO PUNJAB

- The SC issued a contempt notice to Punjab government on contempt plea over non-compliance with order on medical aid to Dallewal.
- The top court directed the Punjab government to submit a compliance report on the next hearing in the case on Saturday.
- "A life is at stake, and this matter needs to be taken seriously. Medical assistance must be provided, and there should not be any perception that you are not complying," observed the bench.



shift Dallewal and issued a contempt notice to Punjab government over non-compliance with order on medical aid to Dallewal. The top court directed the Punjab government to submit a compliance report on the next hearing in the case on Saturday.

"A life is at stake, and this matter needs to be taken

seriously. Medical assistance must be provided, and there should not be any perception that you are not complying", observed the bench. The apex court also ruled, "If a law and order situation arises, it must be handled strictly". The bench also issued a notice and asked the Punjab DGP and chief secretary to

appear before it in person. However, Punjab Advocate General informed the court that a Punjab cabinet minister had met Dallewal and latter has submitted a letter addressed to the Prime Minister, suggesting that if the Centre intervened, the situation could be resolved. The Advocate General

also mentioned that Dallewal expressed willingness to cooperate for medical aid if a dialogue was initiated. When Solicitor General Tushar Mehta argued that a few individuals cannot hold the system hostage, especially when Dallewal's life is at risk, the bench stated, "Once he is stable, we will listen to his views." Earlier, the Supreme Court had raised concerns about Dallewal's deteriorating health and instructed both the central and state governments to take steps to persuade the farmer leader to end his hunger strike. Following this, Punjab Police Chief Gaurav Yadav and an official from the Union Ministry of Home Affairs visited the protest site to address Dallewal's concerns.

Standing firm with farmers, says Punjab FM after meeting Dallewal

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema said that the Supreme Court should issue directions to the union government to resolve farmer issue without any delay.

Cheema visited Khanauri Border on Friday to meet farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who is on a hunger strike demanding justice for farmers from the central government.

Cheema strongly criticized the central government's rigid stance and urged immediate talks with farmer leaders. He also referred to a recent Supreme Court directive asking the Punjab government to ensure medical care for Dallewal. He said, "We respect the judiciary's concerns, but I believe the Supreme Court should direct the central government to start discus-



Urges Supreme Court to issue directions to Union government to resolve farmers' issues

sions with farmers. This can resolve the issue within 24 hours."

During the meeting with Dallewal, the Minister praised his commitment to the farmers' cause and assured him of full support for his struggle.

Speaking to the media, Harpal Singh Cheema said, "Jagjit Singh Dallewal is fighting with great spirit for the rights of Indian farmers. We are grateful for his historic efforts." Cheema referred to the ear-

lier farmers' movement, saying that just as the united efforts of farmers forced the central government to repeal the black farm laws, this time too, the government will have to let go of its stubbornness. He said, "Earlier, the unity of farmers made the Modi government bow down. I believe this time too, the solution will come through dialogue, not rigidity. Cheema called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi to take steps to end the deadlock. He said, "The Prime Minister should respond to the farmers' letter and start constructive talks. The Supreme Court should direct the central government, and I am confident this will make them accept the farmers' demands." Minister Cheema reiterated the AAP government's commitment to the farmers' cause, saying, "AAP has stood with farmers from day one and will continue to support them."

BRS leader visits Sandhya theatre incident victim, slams Cong govt

TDG NETWORK
HYDERABAD

In a visit to KIMS Hospital today, BRS MLA T Harish Rao met with Sritej, a victim of the Sandhya Theatre incident, and provided an update on his condition. "Sri Tej is recovering well and responding to medical treatment," Rao said.

He described the Sandhya Theatre incident as "unfortunate" and expressed concern over the delayed response from some political leaders. "The CM and Minister commented on the Sandhya Theatre issue after 10 days in the assembly," he noted, referring to the slow official reaction. Rao also took a jibe at the state government particularly

Rao also took a jibe at the state government particularly CM Revanth Reddy

CM Revanth Reddy. "Why did Revanth Reddy and his cabinet not visit the families of the children who died in Gurukul?" he questioned, accusing them of ignoring tragedies that happened within their own purview.

Meanwhile, Allu Aravind, film producer and father of 'Pushpa 2' actor Allu Arjun, has announced financial support of Rs 2 crores for Sri Tej, the victim of the Sandhya Theatre tragedy and the son of Revathi, who lost

her life in the incident and the victim's family. After meeting the child injured in the Sandhya Theatre incident during the premier show of 'Pushpa 2', Allu Aravind told the media, "...After speaking to the doctors, we are very happy to know that the boy is recovering... and all the days he has been on ventilator and ventilator has been removed and he is breathing himself and doctors are very positive about his recovery..." He added, "To support the family and the boy after coming out... for his future, all this we thought we should support him with an amount of Rs 2 crores-Rs one crore has been given by Allu Arjun and Rs 50 lakhs given by the producers and 50 lakhs by the director.

TN BJP chief whips himself in protest over student rape

TDG NETWORK
COIMBATORE

Tamil Nadu BJP president K Annamalai whipped himself in front of his house here on Friday as a mark of protest against the sexual assault incident in Anna University. Annamalai was seen whipping himself and after he completed his six-whip, one of the men standing behind rushed towards him and stopped him from further whipping himself. He said that his protest was against the "continuous injustice" in the state. "Anybody understanding the Tamil culture will always know these are all part of the land. Flogging ourselves, punishing ourselves and putting ourselves through tough rhythms are all part of this culture. This is not against any person or thing but



Tamil Nadu BJP chief K Annamalai whips himself as a mark of protest to demand justice in the alleged Anna University sexual assault case, in Chennai on Friday. ANI

against a continuous injustice that is happening in the state," Annamalai said. "What has happened at the Anna University is only a tipping point. If you look at what has been happening in the last 3 years, continuous injustice against common people, women, children and high corrup-

tion... Yesterday we announced and I have chosen to go the path which a lot of my forefathers have walked on, flogging ourselves and whipping," he added. He announced this protest on Thursday at a press conference in Chennai. At the press conference, he also announced that he

PALANISWAMI SLAMS DMK GOVT

CHENNAI: AIADMK General Secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami also slammed the DMK-led government in Tamil Nadu over the alleged sexual assault incident in Anna University in Chennai, saying that there is no law and order in the state. Palaniswami said that AIADMK will organise a state-wide protest on December 30, demanding justice for the second-year student of Anna University, who was allegedly assaulted on the night of December 23. Palaniswami launched a scathing attack on the government emphasising the murder, rape, and robbery in the state. "There is no law and order in Tamil Nadu. Daily murder, rape, and robbery is happening in the state. Since the accused is DMK cadres he roamed free inside Anna University campus. On the 30th morning, our AIADMK cadres will protest in all districts in Tamil Nadu on the Anna University alleged sexual assault case."

would not wear sandals from today onwards until the DMK is removed from power and that he would fast for 48 days. BJP leader Tamilisai Soundararajan and other party cadres were detained by the Tamil Nadu Police on Thursday during protests organised by the BJP and AIADMK against the alleged sexual

assault of a female student on the Anna University campus in Chennai. Soundararajan, who led the BJP's protest, accused the DMK-led state government of attempting to silence dissent, claiming, "This is atrocious. They want to crush our voice." She added that police had detained her and several party workers during the protest.

Assam: Over 500 leaders of different parties join TMC

TDG NETWORK
GUWAHATI

Around 500 leaders and workers from different political parties joined the Trinamool Congress (TMC) during a programme held in Guwahati on Friday, in the presence of TMC MP Sushmita Dev and State TMC president Ramen Borthakur.

The leaders and workers from several parties, including Congress, Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP), and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) joined TMC. TMC MP Sushmita Dev said, that the regional parties have a good strike rate and fighting ability against the BJP.

TMC MP

Sushmita Dev said that the regional parties have a good strike rate and fighting ability against the BJP.

Around 17-18 community leaders have joined us from the Indian National Congress, Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), AJP, Rajiv Dal and BJP. They joined us (TMC) because these grassroot leaders were neglected in these parties. Trinamool Congress is a party of grassroot work," she said. "We hope to build up a strong team in Assam and we will fight against BJP.

Contractor commits suicide in Karnataka's Bidar

TDG NETWORK
MANDYA

After a young contractor in Bidar died by suicide, Union Minister H D Kumaraswamy, sharply criticised the state government. He said that this was evidence of the lawlessness prevailing in the state.

Speaking to the media in Mandya, Kumaraswamy expressed deep concern over the contractor's suicide. He criticised Minister Priyank Kharge, stating, "Priyank Kharge claims he is the only man of integrity in the state. But now, even his close associate's name has come up in the note. This government has been playing games with contractors from the beginning and continues to do so even now." Kumaraswamy accused the government of negligence.



State playing games with contractors: H D Kumaraswamy

"People are suffering in the state. Despite facing numerous issues, the government has abandoned its responsibilities and created anarchy. Infant and maternal deaths are occurring regularly. Babies are dying even before birth, yet this government shows no compassion. I haven't heard a single sympathetic word from the government about the

women who have died. The truth behind these deaths is yet to come to light.

They form commissions for all kinds of matters-why haven't they formed one for this issue?" he said. He further targeted Priyank Kharge and the Congress party, saying that they repeatedly claim injustice is being done to North Karnataka. "Mallikarjun Kharge has held power for decades, and now his son is a minister. You keep saying injustice has been done-who were you relying on all this time? What is your contribution to North Karnataka?" he said. Kumaraswamy questioned the Congress's moral authority. "They created a commission to investigate the commission system of the previous government.

BJP accuses Priyank Kharge's close aide of abetting suicide

TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

BJP State President BY Vijayendra Yediyurappa attacked the Congress party alleging that Sachin, a contractor from Bidar, died by suicide due to harassment and threats from Minister Priyank Kharge's close aide Raju Kapanur. He claimed that Sachin left behind a detailed letter highlighting his ordeal. Coming down heavily on the Congress Party, the BJP leader claimed that some ministers have given General Power of Attorney (GPA) to their close aides and right-hand men and pointed to several incidents to support his claims, including the suicide of SDA Rudresh, who was allegedly harassed by Minister Lakshmi Hebbalkar's close aide.

NGT notice to centre over disposal of solar panels

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has sought a response from the Union of India and other respondents on a plea regarding improper disposal and recycling of Photovoltaic (PV) solar panels. The matter was raised through a letter petition highlighting the environmental risks posed by discarded panels and the need for an organized system for their proper handling and management.

As solar panels become increasingly popular, particularly in rural areas, ensuring their safe disposal has become a growing concern. The bench of Justice

Prakash Shrivastava, (Chairperson, NGT) and Dr. A. Senthil Vel (Expert Member) in an order passed on December 23, 2024 said the petition raises substantial issues relating to compliance with environmental norms, especially, the implementation of the provisions of E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022. Hence the Tribunal impleaded the Ministry of Environment and other respondents as the party in the matter and issued notice, said the NGT. The letter petition sent by Ashish Singh Chandel, a farmer from Uttar Pradesh stated that solar panel is utilized for generating energy for irrigation in agricultural fields in his village under the Kusum Yojna since 2019.

British covered up truth, planted many lies: RSS chief

TDG NETWORK
NAGPUR

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat on Thursday said that the Britishers tried to hide the truth and filled the minds of people with lies. He further added that the Britishers due to their power and our ignorance planted lies. "The British covered up the truth and filled the minds of the people of our country with many lies. One of them was that most of the people

seen in India today have come from outside. At that time, the Dravidians had driven them into the jungle. Then came the Aryans who pushed the Dravidians further back. They say that the history of our country is such that someone came from outside, beat up the people here and became the king himself. To rule is not in the blood of the people of this country, they are like people who have come to live in a Dharamshala. They planted this lie in our minds due to their power and our



ignorance. This theory has been rejected all over the world, no one believes in it and there is a lot of evidence about it. But it is still taking time to get it out of people's minds," said the RSS chief while addressing the 70th Founders' Day of Somal-

war Educational Institute. Earlier on Monday, addressing the Mahanubhav Ashram Shatakpurti Samaroh, RSS Chief Bhagwat urged different sects to work and explain their religion to its followers as misunderstanding of religion leads to atrocities in the world. He stated that there have been atrocities in the world due to a misunderstanding of religion. It is necessary to have a society that interprets the religion correctly. Religion is very important, it should

be taught properly. Religion has to be understood, if it is not understood properly then half knowledge of religion will lead to 'Adharma'. He further stated that improper and incomplete knowledge of religion leads to 'Adharma'. All the oppression and atrocities happening in the world in the name of religion have happened due to misunderstandings about religion. That is why, it is required for the sects to work and explain their religion.

PIL in SC seeks to scrap TDS system

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A PIL has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking to declare that the Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) system is "manifestly arbitrary, irrational and violative of various fundamental rights". The petition filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay contended that the TDS system disproportionately burdens the assessee with significant administrative expenses.

"Declare the TDS system manifestly arbitrary, irrational and against Articles 14 (right to equality), 19 (right to practice profession) and 21 (right to life and personal liberty) of the Constitution, hence void and inoperative," the plea stated. The petition made the Centre, Ministry of Law and Justice, Law Commission, and NITI Aayog as parties in the case. The plea urged the apex court to direct the NITI Aayog to consider

the contentions raised in the plea and suggest necessary changes in the TDS system. Law Commission should examine the legality of the TDS system and prepare a report within three months, it sought. The petition said the system violated Article 14 by disproportionately burdening economically weaker sections and small earners who lack the capacity to navigate its technical requirements.

DELHI SHIVERS AS TEMP DROPS, MORE RAIN WOES AHEAD

City witnessed incessant rainfall since Friday morning causing severe waterlogging and traffic snarls in several parts.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

An 'orange' warning was issued in Delhi after rain lashed several parts of the national capital and adjoining areas on Friday, throwing traffic out of gear in many places. The weather office has forecast more showers during the day.

The rain affected traffic in many areas of south, central and north Delhi.

The weather office said the rain started in Delhi-NCR around 2:30 am.

According to Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) data till 11:30 am, the observatory at Safdarjung -- the national capital's primary weather station -- recorded 9.1 mm rainfall.

The observatory at Palam recorded 8.4 mm rainfall, Lodhi Road (10.8 mm), Ridge (9 mm), Delhi University (11 mm), and Pusa (9.5 mm).

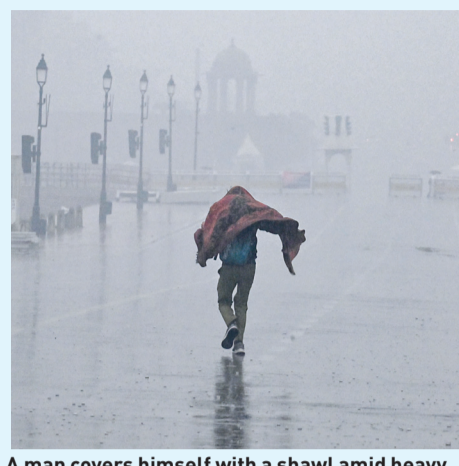
Met officials said an active western disturbance and its interaction with easterly winds were causing light to moderate rainfall and thunderstorms over north-west and central India, including the NCR areas of Delhi.

The Met office -- which has forecast light to moderate rain for the rest of the day -- denotes 'orange'

CITY DRENCHED



People visit India Gate amid rain, in New Delhi, PTI



A man covers himself with a shawl amid heavy rainfall, in New Delhi on Friday, ANI



A cyclist holds an umbrella while commuting amid heavy rainfall, in New Delhi on Friday, ANI

- Delhi issued an 'orange' warning after heavy rain disrupted traffic on Friday, with ongoing adverse weather expected.
- Rain began at 2:30 am, causing traffic issues in south, central, and north Delhi. Safdarjung recorded 9.1 mm of rain.
- The rain was due to a western disturbance interacting with easterly winds, affecting Delhi and nearby areas.
- The minimum temperature was 11°C, above normal, with air quality recorded as 'very poor' (AQI 372).

warning as "be prepared". The national capital recorded a minimum temperature of 11 degrees Celsius, 2.8 notches above normal.

The air quality at 9 am was recorded in the 'very

poor' category, with a reading of 372, according to Central Pollution Control Board data.

The Public Works Department (PWD) received one call for waterlogging and one for a fallen tree, the of-

icials said. The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) said that by 7 PM they had not received any calls regarding waterlogging or fallen trees.

Mercury also dropped to 9.5 degree celsius, because

of the rain, marking the lowest maximum temperature in the last five years. On Thursday, the maximum temperature was recorded at 24.1 degree celsius, according to data from the IMD.

City faces waterlogging, traffic chaos

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi witnessed severe waterlogging and traffic snarls in several parts of the city.

Visuals from the Burari area of the city show that heavy water logging has caused traffic congestion in the area as the rain continues to lash parts of Delhi.

The Met department has predicted "thunderstorms with rain" for today.

Earlier today, a local resident, Deepak Pandey said, "The weather has become good and it feels like Kashmir. The weather has become so pleasant and one could travel in it. It is cold, but the rain has decreased the level of pollution."

A local resident, Deepak



Vehicles ply on Delhi-Gurugram Expressway during rain on a cold winter day, in Gurugram, ANI

Pandey said, "The weather has become good and it feels like Kashmir. The weather has become so pleasant and one could travel in it. It is cold, but the rain has decreased the level of pollution."

Meanwhile, the air quality index in the city witnessed a slight difference, however, it remained in the

'very poor' category. As of 2 pm, the AQI measured is 355, according to the data of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

As of 2 pm, the AQI measured at Anand Vihar is 390, IGI Airport (T3) is 314, Aya Nagar is 329, Lodhi Road is 327, ITO is 360, Chandani Chowk is 300 and Punjabi Bagh is 361.

Highest December rainfall in 15 years

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Rain lashed Delhi-NCR throughout Friday with the city recording its highest December rainfall in the last 15 years and the mercury dropping sharply to 14.6 degree celsius, the weather department said. The rain began late Thursday around 2:30 am and continued

Mercury dropped sharply to 14.6 degree celsius

throughout the day, it said. According to Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) data between in the last 24 hours till 8:30 am

on Friday, the city logged 9.1 mm of rainfall. The observatory at Safdarjung -- the national capital's primary weather station -- recorded an additional 30.2 mm of rainfall between from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm on Friday, as per the data. The total rainfall for December stands at 42.8 mm, marking the highest rainfall this month.

Police busts syndicate producing banned narcotics, arrests 3 men

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested three men, including the kingpin, and claimed to have busted a 'nationwide narco syndicate' involved in the manufacturing and distribution of banned narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, an official said on Friday. Police said the accused were manufacturing and distributing Alprazolam tablets and Triprolidine Hydrochloride and Codeine Phosphate syrup across the country.

Tablets and syrup worth approximately Rs 1 crore were recovered and machines used in the preparation of Triprolidine hydrochloride and Codeine Phosphate syrup including packaging materials were seized from their possession, they said.

The accused were identified as Samaluddin alias Sadik (28), a resident of Agra; Mohammad Gulzar (34), a resident of Narela;



and Salman (28), a resident of Baghpat in Uttar Pradesh, the police said.

According to the police, the accused have connections with various distribution channels extending into Haryana, Delhi and Uttarakhand, indicating a complex inter-state operation.

"The entire syndicate was unearthed after a tip-off which was received on December 25," Special Commissioner of Police (Crime Branch) Devesh Chandra Srivastva said.

The officer further said the tip-off led to the arrest of the three accused who were in possession of 1.80 lakh tablets of Alprazolam tablets and 9,000 bottles of Tripro-

lidine Hydrochloride and Codeine Phosphate Syrup.

He further said Samaluddin, the kingpin of the syndicate, who also possess the degree of B.Pharma and Salman planned to set up a factory to manufacture the Codeine-based syrup and habit-forming drugs like Alprazolam and Tramadol.

"Sadik has also a social media account in the name of Sandeep Saini. In that profile DP, he put the picture of medicine so that he can get customers through social media, without being identified. He had set up the factory in Bawana with the help of Salman and Gulzar," said the Special CP.

Doctors remove razor from man's stomach

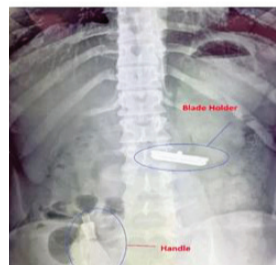
TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

In a case highlighting the interplay of mental health and surgical emergencies, doctors at a private hospital in Delhi successfully treated a 20-year-old man who swallowed a shaving razor in a fit of anger following a quarrel with his father.

The young man, suffering from depression and suicidal tendencies, ingested the razor in two parts -- the blade holder and the handle -- posing a threat to his life. His father also suffers from a mental illness, adding to the family's challenges.

Scans showed that the blade holder had lodged in his stomach, while the handle had moved to the large intestine.

A team of surgeons, led by Dr Tarun Mittal and including Dr Anmol Ahuja, Dr Shreshth Manglik, Dr Rakesh S, Dr Karthik Krishna and Dr Tanushree Nahata, performed a two-step procedure.



First, a laparotomy was done and the stomach was opened to remove the blade. Then, very meticulously handle which was found in the colon was milked and pushed distally. Using sigmoidoscopy, the handle was removed. It was a cumulative effort of meticulous planning and teamwork. "This was a peculiar case, not only because of the nature of the foreign body but also the psychological factors at play. Addressing such cases requires both good medical care and sensitivity to the patient's mental health," said Dr. Mittal. He also highlighted the importance of seeking early help for mental health problems and removing the stigma around mental illness.

Delhi Police busts illegal cigarette trade, arrests two

TIKAM SHARMA
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police Crime Branch has claimed to have busted a racket involved in the illegal trade of international cigarette brands with the arrest of two people. The accused, identified as Naresh Gupta (42) and Vijay Gupta (49), are both residents of Delhi.

"Delhi Police, Crime Branch, ISC, with the arrest of 02 accused persons namely (1) Naresh Gupta, resident of Arjun Nagar, Kotla Mubarakpur, Delhi, Age 42 Yrs, and (2) Vijay Gupta, resident of Kotla Mubarakpur, Delhi, Age 49 Yrs, has busted a racket that deals in prohibited cigarettes of international brands," according to an official release.

The arrests were made based on a tip-off about prohibited cigarettes being sold in the Kotla Mubarakpur area in New Delhi.

"On December 25, a police team initially conduct-



The arrests were made based on a tip-off about prohibited cigarettes being sold in the Kotla Mubarakpur area in New Delhi.

ed a raid at Ganpati Traders, situated at Shop No. 944, Laxmi Complex, Arjun Nagar, Kotla Mubarakpur, Delhi. During the raid at the said premises, four prohibited cigarette brands were found, namely Esse Lights, Esse Special Gold, and Gudang Garam. The total number of prohibited Esse Lights cigarettes was 3,300. The premises were being run by Naresh Gupta, and he was apprehended from the said shop," the release read.

Further, a large cache of prohibited cigarettes was found stocked at the accused Naresh's residence. The total number of these

cigarettes was 55,200, police said.

"Naresh Gupta disclosed that he was trading in these prohibited cigarettes with Vijay Gupta of M/s Virender Cigarettes Store. Subsequently, a raid was conducted at the premises of M/s Virender Cigarettes Store, situated at F-59/3, Punjabi Bazaar, Kotla Mubarakpur, Delhi. During the raid at the said premises, two prohibited cigarette brands were found, namely Esse Lights and Mond Variance. The total quantity of these prohibited cigarettes was 3,200 (each costing Rs 10).

Man who set himself on fire dies

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A 26-year-old man who set himself on fire near the Parliament on Dec 25 died during treatment at RML hospital here on Friday, officials said. On Wednesday, Jitendra from Uttar Pradesh's Baghpat tried to immolate himself near the new Parliament building after pouring a petrol-like substance on his body.

The fire was extinguished with the help of security personnel deployed near the parliament.

He was then taken to RML hospital and admitted to the burn wards.

According to initial investigations, the man took the extreme step due to a dispute with some people back home in Baghpat.



His family has been facing two cases of assault with another family in their village due to which he was upset, police said.

According to the hospital authorities, he suffered 95 per cent of burn injuries and expired at 2:23 am on Friday.

The cause of death was burn shock due to inhalational burns, resulting from 95 per cent of second-degree deep dermal burns, the au-

thorities stated. A police officer said that Jitendra's body had been handed over to his family after the post-mortem.

Nitin, Kumar's friend, said he is survived by his parents Mahipal, 60, and Omi, 55, brothers Ravindra, 28, and Shibu, 24, and a 22-year-old sister. "His sister was about to get married in February 2025," he said.

"There should be a fair in-

vestigation and the culprits should be punished. Had the police acted properly on time, this day would not have come," he said. Kumar was cremated Friday afternoon in his native village in Patti Dhandhan, Chhaprauli.

After the incident, the police found a general class railway ticket from Baraut to Shahdara on his person, and that Kumar reached the Shahdara railway station at around 1 pm Wednesday before immolating himself. He was rushed to RML Hospital after the local police and Railway Police, along with civilians, doused the fire using a blanket.

According to sources, in his police statement, Kumar named a man who he accused of troubling him and his family for some years.



Delhi Chief Minister Atishi pays her last respects to the mortal remains of former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh at his residence in New Delhi on Friday, ANI

BJP ACCUSES AAP GOVT OF NEGLECTING NORTH-EAST DELHI'S DEVELOPMENT

TIKAM SHARMA
NEW DELHI

North-east Delhi MP Manoj Tiwari on Friday launched an attack on the AAP government, accusing it of neglecting the area's development. At a press conference, Tiwari released a charge sheet outlining several issues allegedly plaguing north-east Delhi, including inadequate infrastructure, water and drainage problems, deteriorating roads, and a "weak" public transport system.

There was no immediate reaction available from AAP.

Tiwari pointed out significant issues in areas such as Burari, Timarpur, Mustafabad, Seelampur, Babarpur, Gokalpur, and Seemapuri, including a lack of clean drinking water, poor drainage, dam-

BJP'S ACCUSATION

- BJP claims AAP hindered progress in areas like Burari, Timarpur, and Mustafabad, leaving citizens without essential services.
- Tiwari alleges AAP misled the public with non-existent schemes like "Sanjeevani" and "Mahila Samman Yojana."
- Accuses AAP of exploiting illegal immigrants for political gain, contributing to law and order problems, including the riots.



aged roads, and insufficient public toilets in slum areas. He held the AAP government accountable for the deteriorating transportation system and accused it of deceiving the public with schemes like "Sanjeevani" and "Mahila Samman Yojana," which, according to

him, were non-existent as confirmed by Delhi government departments.

He assured the public that a BJP-led government would focus on repairing major roads like Sonia Vihar Pusta Road, Karawal Nagar Road, Kali Ghata Road, and Gaudi Road, while estab-

lishing a fair and effective governance system. Tiwari also accused Kejriwal of betraying the Purvanchali community, claiming they were abandoned during the COVID-19 crisis, which forced many to leave Delhi. He alleged that thousands lost their lives due to con-

taminated water.

Tiwari, along with BJP MLAs Mohan Singh Bisht, Ajay Mahawar, and Jitendra Mahajan, criticised the AAP government for its failure to address basic development needs despite repeated efforts by BJP representatives.

He said that despite the consistent demands for improvements in areas like Burari, Timarpur, Mustafabad, and Seelampur, the Kejriwal administration deliberately obstructed progress, leaving citizens without access to essential services.

The BJP MP alleged severe lack of drinking water, drainage issues, damaged roads, and insufficient public toilets in slum areas.

Relief for consumers: Expect lower electricity bills as PPAC reduced

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Power Purchase Adjustment Charges (PPAC) have been sharply reduced in Delhi which will provide a relief to the city's consumers who can expect lower electricity bills now, officials said on Friday. Discom officials said the earlier (September) PPAC of Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (TPDDL) was 37.88 percent, BSES Yamuna Power Limited (BYPL)

37.75 percent and BSES Rajdhani Power Limited (BRPL)

35.83 percent. The revised PPAC (December) is 20.52 percent for TPDDL, 13.63 percent for BYPL and 18.19 percent for BRPL, they said.

"This will lead to a sig-



"This will lead to a significant cut in the monthly electricity bills of the consumers," an official stated.

nificant cut in the monthly electricity bills of the consumers," an official stated.

The BJP tried to take credit for the decision, with its Delhi president Virendra Sachdeva saying it was a victory of party workers as the BJP has been protesting against discoms and the AAP gov-

ernment for "looting" honest consumers in the name of PPAC.

He said the charges have been reduced due to the BJP's protests and an intervention of LG V K Saxena.

Citing Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) orders, Sachdeva told a press conference here the "PPAC imposed by the three discoms has been reduced by more than 50 percent, and resultantly the consumer bills will be reduced by 20-25 percent".

The PPAC is added to the electricity bill to compensate for any increase in the cost of power during procurement due to factors like rise in fuel prices, changes in policies among others. It is calculated as a per cent of the sum of the fixed charge and energy charge (units consumed) in power bills. The PPAC is levied under the Electricity Act, Rules and APTEL orders.

Man duped of Rs 8.5 lakh in job scam

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A 62-year-old man from south Delhi was allegedly defrauded of Rs 8.5 lakh after being promised a job following an online interview, police said on Friday. According to the police, the complainant received a call from an unknown number in March and informed him that they had shortlisted his CV for the position of Joint Director in Human Resources for a reputed company.

The complainant stated that he was a resident of Mumbai but was staying in Saket at the time of the incident. He attended a 90-minute interview video call.

"After the interview, two individuals appeared to discuss something privately, turning their microphones off. After five minutes, they congratulated me and said



that I had been selected for the position of Joint Director in HR," the complainant said.

The complainant said he was then asked to accept the company's terms and conditions and to pay for various requirements, including an offer letter, a psychological test, a medical test, and other formalities. He transferred a total of Rs 8.5 lakh for these procedures, police said.

The complainant further told the police, "On March 28, the scammers assured me that one of their employees would visit Delhi for my

The complainant said he was then asked to accept the company's terms and conditions and to pay for various requirements, including an offer letter, a psychological test, a medical test, and other formalities.

induction, to deliver the offer letter and to facilitate a formal introduction with other employees in the city. However, no one showed up and their numbers were switched off."

Based on the complaint, an FIR was registered. Further investigation is underway, police said.

4 held for killing youth over mobile phone in Gurugram

TDG NETWORK
GURUGRAM

A 19-year-old youth was beaten and later strangled to death following an argument over a mobile phone, police said on Thursday, adding that four people have been arrested in the case.

According to police, they received information about a body lying in the green belt of Dwarka Expressway on Sunday last week. They identified the victim as Ashish (19), a resident of Bhangrola village.

He had injury marks on his head and his neck was tied with a muffler, police said. The victim's father informed the police that Ashish was an autorickshaw driver.

NGT notice to Centre over solar panel recycling

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal has sought a response from the Centre on the improper disposal and recycling of photovoltaic (PV) solar panels. The green body was hearing a letter petition filed by a farmer in Uttar Pradesh claiming lack of proper disposal facilities for used solar panels.

In an order dated December 23, a bench of NGT chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava and expert member A Senthil Vel said, "The case of the applicant is that solar panel is utilised for generating energy for irrigation in agricultural fields in his village under the Kusum Yojna since 2019, and he has highlighted the gap in the life cycle management of damaged solar panels."



The NGT impleaded the secretaries of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy as respondents or parties.

The bench said as per the petition, these solar panels could not be repaired and were required to be discarded as scrap, but there was a lack of "proper disposal infrastructure", requiring these panels to be buried or sent to landfills, which adversely affected soil quality.

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) said the plea raised various issues, including the panels having limited scrap value, as scrap dealers only accepted the aluminium, copper and glass components of PV panels while the remaining substances, including

polymers and silicon, were non-recyclable and needed to be sent to landfills.

It said the "PV panels contain heavy metals like lead and cadmium, which could leach into soil and water, causing long-term environmental damage", and that there was also no "established mechanism for safe disposal or recycling of damaged solar panels" in the region.

"The letter petition raises substantial issues relating to compliance of environmental norms, especially the implementation of the provisions of E-Waste (Management) Rules," the tribunal noted.

The NGT impleaded the secretaries of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy as respondents or parties.

BJP urges LG to convene special assembly session for CAG reports

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Senior BJP leader Vijender Gupta has demanded Delhi Lt Governor V K Saxena advise Assembly Speaker Ram Niwas Goel to convene a special session and ask the AAP government to table pending CAG reports.

Gupta, the Leader of Opposition in the Assembly, met the LG and submitted a memorandum, claiming the government was withholding 14 Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) reports on its performance audits of previous years, said a statement from his office. No immediate reaction was available from the ruling AAP over Gupta's charges. Gupta said that despite persistent demands from

No immediate reaction was available from the ruling AAP over Gupta's charges.

the BJP, the AAP government did not convene a special assembly session to table these reports. Gupta urged the Lieutenant Governor to direct the Speaker to ensure these reports are presented in the assembly promptly.

He said that due to a petition filed by BJP legislators and the intervention of the Delhi High Court, Chief Minister Atishi, who also holds the Finance department, was compelled to forward the pending CAG audit reports to the

Speaker on December 24. However, no progress has been made since then, he said. Consequently, the BJP legislature party filed another petition in the High Court, seeking its direction to the Speaker to convene a special assembly session for tabling of the reports, he said. The High Court, taking cognizance of the matter, issued a notice to the Speaker, directing submission of a counter-affidavit within 10 days.

The next hearing in this case is scheduled for January 9, 2025, Gupta said. The AAP government's term ends in February next year. The delay in presenting the CAG reports raises serious questions about the transparency and accountability of the present dispensation, he added.

BLAZING FIRE



Firefighters try to douse a fire that broke out in a canteen at Gwyer Hall, Main Campus, University of Delhi. ANI

54-year-old man jumps to death at hospital

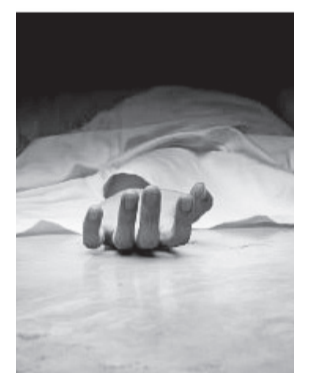
TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A 54-year-old man died on Friday after allegedly jumping from the window of a fifth-floor washroom at Jamia Hamdard Hospital in south Delhi, police reported. No suicide note has been recovered. The police received information about the incident at 1:21 am on Friday, an officer said.

The victim, Mushtaq Ali, used to work at the hospital as a ward boy and was a resident of the staff quarters at the Jamia Hamdard campus, he added.

Ali had been admitted to the orthopedic ward of the hospital on Monday due to a fracture in his foot, the officer said.

Ali lived alone and his family members reside in Odisha, police said, adding



The victim, Mushtaq Ali, used to work at the hospital as a ward boy and was a resident of the staff quarters at the Jamia Hamdard campus, he added.

that further investigation is underway.

DU approves one-year PG programme, reserves seats for single girl students

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi University's Academic Council (AC) on Friday approved the introduction of a one-year postgraduate programme starting in 2026 under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

The council also approved a resolution regarding reserving one supernumerary seat in each postgraduate course for single girl students.

In its 1021st meeting,

chaired by Vice-Chancellor Yogesh Singh, the council approved the implementation of the "Postgraduate Curriculum Framework 2024" (PGCF 2024), which aligns with NEP 2020 and paves the way for the one-year postgraduate programme.

However, some Academic Council members raised strong objections to the proposed framework, citing various challenges and potential drawbacks.

The resolution passed



by the council will now be presented to the Executive Council, the university's highest decision-making body.

The one-year postgraduate

programme will be available to graduates of DU's four-year undergraduate course, while students with a three-year undergraduate degree can opt for the existing two-

The council also approved a resolution regarding reserving one supernumerary seat in each postgraduate course for single girl students.

year programme. Students in the one-year programme will earn 44 credits, while those in the two-year programme will complete 88 credits.

In another decision, the council, a key statutory body responsible for over-

seeing academic matters, approved the reservation of additional seats for single female students in postgraduate programmes.

A dissent note signed by members Mithuraj Dhuriya, Biswajit Mohanty, and another representative

highlighted concerns over the outcomes of dissertation writing, academic projects, and entrepreneurship under the fourth year of the Undergraduate Curriculum Framework 2022 (UGCF 2022). They argued that inadequate infrastructure, insufficient time for self-study, and the absence of a minimum CGPA requirement for entry into the fourth year would make achieving these outcomes nearly impossible. At the beginning of the meeting, mem-

bers observed two minutes of silence to pay tribute to former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh.

In a significant administrative move, the Vice-Chancellor directed all college principals to resolve pending faculty promotion cases by February 28, 2025, through their respective Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQACs). Colleges unable to meet the deadline will require explicit approval from the Vice-Chancellor for extensions.

RBI HIGHLIGHTS NBFCS' HIGH DEPENDENCE ON BANKS

Urged NBFCS' to diversify funding sources to mitigate concentration risks

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has highlighted the need for Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) to diversify their sources of funding as a key risk mitigation strategy.

In its latest report, the RBI noted that while the dependency of NBFCs on banks has moderated slightly, it remains significantly high.

It said "The dependence of NBFCs on banks remain high, notwithstanding some moderation; NBFCs need to further diversify their sources of funds as a risk mitigation strategy".

The report emphasized that NBFCs must broaden their funding sources to reduce concentration risks. It also pointed out that the sector faces emerging chal-



RBI

- Cybersecurity Threats: A growing risk for the sector.
- Concentration Risks: Evolving risks need addressing through diversification.
- Climate-Related Risks: Lending to certain industries poses environmental financial risks.
- Growth Strategy: Warned against an imprudent "growth at any cost" approach; emphasized robust risk management frameworks.

lenges, including cybersecurity threats, evolving concentration risks, and climate-related financial risks associated with lending to certain industries.

The RBI warned that an imprudent "growth at any cost" approach could be detrimental to the sector, urging NBFCs to implement robust risk management frameworks.

"An imprudent 'growth at any cost' approach would be counter-productive, and a robust risk management framework should be implemented" said the report.

Additionally, the central bank advised NBFCs to strengthen their customer grievance redressal mechanisms, adhere to fair practices, and avoid charging excessively high interest rates.

Such measures, the report stated, are essential for ensuring the sector's relevance in a rapidly evolving financial landscape.

Despite these concerns, the report highlighted positive trends in the NBFC sector during the financial year 2023-24. It noted that NBFCs experienced sustained double-digit growth in their balance sheets, reflecting

the increasing importance of the sector in domestic credit intermediation.

Housing Finance Companies (HFCs) also recorded double-digit credit growth, adjusted for recent mergers, while asset quality improved across various layers of the NBFC sector.

The RBI recognized innovative strategies, such as the First Loss Default Guarantee (FLDG) framework and the co-lending model, as valuable tools for helping NBFCs expand their reach.

The report also noted that the consolidated balance sheet of All India Financial Institutions (AIFIs) grew at a slightly higher pace in 2023-24. Public Depositories (PDs) exceeded their minimum bidding commitments and achieved the required annual turnover ratios during the year.

Over 1.10 crore new credit cards issued in last 1 year

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The credit card market in India has witnessed significant growth over the past year, with more than 1.10 crore new credit cards issued, according to a report by Indus Equity Advisors.

The report also added that the total number of credit cards in the country surged from 9.60 crore in November 2023 to 10.72 crore in November 2024, highlighting the increasing adoption of credit cards among consumers.

Private banks continue to dominate the credit card market, holding a substantial 71 per cent market share. In contrast, public sector banks (PSU banks) account for only 23.82 per cent of the total credit card base.

The report also noted a continuous increase in the market share of private banks, while foreign banks



have been witnessing a decline in their share of credit card issuance.

The report further revealed that the value of transactions made using credit cards in November 2024 reached an impressive Rs 1.70 lakh crore, underlining the growing preference for credit cards as a payment method.

On the debit card front, the report data stated that the total number of debit cards in the country stood at 99.36 crore as of November 2024. PSU banks

dominate the debit card segment with a 64.67 per cent share, while private banks hold a smaller share of 24.94 per cent.

Online (e-commerce) transactions also reflected the growing influence of private banks. The volume of online transactions in November 2024 stood at 22.13 crore, with private banks leading the segment with a market share of 68.54 per cent. Meanwhile, PSU banks' share in online transactions has declined to 26.53 per cent.

Former Suzuki Motor President Chairman & CEO passes away at 94

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Osamu Suzuki, the former President Chairman & CEO of Suzuki Motor Corporation, passed away at the age of 94 on Wednesday afternoon due to malignant lymphoma, the company announced on Friday. According to Kyodo News, Japan, Suzuki's leadership spanned over four decades, during which he transformed the Japanese automaker into a global powerhouse, especially



cementing its dominance in India's car market. Suzuki helmed the company as president, chairman, and CEO from 1978 until stepping down in 2021 at the age of 91. Under his stewardship, Suzuki Motor's consolidated sales skyrocketed from around 300

billion yen (USD 1.9 billion) in 1978 to over 3 trillion yen in fiscal 2006, a tenfold growth that underscored his vision and leadership. His strategic focus on compact and affordable vehicles for emerging markets, including India, set the company apart. Maruti Suzuki India Ltd., the company's subsidiary, maintained an impressive 41.7 per cent share of India's car market in fiscal 2023, far outpacing its nearest rival Hyundai Motor Co., which held a 14.6 per cent share.

RBI allows UPI access through PPIs for full-KYC third-party applications

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India has allowed UPI to enable payments from KYC Pre-paid Payment Instruments (PPIs) through third-party UPI applications.

It was initially announced by the Reserve Bank in early April this year.

This will enable PPI holders to make or receive UPI payments through the mobile application of third-party UPI applications.

Earlier, UPI payments from or to a bank account



could be carried out using the UPI application of that

bank or of any third-party application provider. How-

ever, UPI payments from or to a PPI could only be carried out using the mobile application provided by the PPI issuer.

To provide more flexibility to PPI holders, RBI had proposed to permit the linking of PPIs through third-party UPI applications. This new provision has enabled the PPI holders to make UPI payments like bank account holders.

Unified Payment Interface is India's leading digital payment platform. Payments through digital means in India are hitting fresh highs,

as its citizens are increasingly adopting the emerging modes of transacting on the internet.

Among others, a key emphasis of the Indian government has been on ensuring that the benefits of UPI are not limited to India only; other countries, too, benefit from it.

Since its launch in 2016, the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) has transformed financial access in India, enabling millions of individuals and merchants to perform seamless digital transactions.

Industry captains recall contributions by MMS



"India has lost one of its tallest leaders and finest economists. His most defining contribution—the epochal 91 reforms spurred a multi-decadal economic boom and, more importantly, reshaped the calculus of possibilities for India and Indians,"
- Kumar Mangalam Birla, Aditya Birla Group Chairman



"Deeply saddened by the passing of Dr. Manmohan Singh ji, former Prime Minister of India and the visionary leader behind India's economic liberalisation", describing the former prime minister as "a statesman of humility"
- Sajjan Jindal, MD, JSW Steel



"Dr Singh will always be remembered for his visionary thinking and deep insights while always being humble and upholding his personal values,"
- Natarajan Chandrasekaran, Chairman of TCS

"Farewell Dr Manmohan Singh. You loved this nation. And your service to it will long be remembered,"
- Anand Mahindra, Mahindra Group Chairman.



"He was a brilliant economist with a great vision of what India could be, combined with a fine sense of what was possible politically... the liberalisation and reforms he undertook with the support of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao laid the foundations of the modern Indian economy,"
- Raghuram Rajan, Former RBI Governor

"History will forever honour his pivotal role in the transformative 1991 reforms that reshaped India and opened its doors to the world,"
- Gautam Adani, Adani Group Chairman

"I think the Indian economy owes a lot to Dr Singh, especially my generation who created remarkable success stories around aviation, broadcasting, telecom, Infosys, Wipro, and Airtel,"
- Sunil Bharti Mittal, Founder and Chairman of Bharti Enterprises



DR. MANMOHAN SINGH

A PERSONAL TRIBUTE TO THE GENTLE GIANT OF INDIAN POLITICS

OPINION

VIVEK TANKHA



Today, I find myself compelled to pen these words, not just as an acknowledgment of loss but as a testament to a life lived with grace, conviction, and purpose. Dr. Manmohan Singh's passing leaves a void that transcends political affiliations, touching all who had the privilege to know him, learn from him, or simply observe his journey.

I reflect on my own association with him, spanning decades. As a mentor and senior colleague, he embodied the ideals we so often seek in public life

but rarely find—dignity, intellect, and unwavering humility. Dr. Singh was not just a man of ideas; he was a man of action, quietly shaping the course of our nation's destiny, often under immense pressure and scrutiny.

Dr. Singh's unique ability to navigate complexities with simplicity remains etched in my memory. I recall a parliamentary session during which I approached him, grappling with a seemingly intractable financial matter. In his characteristically calm manner, he listened, processed, and responded with clarity that transformed my understanding. Such moments defined him—not merely a repository of knowledge but an enabler of solutions, always accessible, always generous with his wisdom.

There are personal moments, too, that stand out—occasions when his humanity eclipsed even



What makes Dr. Singh's legacy extraordinary is his quiet endurance. In an era where struggles are often amplified for public sympathy, he wore his scars with silence and strength. Born in the upheaval of Partition and shaped by early personal losses, he chose not to lean on these adversities as a crutch but to rise above them, letting his work do the talking.

his formidable intellect. At the weddings of my children, his early arrival and warm blessings reflected a humility and graciousness rare among leaders. He engaged not as a statesman but as a cherished family

friend, reminding us all of the values that truly define greatness.

What makes Dr. Singh's legacy extraordinary is his quiet endurance. In an era where struggles are often amplified for public sym-

pathy, he wore his scars with silence and strength. Born in the upheaval of Partition and shaped by early personal losses, he chose not to lean on these adversities as a crutch but to rise above them, letting

his work do the talking.

His statesmanship is well-documented—ushering in economic reforms that forever changed the trajectory of India's growth. Yet, it is the intangible qualities of his leadership that will endure in memory: his respect for dialogue, his willingness to admit fallibility, and his steadfast belief in the power of collective wisdom.

To the children he patiently encouraged or the citizens he served with quiet resolve, Dr. Singh was more than a leader—he was an inspiration. His life reminds us that true strength lies not in volume but in depth, not in spectacle but in substance.

As we reflect on his monumental contributions, let us also imbibe the values that he stood for. Dr. Singh's legacy calls upon us to elevate our public discourse, to prioritize the nation above self, and to lead with integrity and compassion.

Dr. Manmohan Singh, the scholar-statesman, the compassionate mentor, the steadfast reformer—your light will guide us in the times ahead. Rest in peace, Sir. You have not merely lived; you have inspired.

Vivek Tankha is a Senior Advocate and Parliamentarian.

The balance of seasons and society

OPINION

ATIR KHAN



Extremes bring discomfort, whether in nature or in society.

When seasons change, we experience discomfort: the blistering heat of summer, the unpredictable floods of the monsoon, or the suffocating chill of winter.

Nature, in its cycles, requires balance—so too does human society.

In India, we see a parallel struggle. When RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat advocates for moderation, several Hindu religious leaders stand up to oppose his stand.

Similarly, when Indian Muslim religious leaders and intellectuals condemn the persecution of Hindus in Bangladesh, some of their peers dismiss these calls for peace.

This contradiction reflects a paradox of human nature: we yearn for balance and moderation, but often resist the very equilibrium that could bring peace.

The tailwinds of polarization are so strong that even the sanest voices struggle to

make an impact.

The scope of pluralism is narrowing in the Indian psyche. People could only imagine either a masjid or mandir, both cannot co-exist in the same premises.

Quite contrary to this in the Indian Army places of worship are built in a single row, one after the other, mandir, masjid, gurdwara and church you will find at the same premises. All of them are run smoothly.

Sometimes they even have common walls. And Indian Army personnel are one of the happiest people of our country.

However, in the civilian world self-proclaimed religious leaders, driven by the potential for political gain, spread venomous communal hatred.

Their mischievous religious activism, much like the scorching summer winds, dry up reason and fuel division, creating an environment of hostility.

Adding to this complexity is the role of social media. The rapid spread of misinformation deepens divides, with negative discourse gaining more attention than reasoned debate.

The world becomes a battleground, and the air feels thick with toxicity, much like the polluted atmosphere we endure in winter.

Just as stubble burning and vehicle emissions choke our cities, the intolerance of both Hindu and Muslim ex-

trémists suffocates peaceful coexistence, preventing any hope for harmony.

The regional intensity of extremism may vary, but the cold of intolerance, like the harsh winter winds of north India, remain.

The poor suffer the most during such times, regardless of their religion.

In these moments of despair, we forget to appreciate the delicate balance nature provides—the cyclical interplay of heat and cold, drought and rain.

India, with its vast diversity of religions, languages, and cultures, is a microcosm of this balance. Yet, rather than fostering unity, we often seek polarization.

Extremism dominates public discourse, while moderate voices struggle to be heard.

These extremist ideologies spread panic, create law-and-order crises, and leave long-lasting scars on the national psyche. They tend to weaken the law-and-order system.

Voices calling for balance and moderation are often dismissed as irrelevant.

We forget that it is this very balance—whether in nature or society—that allows life to thrive.

We often romanticize our distant religious past but overlook the icons of coexistence.

Figures like Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekanand, Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia, Guru Nanak, Dara Shikoh, Kabir, and Mother Teresa—who prioritized humanity over division—serve as examples of how to live in harmony despite differences.

Just as the changing seasons bring variety, India's religious diversity offers a dynamic blend that can



In India, we see a parallel struggle. When RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat advocates for moderation, several Hindu religious leaders stand up to oppose his stand. Similarly, when Indian Muslim religious leaders and intellectuals condemn the persecution of Hindus in Bangladesh, some of their peers dismiss these calls for peace.

unite rather than divide.

If we only had summer, we would never learn to appreciate the warmth that winter brings. Similarly, the harshness of one season makes the blessings of another more apparent.

India's religious diversity, though sometimes contentious, keeps the country vibrant, offering a foundation for unity and mutual respect.

As spiritual leaders remind us, living in the present moment holds far more meaning than dwelling on the past.

India's communities, de-

spite their struggles, are in a far better place today than they were twenty years ago. They are healthier, more prosperous, and better educated. Yet, we find ourselves dissatisfied, consumed by polarization and conflict.

Just as all seasons change, so too will this period of division. But only when we recognize the importance of balance—both in nature and in society—will we unlock the key to lasting peace and prosperity.

As the year draws to a close, let us look ahead with the new hope that modera-

tion will guide us through the challenges of the future. And we will be able to rein in the extremes that threaten to tear apart the beautiful fabric of our nation.

Let us conclude with famous Urdu poet Bashir Badr's poetry: *Dushmani Jamn Ke Karo, lekin yeh gun-jayish rakna, jab hum dost bo jayen to sbarminda na boon.*

It says be at loggerhead with each other with full force but remember to keep some scope for revival of your friendship so that you are not embarrassed to see each when you reunite.

PERSPECTIVE

MANMOHAN SINGH, THE DESIGNATED SURVIVOR OF CONGRESS POLITICS

Dr Manmohan Singh would go down in history as a great visionary and the architect of Liberalization, who besides being a distinguished academic was also a pragmatic leader familiar with the circumstances of his times. There are a number of accounts which would put him on top as an economist and a reformer and some would rate his navigation of the Indo-US nuclear treaty as one of the highlights of his glorious innings. However, he was a designated survivor, who managed to retain his position and cool despite the most diabolic political maneuvers by some of his erstwhile colleagues. He was a humble man who empathized with the ground level reality and his story is about a person who had very modest beginnings before being pushed to a fame which made him a household name both in India and abroad. There are many untold stories concerning him and it would be worthwhile to recall some of them. The general belief is that he was picked up by Sonia Gandhi to be the Prime Minister in 2004 after she decided to withdraw herself from the race on account of multiple reasons, the security concerns of her children, being one of them. The fact is that when the Atal Behari Vajpayee government was toppled by one vote on the floor of the House in 1999, and Sonia was shown on the TV screens stating ``that we have the numbers, 272'' to form the government following her visit to the Rashtrapati Bhawan, she had recommended his name for the Prime Minister's post to President KR Narayanan. It was a closely guarded secret. Madhav Rao Scindia, who was considered close to the then Congress president had figured that he would be the obvious choice and when he somehow learnt that it was Manmohan Singh, who was the preferred choice, he was very upset. He summoned his close friend Amar Singh and asked him to convince Mulayam Singh Yadav, to withdraw the Samajwadi Party from the proposed alliance. Rest is history and the Congress was unable to lead the formation of an alternative government leading to elections which brought back Vajpayee. What transpired during the elections which followed in 1999 had also a story which is not there in public domain. Manmohan Singh was granted the nomination from South Delhi and it was a foregone conclusion that he would win by defeating Vijay Kumar Malhotra of the BJP. However, certain Congress leaders in order to prevent him from entering the Lok Sabha, ensured that he was defeated. While covering the polls, I had predicted that Manmohan Singh would lose, though no one believed me including my colleagues in the Hindustan Times, since I could see the sabotage of his election by Congressmen themselves. Sonia Gandhi who was aware of what was happening was unforgiving and was determined to deal with the saboteurs.

In 2004, after she declined the post, there were multiple aspirants including Pranab Mukherjee, Arjun Singh, ND Tewari and P. Chidambaram. However, Sonia Gandhi had made up her mind and was not bothered about what others in the party thought of the decision. She first released a letter declining the position and then opted for Dr Manmohan Singh. The letter was drafted by my former Editor Vir Sanghvi who was on a vacation to either Thailand or Singapore and was contacted by me after receiving a call from Ten Janpath. First Madhavan and later Ambika Soni called me to trace Vir and get the draft, which finally arrived and was sent to a specific email at 10 Janpath from Vir's office. Sonia had wanted Singh to be elected as the leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party but on the insistence of Makhan Lal Fotedar, she first allowed herself to be chosen, and after being empowered by the CPP, nominated Manmohan Singh for the post. Several attempts by Congressmen to dislodge Manmohan Singh did not succeed and the closest was when in 2006 during the Congress Chief Minister's conclave in Nainital, a move was initiated to make Pranab Mukherjee as the deputy PM. Ms Gandhi's political adviser Ahmed Patel was privy to this and the plan would have been silently executed. However, at the press conference which marked the culmination of the conclave, I had asked Manmohan Singh whether he was in the process of appointing a deputy PM.

Before he could answer, Sonia Gandhi sitting next to him, took the mike and categorically stated that this was never going to happen, thus putting to rest all speculation over the matter. Manmohan Singh survived and also ensured that his government did not fall when there was voting on the Indo-US nuclear treaty. During the 2009 Lok Sabha polls, I.K. Advani, the BJP prime ministerial face, ridiculed Manmohan Singh by describing him as the ``Nikamma PM'' (useless PM). This boomeranged on the Saffron Brigade and the middle classes, which held Singh in high esteem, voted for the Congress instead of the BJP. This resulted in the Congress winning in most Urban areas including Mumbai and Delhi. The tally went up from 145 in 2004 to 205 in 2009, an increase of 60 seats. Sycophants tried to give the credit for the Congress performance to Rahul Gandhi but the reality was that this was due to Dr Manmohan Singh. Political intrigue had already commenced in the Congress and an effort was on to dislodge him from his chair. The 2G scam and the controversial report of the then CAG, Vinod Rai, followed. And it was evident that a section of the party wanted to force Singh to quit so a new PM could take over. Fortunately, these designs never succeeded and instead unfortunately for his rivals, the entire game resulted in the Congress losing power at the Centre. In people's perception, the Congress was seen as corrupt but not Manmohan Singh, who politically managed to personally survive.

PANKAJ VOHRA

2024: POPULAR POLLS

These elections not only changed national political landscapes but also had far-reaching implications for international relations and the balance of power worldwide.



TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The 2024 elections reflected global trends of polarization, nationalism, and demands for economic and social reforms. These elections not only changed national political landscapes but also had far-reaching implications for international relations and the balance of power worldwide.

However, the integrity of elections is paramount. When elections are free, fair, and transparent, they ensure the voice of the people is heard and can prevent violent uprisings or social fragmentation. As such, successful elections contribute to both domestic stability and the promotion of democratic ideals on the global stage. In a world that is increasingly interconnected, upholding democratic norms through elections helps create a more stable and predictable international order.

Here is an analysis of the most famous elections in 2024 that reshaped the political landscape globally:

UNITED STATES: DONALD TRUMP'S RETURN TO POWER

Background: The 2024 U.S. presidential election was pivotal as Donald Trump became the first president since Grover Cleveland to serve two non-consecutive terms. He contested against the strong contender Kamala Harris.

Key Issues: Trump's campaign focused on addressing economic challenges, immigration reform, and resolving the Ukraine conflict. His return promised significant changes in U.S. foreign and domestic policies.

Impact: This election highlighted the deep divisions in American society and signaled a potential shift in the global order, particularly regarding U.S. relations with allies and adversaries.

INDIA: PM NARENDRA MODI'S THIRD TERM VICTORY

Background: Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) secured a third consecutive term, cementing his status as one of India's most influential leaders.

Key Issues: The opposition INDIA alliance mounted a strong challenge, raising concerns about economic inequality, religious harmony, and press freedom.

Impact: Modi's victory reinforced his vision of a nationalist and economically assertive India. His government was taken as one of the most powerful among his contemporaries.

UKRAINE: WARTIME LEADERSHIP ELECTION

Background: Ukraine's 2024 election took place amid the ongoing war with Russia. President Volody-

myr Zelenskiy ran on a platform of resilience and rebuilding.

Key Issues: Voter turnout was affected by the conflict, but the election was seen as a testament to Ukraine's commitment to democracy.

Impact: Zelenskiy's victory bolstered international support for Ukraine, while his leadership became a symbol of resistance against aggression.

TURKEY: POST- ERDOGAN ERA BEGINS

Background: After over two decades in power, Recep Tayyip Erdogan faced his toughest challenge yet in the 2024 general election.

Key Issues: Economic turmoil, inflation, and the aftermath of the 2023 earthquake dominated the campaign.

Impact: A victory for the opposition marked the end of Erdogan's dominance, leading to potential shifts in Turkey's foreign policy and domestic governance.

EUROPEAN UNION: ITALY'S FAR-RIGHT CONSOLIDATION

Background: Italy's 2024 parliamentary elections saw Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's far-right Brothers of Italy solidify their influence.

Key Issues: Immigration, economic reform, and relations with the EU were central to the campaign.

Impact: Meloni's government continued to push for stricter immigration policies and challenged traditional EU policies, reflecting a broader trend of rising nationalism in Europe.

BRAZIL: LULA DA SILVA'S ECONOMIC REFORMS TESTED

Background: Brazil's 2024 municipal elections acted as a referendum on President Lula da Silva's progressive policies.

Key Issues: Economic inequality, climate change, and corruption shaped the political discourse.

Impact: The results indicated growing public dissatisfaction, leading to challenges for Lula's administration in implementing reforms.

ISRAEL: NETANYAHU'S COALITION UNDER PRESSURE

Background: Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition faced significant challenges in the 2024 Israeli general elec-



Rishi Sunak and Keir Starmer (Right)



Prime Minister Narendra Modi flashes the victory sign as he arrives at the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) headquarters to celebrate the party's win in general elections in June 2024.



(Left to Right) Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Queen Sophia of Spain, Bangladesh local government state minister Mohammad Rahmat Ali, and chief of Bangladesh's Grameen Bank Muhammad Yunus, as Queen Sophia tours a housing project. (File photo)

tions. **Key Issues:** Judicial reforms, security concerns, and tensions with Palestinians dominated the agenda.

Impact: The results reshaped Israel's political landscape, highlighting deep divisions over democracy and governance.

UNITED KINGDOM: SNAP ELECTION SHAKES UP POLITICS

Background: A snap election in the UK resulted in significant gains for the Labour Party under Keir Starmer, ending over a decade of Conservative rule.

Key Issues: Corruption, unemployment, and power shortages eroded public trust in the ANC.

Impact: The election signaled a potential end to ANC dominance, with coalition politics becoming

increasingly likely in South Africa's future.

PAKISTAN: RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE

Background: Pakistan's 2024 general election marked a return to civilian rule after months of political turmoil and military influence.

Key Issues: Economic instability, security concerns, and the military's role in governance shaped the campaign.

Impact: The election restored democratic norms, but challenges in achieving stability and growth remained significant.

IRAN ELECTIONS

In Iran, the year began with legislative elections in



Ayatollah Ali Khamenei



Kamala Harris and Donald Trump (Right)



South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeo

THE NEED

Elections across the world play a crucial role in maintaining democratic principles and political stability. By allowing citizens to express their will, elections provide legitimacy to governments and ensure that political power remains accountable to the people. Regular elections offer a peaceful means of political transition, preventing instability caused by authoritarian rule or military coups.

In functioning democracies, elections reinforce the rule of law, encouraging transparency and checks on executive power. For example, in countries like India and the United States, elections enable peaceful transitions of power, even when there are deep political divides. These elections are vital for sustaining stability, as they provide a forum for public debate and resolution of national issues, such as economic challenges, social justice, and security concerns.

Internationally, successful elections can inspire neighboring countries and act as models for democratic development. For instance, recent elections in Tunisia and other parts of Africa have demonstrated how democracy, when properly instituted, can contribute to peace and stability in regions affected by civil unrest and authoritarian regimes.

er. While Hasina's victory was hailed by her supporters, it was overshadowed by significant allegations of voter suppression, violent protests, and irregularities, which observers believed undermined the integrity of the electoral process. These allegations sparked widespread discontent, leading to mounting unrest across the nation. The situation reached a boiling point when student-led protests against Hasina's government escalated into a full-scale anti-government movement. These protests, fueled by controversial policies and the perception of electoral fraud, forced Hasina to flee to India in August. In the aftermath of Hasina's departure, the military, in agreement with the protest leaders, installed Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus

Some other polls in the Southern Asia also caught the attention of the world.

BANGLADESH: FAILURE OF HASINA 4.0

The January election saw the ruling Awami League, led by Sheikh Hasina, secure a fourth consecutive term in power.

as the head of an interim government. This political upheaval set the stage for a snap election in 2025, a year that will be crucial for determining Bangladesh's future direction.

While Hasina's departure and Yunus' installation as interim head brought hope to many, the road ahead for Bangladesh remains uncertain.

SRI LANKA: THE RISE OF LEFT-WING PRESIDENT

Sri Lanka, like many countries in the region, found itself embroiled in political turmoil amidst the economic crisis. The election in Sri Lanka was deeply influenced by the country's economic struggles, which had led to widespread dissatisfaction with the ruling party. Bucking the global trend, the country saw a shift towards the Left. Anura Kumara Dissanayake, who represents the Leftist coalition National People's Party (NPP), secured a decisive victory in the presidential elections. Later, his party also won the parliamentary polls.

OTHERS

Like Sri Lanka, Bhutan was also impacted by economic crises, while the Maldives shifted its political alliances from India towards China as President Mohamed Muizzu campaigned on an "India-Out" platform, highlighting what he described as a long-standing economic dependence on New Delhi. His pro-China stance was solidified further when his party secured a parliamentary majority in April 2024.

In Taiwan, elections in January saw Vice President William Lai of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) emerge victorious, despite increasing pressure from China. Beijing's growing military and political tactics aimed at asserting its claim over Taiwan loomed large over the election, as the island's future sovereignty remained uncertain.

DELHI HIGH COURT BARS NON-ADVOCATES FROM APPEARING BEFORE CONSUMER COURTS

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court in the case Anuj Kumar Chauhan And Anr Versus Lieutenant Governor NCT Of Delhi And Ors observed and has barred the practise of permitting non-Advocates or agents to appear before the Consumer Courts here on the basis of authority letters issued by lawyers, with immediate effect. The bench headed by Justice Sanjeev Narula directed all Consumer Commissions in Delhi to ensure that the parties are represented by Advocates or by the agents or representatives or non-advocates strictly in terms of the Consumer Protection

(Procedure for Regulation of Allowing Appearance of Agents or Representatives or Non-Advocates or Voluntary Organizations before the Consumer Forum), Regulations, 2014.

However, the regulations permits parties to be represented through non-Advocates or Agents or Representatives or Social Organizations in an individual complaint case, appeal or revision. This being subject to a duly authenticated authorisation made by a party in their favour. The court in the case stated that, 'This practise of permitting non-Advocates or agents to appear on the basis of authority letters issued by the Advocates as referred above, must not be allowed, with im-



mediate effect.'

Further, the court directed the State Dispute Redressal Commission and the District Dispute Redressal Commissions to give details of pending cases where the parties are being represented by such non-Advocates or Agents.

It has also been directed by the said court that the Bar Council of Delhi and the Bar Council of India to submit their comments on the issues raised herein by filing counter affidavit. The bench of Justice Narula in the case was hearing the petition filed by

various lawyers who is aggrieved by the issue which relates to the representation of parties before Consumer Courts by non-Advocates or agents. It has also been submitted by them before the court that the conditions mandated in the Regulations

Adding to it, the court stated that the practice raises serious concerns about professional privilege and confidentiality, as non-Advocates are not bound by the Advocates Act, 1961. The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case observed and has issued notice on the petition.

were not being adhered to and there were several instances where such agents or non-Advocates were appearing before Consumer Courts merely on the strength of a purported authorisation. The court that the Advo-

cate had delegated core professional responsibilities—signing documents, receiving communications, and arguing cases, to a non-Advocate. The court also stated that this being fundamentally inconsistent with the Ad-

vocates Act, 1961, which exclusively vests these functions in enrolled Advocates and such kind of practice not only dilutes the legal and ethical responsibilities that define the role of an Advocate but also undermines the concept of a Vakalatnama. Adding to it, the court stated that the practice raises serious concerns about professional privilege and confidentiality, as non-Advocates are not bound by the Advocates Act, 1961. The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case observed and has issued notice on the petition. Accordingly, the court listed the matter for further consideration on March 18, 2025.

Delhi High Court: Not essential to arrest person who voluntarily appears before Magistrate for giving specimen signature or handwriting

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court in the case Court On Its Own Motion Versus State observed and has ruled that it being not essential to arrest a person who voluntarily appears before the Court or Magistrate, pursuant to the application filed by the Investigating Officer, for giving specimen signature or handwriting. The Division bench comprising of Justice Prathiba M Singh and Justice Amit Sharma was hearing the present matter.

The court in the case upheld the constitutional validity of proviso to Section 311A of CrPc. The section 311A of CrPc provides that the Magistrate has the power to order persons to give specimen signatures or handwriting for carrying any investigation or proceedings. The said proviso states that



no order shall be made under the provision unless the person has at some time been arrested in connection with the investigation or proceedings. The bench in the case ruled that the proviso to Section 311A of the CrPc is directory in nature and not mandatory.

The court stated that the proviso to Section 311A of the CrPc, being directory in nature, is constitutionally valid as the same does not impose any excessive restriction on the fundamental rights under Article 14,

Article 19, Article 20, Article 21 and Article 22 enshrined in Part III of the Constitution of India.

The bench in the case was answering a criminal reference received by the trial court on the issue.

The court in the case observed that the provision in question was meant to safeguard the interest of an accused person as well as to ensure that the investigation is not impeded in any manner.

Adding to it, the court stated that if the proviso is held to be mandatory, then it would

The court stated that the proviso to Section 311A of the CrPc, being directory in nature, is constitutionally valid as the same does not impose any excessive restriction on the fundamental rights under Article 14, Article 19, Article 20, Article 21 and Article 22 enshrined in Part III of the Constitution of India.

run contrary to the settled principles of criminal jurisprudence which provide that arrest of an accused person is not a mandate but a discretion vested with the Investigating Officer which has to be exercised fairly and in accordance with law. The court while considering the facts and circumstances

of the case stated that this court is of the opinion that the expression 'shall' appearing in proviso to Section 311A of the CrPc has to be interpreted as directory in nature which is also fortified by the position in the newly enacted procedural law as pointed out herein above.

Delhi High Court issues notice to Uber India in plea alleging discrimination by driver against visually impaired person

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court in the case Rahul Bajaj Uber India Technology Private Limited (Uber) & Anr observed and has issued notice to Uber India Technologies Pvt. Ltd. and the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, MoRTH wherein the petition is filed by a visually impaired advocate against discriminatory treated meted out to him by the drivers engaged with Uber India, and further the lack of proper implementation of policies of the rights of Persons with Disabilities, PwDs in transportation services by the MoRTH. The petition filed states that when the petitioner booked a ride through Uber, he was being subjected to the discrimination and disrespectful behaviour by the driver.

It was stated before the court that the driver in the case refused to get out of the auto and guide the petitioner by hand to the door of a cafe where he was travelling. The driver refused wherein stating that it was a waste of his time and energy. The petition filed states that the driver agreed to



begin the ride only after some persuasion and still exhibiting disrespectful behaviour.

It has been contended by the petitioner in the plea that despite having a zero-discrimination policy against PwDs, Uber failed to ensure proper implementation and enforcement.

It has also been stated by him before the court that despite posting about such incidents on his social media, he continued to experience reluctance from Uber's drivers.

He asserts that Uber failed to implement the policy of sensitizing or training its drivers on disability-related issues, in violation of Section 41 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, RPwD Act, which provides for acces-

sible transport. He also contends that the failure to implement accessible services violates PwDs legal rights to accessibility and equality.

The petitioner in the plea contended that MoRTH is in violation its statutory duties under the RPwD Act.

He also argued that MoRTH has been negligent in ensuring that Uber complies with the RPwD Act by not enforcing a zero-tolerance policy for refusal of service to PwDs.

The petitioner in the plea prays for Rs. 1 lakh compensation from Uber for the mental anguish, distress, and inconvenience caused due to the discriminatory behavior. He also prays that penalties be imposed on Uber under Section 89 of the RPWD

It was stated before the court that the driver in the case refused to get out of the auto and guide the petitioner by hand to the door of a cafe where he was travelling. The driver refused wherein stating that it was a waste of his time and energy.

Act for failure to make their app accessible and thus violating statutory obligations.

He prays before the court to direct the MoRTH to issue a comprehensive legal mandate to all ride-hailing service providers, directing them to adopt accessible service standards in line with the RPwD Act and other relevant laws, including specific provisions on accessible vehicles, driver training and app accessibility with a suitable grievance redressal mechanism. The bench headed by Justice Sanjeev Narula in the case observed and has issued notices to Uber and MoRTH and asked them to file counter affidavits. However, it asked Uber to provide a specific response to the grounds raised by

the petitioner that it must ensure certain accessibility features on its platforms.

Further, it asked the MoRTH to respond to the petitioner's contention that the advisory issued by it 'Advisory for Licensing, Compliance and Liability of On-demand Information Technology based Transportation Aggregator' is silent on certain aspects. Therefore, these include specifications pertaining to the technical and physical accessibility features, a mandate for regular and comprehensive training and sensitization for drivers and specific steps for timely redressal and accountability. Accordingly, the court listed the matter for further consideration on March 27, 2025.

Gujarat High Court issues notice on father's plea alleging illegal detention of his daughter by persons living in ISKCON temple

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Gujarat High Court in the case Shelsing Jaysingh Rajpurohit Versus State Of Gujarat observed and has issued notice to the State on a habeas corpus petition filed by a man wherein it claimed that his daughter has been illegally detained by certain persons who used to allegedly live at Ahmedabad's ISKCON temple.

The Division bench comprising of Justice Sangeeta K Vishen and Justice Sanjeev J Thaker was hearing the present matter.

The court in its order took note of the averment's made in the father's police complaint dated July 10. Further, the court stated that, 'Considered the submissions. Issue notice to the respondents returnable on January 09, 2025, to be served through the concerned police station.

The petition filed claims that the daughter of the petitioner left on June 27 and June 23 told Gold ornaments and Rs. 3,62,000 cash from her father's residence. The family inquired about her in the neighbour-



The Division bench comprising of Justice Sangeeta K Vishen and Justice Sanjeev J Thaker was hearing the present matter.

ing houses but they did not get any satisfactory answer. The petitioner in the plea also alleged that, he came to know, that the respondent no. 4 in "collusion" with and with the "help of" seven other private respondents (i.e., the Respondent No. 5 to 11), had taken away the corpus.

The petition filed states that, 'It is humbly submitted by the present petitioner that it is to be come into the knowledge of the present petitioner that private respondent No. 5 to 11 who are generally live and give the Sevadan Shram into the world famous isckon Man-

dir situated at S.G. Highway, Ahmedabad.'

Further, the petition claimed that 5 to 6 months have passed however he is not able to get any information about the life of the corpus and police has not taken any appropriate action to find his daughter. In view of the same, the petitioner's daughter before it. Accordingly, the court listed the matter for further consideration on January 09, 2025. The counsel, Advocates Dharmesh C Gurjar and Prema D Sharma appeared for the Petitioner. The counsel, Public Prosecutor represented the State.

Allahabad High Court: ADJ expected to not only apply his mind but also deal with arguments of parties before returning findings

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Allahabad High Court in the case Smt. Mummi Devi v. Smt. Shashikala Pandey observed that a judge of the rank of Additional District and Sessions Judge is expected not only to apply his judicial mind but also deal with the arguments of the parties before returning any findings. The bench headed by Justice Ajit Kumar in the case held that revision is to be treated as an appeal where remedy of appeal is not specifically available.

The court stated that from a judge in the rank of Addl. District and Sessions Judge it is expected that he would not only apply his judicial mind to issues raised but also be dealing with the arguments advanced on behalf of the respective parties very meticulously to arrive at findings which would be reflecting a sound judicial approach of a varied and wide experience of such a

The court in the case observed that the judge was bound to adjudicate on the lis, which was not done.

judicial officer. The petitioner challenged the order of the Small Causes Court dismissing its revision petition which being on the ground that the Court did not apply its mind to the arguments advanced by the parties before rejecting the revision.

The court in the case observed that the judge was bound to adjudicate on the lis, which was not done. The court also observed that the Judge, SCC had merely stated that based on the arguments and pleadings, the order impugned did not call for any interference. The court while disapproving the manner in which the Additional District and Sessions Judge, Court No.16, Kanpur Nagar had dealt with the case.

The bench of Justice Kumar in the case held that, 'Every judge who has to adjudicate the points on the issue raised in the matter, is not only required to refer to the arguments advanced on behalf of respective parties but also to deal with the same to arrive at a conclusion as to whether the judgment assailed is suffering from any error of law or facts or there is some gross error in assessment and analysis of the evidence by the court whose order has been challenged.' The court in the case set aside the order wherein the court dismissed the revision petition and remitted the matter back to the same Additional District and Sessions Judge, Court No.16, Kanpur Nagar to pass fresh orders.

TOP OF THE DAY

SAUDI ARABIA CONDEMNS ISRAELI VIOLATIONS AGAINST AL-AQSA, SYRIA

RIYADH: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia expressed its condemnation and denunciation of the continued Israeli violations, including the storming of the Al-Aqsa Mosque courtyard by the Israeli National Security Minister, and the incursions of the occupation forces in southern Syria. In a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and carried by the Saudi Press Agency (SPA), the Kingdom affirmed that these systematic practices in Al Aqsa Mosque constitute a flagrant transgression and provocation of the feelings of Muslims around the world, and that the continuation of military operations in Syria is a further undermining of the chances of Syria restoring its security and stability.

PAKISTAN: SIT-IN AGAINST KILLINGS IN PARACHINAR EXPANDS TO KARACHI

KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA: A religiopolitical party holding protest against the killings in Parachinar in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Kurram district expanded its protest in Karachi on Thursday, prompting traffic officials to issue traffic plans in order to avoid inconveniences to the commuters, Dawn reported. Violent clashes, which have claimed more than 100 lives since late November, have cut Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Kurram from other parts of Pakistan. Earlier on Sunday, two people were killed and later decapitated after being waylaid on their way towards Parachinar in Kurram's Bagan.

WHO D-G WAS 'METRES' AWAY WHEN ISRAEL STRIKES AGAINST HOUTHIS

TEL AVIV: Israeli airstrikes in Yemen on Thursday targeted the Houthi rebel-held capital of Sanaa and the port city of Hodeida, and the World Health Organisation's director-general said the bombardment occurred as he was about to board a flight in Sanaa, injuring a crew member. "The air traffic control tower, the departure lounge — just a few metres from where we were — and the runway were damaged," Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on X, adding that he and WHO colleagues were safe.

PAK ARMY ACCUSES INDIA OF LOC VIOLATIONS

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Army on Friday accused India of 25 violations of the Line of Control (LoC) during the past year and threatened a quick response if Indian forces attack. Army spokesman Lt Gen Ahmad Sharif Chaudhry levelled these accusations at an year-end press conference, while not offering details to substantiate the charges. The spokesman said security forces killed at least 925 terrorists in 2024 and lost 383 of its own men in nearly 60,000 operations.

AS TENSIONS BREW, SYRIA'S NEW RULERS WARN AGAINST INCITEMENTS

Violence incidents in the Alawite-majority coastal areas raise fears of sectarian strife.

AGENCIES
DAMASCUS

Syria's new authorities on Thursday launched a security crackdown in a coastal region where 14 policemen were killed a day before, vowing to pursue "remnants" of the ousted Bashar al-Assad government accused of the attack, state media reported.

The violence in Tartous province, part of the coastal region that is home to many members of Assad's Alawite sect, has marked the deadliest challenge yet to the Sunni Islamist-led authorities which swept him from power on Dec. 8.

Members of the Alawite minority, an offshoot of Shi'ite Islam, wielded huge sway in Assad-led Syria, dominating security forces he used against his opponents during the 13-year-long civil war, and to crush dissent during decades of bloody oppression by his police state.

The security forces launched the Tartous operation to "control security, stability, and civil peace, and to pursue the remnants of Assad's militias in the woods and hills", state news

CAUSE FOR WORRY

- Security Crackdown in Tartous: Syria's new authorities launched a crackdown in Tartous after 14 policemen were killed in an attack.
- Focus on Assad Loyalists: Authorities aim to target "remnants" of Bashar al-Assad's forces in the region's woods and hills.
- Sectarian Concerns: The violence in the Alawite-majority coastal area raises fears of sectarian strife.
- Alawite Shrine Incident: A video showing a fire at an Alawite shrine in Aleppo has fueled tensions.
- Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) Pledge: HTS, now leading the government, vows to protect minority groups, but concerns persist among Alawites and Christians.



The security forces launched the Tartous operation to control security, stability, and civil peace. (File Photo)

agency SANA reported.

The crackdown was announced as the Damascus authorities warned of an attempt to incite sectarian strife, after a video dating from late November circulated on social media showing a fire inside an Alawite shrine in Aleppo. The interior ministry said unknown groups perpetrated the violence and that its forces were working "night and day" to protect religious sites.

Reported sectarian violence

AGENCIES
DAMASCUS

In a predominantly Alawite neighbourhood of Damascus, Alawite sheikh Ali Dareer said that homes had been vandalised and people beaten on the basis of their religious identity, despite HTS promises the sect

would be treated with respect. He blamed "a third party" trying to incite discord.

Dareer told Reuters that the community had extended its hand to the new government but there "have been many violations", citing multiple accounts of people being beaten at a checkpoint.

Bangladesh to probe 2009 BDR mutiny

TDG NETWORK
DHAKA

Bangladesh's Major General (Retd) ALM Fazlur Rahman, chairman of newly-formed National Independent Commission on Thursday said that the commission will probe the 2009 mutiny, and exposing the "domestic and foreign conspiracies," according to a report by Dhaka Tribune.

While speaking after the commission's inaugural meeting at the Bangladesh Border Guard (BGB) headquarters in Dhaka on Thursday, Rahman said, "This is a national issue, an event of unprecedented magnitude. The scale of the tragedy is unparalleled, and we are committed to ensuring a comprehensive investigation into the events of that fateful day."

The commission's primary task will be to uncover both domestic and foreign conspiracies surrounding the incident at the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR-now BGB) headquarters in Pilkhana, Dhaka. The National Independent



Commission has been given a three-month timeframe. "We will use our intellect and dedication to complete the investigation within the given period," the Commission chief said, Dhaka Tribune reported.

During the tenure of Sheikh Hasina, that probe was carried out. However, on August 5, a student-led movement ousted Bangladesh's Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, after weeks of protests and clashes that killed over 600 people. Hasina, 76, fled to India and an interim government led by Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus was formed.

On February 25 and 26, 2009, members of the BDR mutinied against their commanding officers at the cen-

tral Dhaka headquarters, killing 74 people, including 57 army officers. A number of women relatives of the officers were sexually assaulted. Human Rights Watch research had found that many of the accused were tortured in custody and most were denied access to proper representation.

"We have long said that the atrocities that took place during the mutiny need to be investigated and prosecuted, but this should not be done through unfair mass trials after the use of torture," Brad Adams, Asia director at Human Rights Watch had said in 2017. "Particularly when the death penalty is involved, expediency cannot take priority over justice," Adams added.

China detains blogger Liu Hanbin for exposing protests

TDG NETWORK
BEIJING

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has called for the immediate release of Chinese blogger Liu Hanbin, who has been in detention for one month after sharing a video about farmers' protest against forced land seizures in Inner Mongolia.

Liu, known by his pen name Wen Yi Fan, was arrested in Hohhot, the capital of Inner Mongolia, on November 27 and is currently being held at Detention Centre No. 1 in the city.

Liu, 52, faces charges of "picking quarrels and provoking trouble," a broad accusation that can carry a prison sentence of up to five years. The charge stems from a video he posted on WeChat, in which he highlighted the ongoing protests by farmers whose land had been forcibly seized by local authorities.

Israel claims it has killed 5 terrorists posing as journo

AGENCIES
TEL AVIV

The Israel Defence Forces on Thursday claimed they killed Islamic Jihad terrorists posing as journalists.

The IDF stated that they found a key source, which was a list of Islamic Jihad operatives discovered during operations in Gaza.

In a post on X, the IDF said, "Overnight, with the direction of IDF and ISA intelligence, the IAF conducted a precise strike on an Islamic Jihad terrorist cell inside of a vehicle in the area of Nuseirat. A number of Islamic Jihad terrorists were eliminated in the strike. Intelligence from multiple sources confirmed that these individuals were Islamic Jihad operatives posing as journalists. One key source was a list of Islamic Jihad operatives discovered by the IDF during operations in Gaza. This list explicitly identified four of the eliminated individuals as members of the Islamic Jihad terrorist organization."

A day earlier, CNN reported, citing a hospital and their news outlet statement



that five journalists were killed in an Israeli strike that hit their vehicle in Gaza.

According to the hospital, the vehicle, belonging to Al-Quds Today Television, was parked outside Al-Awda Hospital when it was hit. The television channel, based in Gaza, is affiliated with the Palestine Islamic Jihad group.

Other journalists at the spot said Ayman Al-Jadi, Faisal Abu Al-Qumsan, Mohammed Al-Lada'a, Ibrahim Al-Sheikh Ali, and Fadi Hassouna were all sleeping in the vehicle when the strike hit, the report said.

Footage of the aftermath showed the vehicles in flames with the words "TV" and "PRESS" in large alphabets visible on the backdoors. Another video seen showed that it completely

engulfed by flames, CNN reported.

Al-Quds Today Television condemned the attack and said that the five people were killed "while performing their journalistic and humanitarian duty."

In a statement, the Israeli military said it conducted strike on what it called an "Islamic Jihad terrorist cell inside in the area of Nuseirat." However, it did not provide any proof for its allegations.

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), a US-based non-profit group, has said at least 141 journalists and media workers have been killed in Gaza, Israel, the West Bank and Lebanon since October 7 last year, "making it the deadliest period for journalists since CPJ began gathering data in 1992."

Pak defends airstrikes that killed 46 people in Afghanistan

AGENCIES
ISLAMABAD

Following airstrikes in Afghanistan's Barmal district of Paktika province, which left 46 dead and six injured, Pakistan defended its counter-terrorism operations, and emphasised its commitment to protecting its citizens from threats like the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), The Express Tribune reported.

The Pakistani Foreign Office spokesperson further reaffirmed respect for Afghanistan's sovereignty, stressing that operations are intelligence-based, with civilian safety as a priority.

During a weekly news briefing on Thursday, Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said, "Pakistan is committed to the security of its people. Our security and law-enforcement personnel conduct operations in the border areas to protect the people of Pakistan from terrorist groups, including TTP. These operations are carefully selected and are based on authentic and concrete intelligence. We respect the sovereignty of Afghanistan," The Express Tribune reported.

She added, "I would like to again underline that Pakistan's counter-terrorism



Pakistan Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch

The Pakistani Foreign Office spokesperson further reaffirmed respect for Afghanistan's sovereignty, stressing that operations are intelligence-based, with civilian safety as a priority.

operations are carefully selected and are based on authentic and concrete intelligence, and protection of civilians is always a key consideration in any such decision. As I said earlier, Pakistan respects the sovereignty of Afghanistan. We believe that Afghanistan should be

able to reclaim its sovereignty and security, and the terrorist groups that threaten the security of Afghanistan and Pakistan need to be combated by both countries."

The spokesperson called for collaborative efforts between the two nations to combat terrorism and said that "Pakistan believes in diplomacy and dialogue."

She said, "Pakistan has been engaged with Afghanistan over the last few days, and our special envoy on Afghanistan, discussed all matters relating to the terror groups, which have found sanctuaries inside Afghanistan. These matters have been discussed, and we will continue to engage with Afghanistan to resolve any issues that arise. I would like to underline that Pakistan believes in dialogue and diplomacy.

We have always prioritised diplomacy in relations with Afghanistan, and we believe that it is critical for both countries to work together to combat this terrorist threat, that is a threat not just for Pakistan, but also for Afghanistan."

Following the airstrikes in Paktika, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan on Wednesday summoned the Charge d'Affaires of the Pakistani Embassy in Kabul.

'Imran's party announces plans to challenge military court convictions of workers'

AGENCIES
ISLAMABAD

Calling the trials of civilians in military courts a "blatant violation of justice," the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has announced plans to challenge the military court convictions of its workers and supporters, The Express Tribune reported.

PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan has called for the formation of a judicial commission to investigate the events related to the May 9 riots and the crackdown on PTI protesters on November 26.

His statement came after the military court sentenced 60 more individuals to prison for their role in the May 9 violence, taking the total number of those convicted to 85. Pakistan military's media wing, the



Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), confirmed the sentences and added that the convicts were given a free trial with an opportunity to appeal, according to The Express Tribune report. The people who have been sentenced include PTI founder Imran Khan's nephew, Hassan Khan Niazi, who received a 10-year prison term. The ISPR stated that the military court had ensured that the legal rights of convicts were upheld during the proceedings. In response,

PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan has called for the formation of a judicial commission to investigate the events related to the May 9 riots and the crackdown on PTI protesters on November 26.

Gohar Ali Khan said that Imran Khan-founded party would file individual appeals against the sentences, requesting the Supreme Court to urgently address the issue of military trials for civilians. Opposition leader Omar Ayub echoed a similar stance and criticised the military courts decision. He stressed that only civilian courts should have the jurisdiction to convict civilians under the constitution. He further said that the military's role is confined to

defence and not judicial proceedings. He stressed the need for civilian trials in accordance with Pakistan's constitutional framework, The Express Tribune reported. Military courts in Pakistan have sentenced 60 more civilians to prison for their alleged involvement in violent attacks on military sites during the nationwide riots on May 9, 2023, The Express Tribune reported, citing an announcement from the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) on Thursday.

South Korea confirms North Korean soldier's capture by Ukraine

TDG NETWORK
SEOUL

South Korea's intelligence agency on Friday verified reports that Ukrainian special forces had captured a wounded North Korean soldier, marking the first known incident of its kind, Yonhap News Agency reported.

"Through real-time information sharing with a friendly nation's intelligence organisation, (we) confirmed the capture of a wounded North Korean soldier and plans to thoroughly examine the subsequent development," South Korea's intelligence agency National Intelligence Service said in a brief release.

Chinese Military shake-up sparks speculation as new Political Commissar appointed

TDG NETWORK
TAIPEI

On December 23, the Central Military Commission of the Communist Party of China officially promoted Chen Hui to the rank of General and appointed him as the new Political Commissar of the Army, Voice of America reported.

This move was made during a high-profile ceremony held at the Bayi Building in Beijing, presided over by Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China and Chairman of the Central Military Commission. However, the absence of four senior generals, including the former Army Political Commissar Qin Shutong, has sparked widespread speculation regarding internal power

struggles within the military and political circles of the Communist Party.

The personnel reshuffle has drawn significant attention, especially due to the collective absence of four prominent generals—Qin Shutong, Army Commander Li Qiaoming, Navy Political Commissar Yuan Huazhi, and Armed Police Commander Wang Chunning—during the promotion ceremony. This sudden disappearance has led many experts to speculate that the generals may have been removed due to their involvement in a corruption investigation, particularly one tied to Miao Hua, the former Director of the Political Work Department of the Central Military Commission.

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE



The parents of 43 missing students from Ayotzinapa walk towards the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe. More than 100,000 people have disappeared in the country, a staggering human rights catastrophe in Mexico City, Mexico. Source: ObturadorMX

RUSSIA WARNS US AGAINST NUCLEAR TESTING UNDER TRUMP

During Trump's first term as president, his administration discussed whether to conduct the first US nuclear test since 1992.

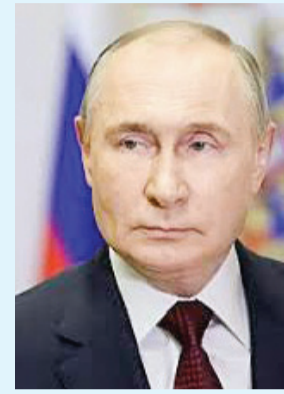
AGENCIES
MOSCOW

Russia's point man for arms control cautioned Donald Trump's incoming administration on Friday against resuming nuclear testing, saying Moscow would keep its own options open amid what he said was Washington's "extremely hostile" stance.

Deputy foreign minister Sergei Ryabkov, who oversees arms control, warned the United States that its nuclear arsenal is intended to "sober up" countries on the "brink of direct armed conflict" with Russia.

Russia, the US and China are all undertaking major modernisations of their nuclear weapons just as the

NUCLEAR TENSIONS



- **Hostile Relations:** Russia criticizes the US for an "extremely hostile" stance amid rising tensions.
- **Ryabkov's Statement:** Deputy FM Sergei Ryabkov stresses nuclear weapons' role in "self-defense" and deterring adversaries.
- **Testing History:** The US last tested in 1992; Russia, in 1990. Both nations have refrained from nuclear tests post-Cold War.
- **Trump Era Discussions:** During Trump's presidency, the US debated conducting its first nuclear test in decades.
- **CTBT Under Strain:** The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty faces increasing challenges from major powers

Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) of the Cold War era between the Soviet Union and the US is starting to fall apart. Mr Ryabkov told the Komersant newspaper: "The

international situation is extremely difficult at the moment, the American policy in its various aspects is extremely hostile to us today. "So the optionality of our actions in the interests of en-

sureing security and the complex of possible measures and actions to realise this - and to send politically appropriate signals, in addition to what practitioners are considering - does not rule anything out."

Tributes to former Manmohan Singh pour in from across the world

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

Leaders from across the world including, the US, Canada, France, Russia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have expressed grief over the death of former prime minister Manmohan Singh and recalled his contributions to strengthening bilateral relations.

Singh, the architect of India's economic reforms, died at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi on Thursday night. He was 92.

He is survived by his wife Gursharan Kaur, a history professor, and three daughters.

Leaders from Afghanistan, Maldives, Mauritius,

He is an outstanding statesman. As prime minister and when serving in other high-ranking positions, he accomplished a lot in promoting India's economic development and asserting its interests on the world stage.

Vladimir Putin
Russia President

Dr. Singh was one of the greatest champions of the US-India strategic partnership, crediting him with laying the foundation for the civil nuclear cooperation agreement that transformed bilateral relations.

Antony Blinken
US Secretary of State

and Nepal also paid their tributes to Singh.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken called him "one of the greatest champions of the bilateral strategic partnership".

India has lost a great man, and France a true friend, in the person of Dr. Manmohan Singh. He had devoted his life to his country. Our thoughts are with his family and the people of India.

Emmanuel Macron
French President

Sad to hear of the death of Manmohan Singh. I remember him as the incorruptible former Indian Prime Minister who helped the world through the global financial crisis and as a friend whose integrity could never be doubted.

Gordon Brown
Former UK Prime Minister

"Dr Singh was one of the greatest champions of the US-India strategic partnership, and his work laid the foundation for much of what our countries have accomplished together in the



MANMOHAN SINGH

1932-2024

We were contemporaries in government in the first decade of the 21st century and worked together to strengthen relations between our countries and build a fairer world. Singh was involved in the creation of IBSA, bringing together Brazil, South Africa, and India, and in the founding of BRICS.

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva
Brazilian President

The weight of grief bears down on me at the news of the passing of my honoured and cherished friend Dr Manmohan Singh. Obituaries, essays and books a plenty there will surely be about this great man...

Anwar Ibrahim
Malaysian Prime Minister

investment in the potential of the US-India relationship.

"At home, Dr Singh will be remembered for his economic reforms that spurred India's rapid economic growth. We mourn

Dr Manmohan Singh's contributions to building the foundation for the development of Japan-India relations of today was commendable.

Ishiba Shigeru
Japan's Prime Minister

He was a distinguished economist and political leader. Dr. Singh demonstrated a commitment to promoting regional peace. Singh's approach to regional issues reflected his belief that mutual understanding, dialogue, and cooperation were essential for collective progress.

M. Ishaq Dar
Pakistan's foreign minister

Dr Singh's passing and will always remember his dedication to bringing the United States and India closer together." Blinken said.

Russia President Vladimir Putin extended condolenc-

es to President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Singh's passing.

Calling him an "outstanding statesman", Putin said, "As prime minister and when serving in other high-ranking positions, he accomplished a lot in promoting India's economic development and asserting its interests on the world stage."

Putin said Singh also made a major personal contribution to strengthening friendly ties between India and Russia by elevating them to the level of a special privileged strategic partnership. "I had the occasion of talking with this remarkable man several times.

GLOBAL POLITICS 2024: A YEAR OF TRIUMPHS AND TURMOIL

The conclusion of the year brings a mixture of both positive and negative reflections from the perspective of global politics. This summary this week highlights the significant international events that have transpired over the course of the year.

In the month of January, Chinese newspaper Global Times praised Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his achievements in global politics, highlighting India's economic, political, and social achievements. India has become one of the fastest-growing major economies and advocates for a multi-alignment strategy, promoting relations with the US, Japan, Russia, and other countries and regional organizations. On the other hand, tensions escalated in the East Asian region as North Korea fired over 200 rounds of artillery shells, posing a severe security threat to South Korea and global security. The Israel-Hamas conflict intensified as Israel accused the International Court of Justice of being a 'legal arm' of Hamas. Also, India signed a significant Lithium exploration pact with Argentina, one of the three Lithium Triangle countries in Latin America. This move was seen as a major step to boost green development and contain China in the region. China got concerned about the new anti-Chinese President in Taiwan, Lai Ching-te, who is labelled as an 'instigator of war' by China. US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, wholeheartedly praised Indian Prime Minister for his remarkable achievements and the establishment of India-US relations. Amid all these de-

velopments, France's President visited India for Republic Day celebrations highlighting the deepening strategic partnership between the two nations. The visit highlighted the growing cooperation in various sectors such as defence, security, space, civil nuclear energy, education, trade, and cultural exchanges.

In the month of February, Maldives encountered a political crisis as its president Ibrahim Muizzu faced the charges of impeachment for abuse of power. On the other hand, China offered to mediate between Iran and Pakistan, positioning itself well to ease tensions. India abolished the Free Movement Regime (FMR) along the Myanmar border to protect its internal security and maintain the demographic composition of its Northeastern states. Pakistan's citizens participated in the national election to choose their new government. India's Prime Minister visited UAE to strengthen bilateral relations and economic cooperation between the two nations. Both signed numerous memorandums of understanding, including co-investments, green energy, and renewable energy projects. The leaders also launched the RuPay card, promoting financial inclusivity and integration. The inauguration of Abu Dhabi's first Hindu stone temple marked a pivotal moment in the relationship. Japan's government signed a finance agreement with India worth 232 billion yen (approximately Rs. 12,800 crores) to fund nine important infrastructure projects in India, strengthening bilateral economic ties between the two nations.

WORLD RECAP

ANSHU JOSHI



The month of March observed intensified Israel-Hamas war. On the other hand, South Korea and the US remained cautious of possible North Korean activities. Amid this, Pakistan's Shehbaz Sharif was elected as the new Prime Minister of the country. Meanwhile, in the US, Nikki Haley's attempt to challenge Republican frontrunner Donald Trump ended when she stepped back. Belarus supported India's call for UNSC reforms, stating that it supports the idea of a permanent seat and a proposed model for reforms. The G4 proposal, presented by Brazil, Germany, Japan, and India, proposes an expansion of the UNSC's membership from 15 to 25, with six permanent members and four or five non-permanent members. Meanwhile, Japan and the US focused on alliance projection against China, with Japan focusing on maritime security and national interests. The US confirmed its support for India by calling Arunachal Pradesh an integral part of India. The US also condemned China for its false territorial claims across the Line of Actual Control (LAC), leaving China in fury. India's External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar, visited Singapore, the Philippines, and Malaysia to discuss bilateral and multilateral issues. Meanwhile, Russia was severely impacted by a brutal

crisis due to high inflation, unemployment, and foreign debts. Amid this, PoK activist Anjad Ayub Mirza called for India's intervention in Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, emphasizing the region's integral part of India. Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi and foreign minister Hossein Amirabdollahian died in a helicopter accident in East Azerbaijan. The sudden death of Raisi left Iranian politics in a state of muddle. Leaders of Norway, Ireland, and Spain announced their intention to officially acknowledge Palestine as a separate country, causing Israel to recall its envoys.

In the month of June, China and Cambodia started a joint military exercise, raising tensions for the US. Russia and China expressed reservations over a US draft resolution on a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in Gaza. Hezbollah launched rockets into northern Israel, heightening regional tensions during a visit by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken. India reaffirmed its support for Israel against Hamas' terror attack and reiterated its support for free Palestine. Narendra Modi participated in the G7 summit in Italy, discussing the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and the situation in Gaza. Russia and North Korea signed a mutual defence pact during Putin's first visit to North Korea in 24 years, aiming to strengthen their bilateral relations.

In the month of July, Narendra Modi visited Russia and Austria. Apart from signing significant agreements with both the nations, he reiterated his message of

'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' and urged for global peace and security. US President Joe Biden announced his exit from the US presidential race and endorsed Kamla Harris as the nominee, sparking global politics.

In the month of August, the biggest prisoner swap between Russia and the US completed, with 24 prisoners released. Bangladesh's Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina fled to India following violence over a reservation issue. Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus was sworn in as the leader of an interim government. Democracy died in Bangladesh proving detrimental to global peace and security. India and Poland advanced their bilateral relations to the level of a strategic partnership, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk discussing collaboration in areas such as defence, security, trade, investment, and digitalization. Narendra Modi also visited Ukraine, marking the first visit by an Indian leader since Ukraine gained independence. He paid tribute to Ukraine's struggle and presented the BHISHM Cube, a mobile hospital for disaster management. Modi's visit aims to end wars and conflicts by promoting development and addressing global humanitarian needs. Xi Jinping and Jake Sullivan engaged in talks. Xi expressed hope that the US would adopt a positive perspective on China's development and work collaboratively with China to create a constructive framework for relations.

The EU's foreign ministers refused to acknowledge the 'democratic legitimacy' of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro due to the contentious elections.

In the month of September, India and Brunei elevated their bilateral ties to an 'Enhanced Partnership' during Modi's visit to Brunei. India and Brunei also discussed enhancing defence and maritime cooperation through joint exercises. On the other hand, India and Singapore unveiled agreements for a semiconductor ecosystem partnership and greater interoperability between their digital economies when the Indian Prime Minister visited Singapore. The Russia-Ukraine intensified, with Putin warning NATO nations that allowing Ukraine to launch aerial strikes on Russian territory using Western-supplied missiles would constitute a direct confrontation with Russia. North Korea publicly displayed images of its centrifuges used in nuclear bomb fuel production, raising alarms for regional and global security. The explosions involving walkie-talkies and pagers used by Hezbollah members in Lebanon raised concerns about escalating the Israel-Hamas war. India's Ministry of External Affairs dismissed Iran's comments on the hardships faced by Muslims in India, labelling them as "misinformed and unacceptable." Narendra Modi visited the US for the Quad Leaders' Summit, where he addressed the Indian American community and delivered a significant address at the UN's 'Summit

of the Future'. Modi also announced to host the Quad Summit in 2025 and introduced the Quad Cancer Moonshot initiative, focusing on cervical cancer in the Indo-Pacific region. Modi also engaged in discussions with Nepali Prime Minister, Ukrainian President Zelenskyy, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, and Vietnamese President.

In the month of October, Narendra Modi visited Laos to participate in the India-ASEAN and East Asia summits. Modi highlighted the importance of India-ASEAN relations and the 10th anniversary of India's Act East Policy. India-Canada relations strained due to Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau's political ambitions. India recalled its High Commissioner from Canada and accused Trudeau of allowing violent extremists to target Indian diplomats and community leaders. India made a significant impact on global politics by setting the roadmap for the future of the BRICS alliance in Kazan, Russia. The summit, attended by representatives from 36 countries, aimed to counter Western-centric global frameworks and promote sustainable development. In the month of November, India and China successfully completed the disengagement process in the Depsang and Demchok areas of Eastern Ladakh, with patrolling set to commence shortly. The author is Professor, School of International Studies, JNU

REVIEW: VANVAAS ****

VANVAAS



PRAVEEN NAGDA

Blending Indian culture, tradition, values, and family bonds into this emotional drama, Vanvaas, directed by 'Gadar 2' fame Anil Sharma, surely reminds you of Baghban but offers much more of a Bollywood masala flick content. There is intense drama, some comedy, some action, and even a non-vulgar item number, making it a good family viewing experience.

Nana Patekar undoubtedly carries the film on his shoulders with his monologues, perfectly pronounced Sanskrit verses, and exhibiting versatility in his character. Nana's eccentricities, his dialogue delivery, and his multitude of expressions depicting a dozen emotions are impeccable. He is an elder, he is a child, he is angry, he is happy, and he is a fighter, he is a lover, he is a father, he is a husband, he is a grandfather, and he repeatedly makes his mark in the film keeping you hooked to the storyline.

Utkarsh Sharma, Simratt Kaur, Rajpal Yadav, and others have performed optimally in this film in their respective roles. The brilliant cinematography of Kabir Lal captures well the grandness of ghats, the boats of Benares, the hilly terrain of Shimla, Dalhousie, and Palampur, and the snow-clad Himalayas.

The storyline is set on how the children start ill-treating their parents who give their lives to raise them isn't new in cinema, but the storytelling has always made a difference. Vanvaas is a film that will provide you with a lumpy throat many times at various moments. An elderly Deepak Tyagi aka Baba (Nana Patekar) is abandoned in Varanasi by his 3 sons Somu (Hemant Kher), Bablu (Kettan Singh), and Chutkan (Paritosh Tripathy) conspiring with their wives.

Baba suffers memory loss and starts reliving the moments of his younger days when he had lost his children. He starts believing that he has lost his children and comes in contact with a petty thief Veeru (Utkarsh Sharma), who initially robs him under the pretext of finding his children. A twist in the tale revolving around Veeru's lady love Meena (Simratt Kaur) brings Veeru and Baba closer, and they are on a mission to find their home.

In this mission, while they dig the government records to explore his pedigree it's a tragic landslide that shows the light to finding Baba's real home. Nana Patekar, being an ex-instructor of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), reacts unknowingly like an instructor in the situation, leading to meeting one of his students and regaining his memory.

While Vanvaas succeeds in making a strong emotional statement Apne Hi Dete Hain Apno Ko Vanvaas (it's your own who abandoned you and put you in exile), it also presents many lighter moments filled with fun, humour, laughter, and love. With such a storyline, the end need not have been a sad one as the message would have gone home.

The music and lyrics are joyful and are perfectly placed in the sequence in this film making it a memorable watch. Thanks to the lyricist Sayeed Quadri, songs like playful Chhabili Ke Naina, sentimental Yaadon Ke Jarokhon Se, romantic Bandhan, and glamorous Geeli Machis are bound to be an audio treat.

Vanvaas, a ZEE Studio release, explores intricate human relationships and their vulnerabilities and is a great watch for families sitting together.

Review by: Praveen Nagda, Festival Director of KidzCINEMA and CultureCinema Film Festivals

ANGELINA DETAILS DIFFICULT YEARS AWAY FROM ACTING

AGENCIES WASHINGTON

After a significant time away from the screen, Angelina Jolie is making her much-anticipated return to acting with a performance in 'Maria', Pablo Larrain's biographical film about the late opera legend Maria Callas. Jolie's portrayal of Callas has earned her nominations for the 2025 Golden Globe and Critics Choice Awards, marking a triumphant comeback.

However, the actress recently opened up about the dark period she endured during her years-long hiatus from Hollywood.

As per E! News, in a recent interview, the 49-year-old actress discussed the personal challenges she faced during her time away from acting.

"I went very dark for reasons I'd rather not explain, but I didn't have a lot of light and life within me," Jolie revealed, adding, "Your light's dim," as per E! News.

The actress, who is known for her work both on-screen and in humanitarian efforts, further explained that dur-



ing this period, she "also just needed to be home more," which limited her ability to take on long-term projects.

Jolie, who shares six children with ex-husband Brad Pitt, spoke candidly about the practical and emotional factors that influenced her choices during that time.

"The choice of what to work on and when was not a creative choice, often, the last few years, but sometimes the practical choice," she said, reflecting on the challenges of balancing personal and professional demands.

Jolie's time away from acting was largely marked by intense personal challenges, including ongoing legal battles with Pitt over their divorce.

PICTURE PERFECT

Bollywood actor Varun Dhawan with actress Wamiqa Gabbi during a press meet for their upcoming film 'Baby John', in Gandhinagar on Thursday. (ANI)



OSCARS SHORTLISTED FILM 'SANTOSH' TO RELEASE ON JANUARY 10, 2025

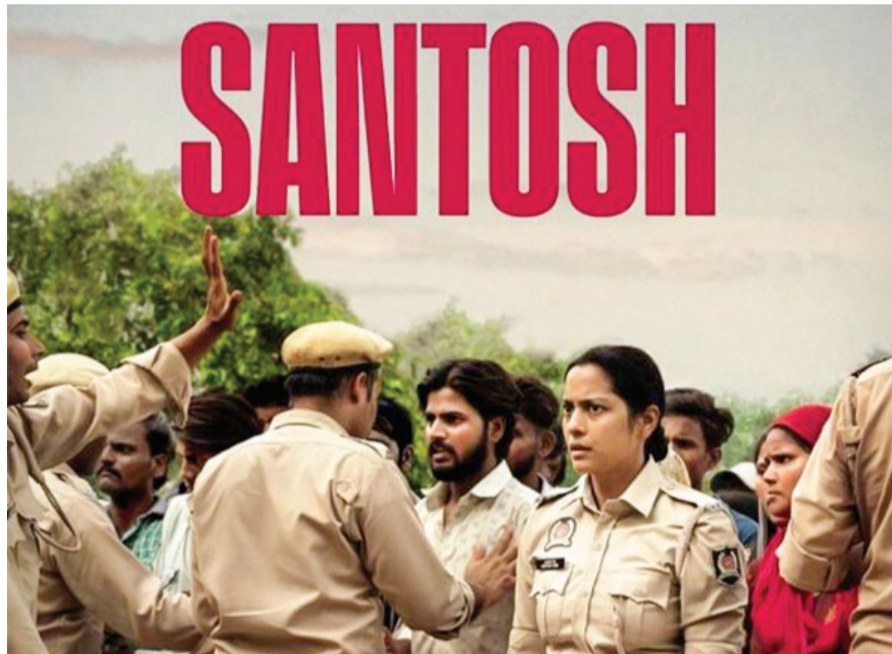
TDG NETWORK MUMBAI

After Hindi drama 'Santosh' made it to the Oscars shortlist, the makers on Friday announced the theatrical release of the film in India.

As per a press note, Shahana Goswami-starrer 'Santosh' will hit the theatres in the country on January 10, 2025.

'Santosh', a Hindi-language international co-production set in rural north India, has found a spot in the 'Best International Feature Film' category.

A total of 15 films have been selected for the Oscar shortlist in this category out of 85 total films submitted by countries all around the world. The film was sent by the United Kingdom as their official submission for the Academy Awards 2025. The



movie also premiered at the 77th Cannes Film Festival in May 2024 and was well-received by critics.

Reacting to this "little glory", Shahana took to Instagram and expressed her happiness.

"So happy for the team especially our writer-director Sandhya Suri for this little glory of recognition for our

film Santosh! How incredible to be shortlisted from amongst 85 films. Thank you to everyone who loved it, supported it and voted for it," she wrote.

Tom Holland reflects on working opposite Zendaya

AGENCIES WASHINGTON

Tom Holland and Zendaya are one of the adorable couples of Hollywood. They have starred in three 'Spider-Man' movies and will spend much of 2025 on film sets together as the stars of a fourth 'Spider-Man' film and Christopher Nolan's untitled film.

Tom Holland opened up about his experience of working with his girlfriend Zendaya. "Studios love it. One hotel room. Separate drivers. We're not crazy now. Listen it's work, alright?" said Tom Holland as quoted by Variety.

"Oh God, yeah. It's a saving grace. Yeah, the best thing that's ever happened to me," he added on a more serious note.

"It's just that perfect thing when you're on set and a director will give you a note that maybe you don't agree with, or I know that she doesn't particularly like,



and it's just that, like, familiar glance at each other of like, can't wait to talk about that later," said Tom Holland in 'Dish' podcast.

Zendaya also feels the same when asked about her working bond with Tom Holland, Zendaya shared, "Not really. It's actually strangely

comfortable. It's like second nature if anything. You feel extra safe with the person you're acting beside. I love working with him," as per Deadline.

Zendaya also praised Holland's dedication to his craft, noting his intense passion and unwavering commit-

ment to his work. "He's so talented and so passionate about what he does. He always gives things one thousand per cent, even if he's absolutely worn down. I really appreciate that about him," she said in a recent interview, as per Deadline.

Selena shares her pictures post-engagement

AGENCIES WASHINGTON

Selena Gomez and Benny Blanco announced their engagement a week ago, and currently both are enjoying this phase. Gomez is so excited that she couldn't stop herself from sharing new pictures of her engagement ring.

Taking to her Instagram stories, she posted several pictures posing with the ring. In the first picture, the focus was on the ring.

In the pictures, she was seen wearing a black top underneath a maroon trench coat. Her hair is styled in a side part. She is seen wearing large, dangly earrings, lavender-co-



loured eyeshadow, and soft pink lip shade, reported People.

"Sorry last post... I've just dreamed of this moment my whole life," Gomez wrote, according to People.

Earlier, Benny shared his fiancée Selena Gomez's announcement of their engagement on his Instagram Stories.

Blanco wrote, "still can't believe it." The photo featured him kissing Gomez on her head as they sat by a closet, while she held up her diamond ring, reported People.

The couple, who first sparked the dating speculations in 2023, shared the news on social media.

BRAIN PICKING



It is immensely enjoyable to work for an album because there's a lot more creative freedom. In films sometimes, all that the makers care about is making the music commercially appealing.



- SHREYA GHOSHAL (Singer)

SAIF CELEBRATES TAIMUR'S BIRTHDAY WITH SPORTY BASH



TDG NETWORK MUMBAI

Birthdays call for celebrations with loved ones, and Saif Ali Khan and Kareena Kapoor Khan went all out to make their son Taimur's special day memorable. On Friday, the dotting parents sporty-themed birthday bash for their firstborn, Taimur.

Several videos surfaced online in which Kareena and Saif can be seen engaging in fun games with Taimur and his friends, adding a lively touch to the festivities.

A while ago, a slew of B-towners including Taimur's "bua" Soha Ali Khan with husband Kunal Kemma was spotted arriving at Kareena and Saif's house. They looked extremely excited to celebrate the birthday of

Taimur, who is fondly called "Tim" by his loved ones.

Soha also took to Instagram and penned an adorable birthday wish for Taimur on behalf of her daughter Inaaya. She also dropped a video, showcasing the adorable bond shared between the cousins.

"From jumping on the bed to racing freestyle we have come a long way - here's to a lifetime of family, food and prezzies!! Happy Birthday Tim bhai," she captioned the post.

Filmmaker Karan Johar's kids were also spotted at the bash.

Meanwhile, several clips of Taimur from his school's annual day function have been doing the rounds on the internet.

SUNIEL CALLS SOHAIL HIS 'FOREVER LIL BROTHER' IN B'DAY POST



TDG NETWORK MUMBAI

Actor Sohail Khan celebrated his 54th birthday on Friday, and the special day has been filled with love and warm wishes from family and friends.

On this joyous occasion, fellow actor Suniel Shetty took to his Instagram account to wish Sohail a very happy birthday.

Suniel, who shares a close bond with Sohail, posted a picture with him on his Instagram stories. In his message, he referred to Sohail as his "little brother," expressing his affection and admiration.

He wrote, "Sooooo... my forever little brother... wishing you a happy happy birthday. Stay blessed, keep shining, and always keep that smile alive! Lots of love always @sohaillkhanofficial."

Sohail reshared the post on his Instagram handle and wrote, "Thank you so much Anna."

The two actors, Sohail and Suniel, have worked

together in films like 'Laker - Forbidden Lines' and 'Fight Club: Members Only', and their camaraderie both on and off-screen is well known.

In addition to the heartfelt wishes from Suniel Shetty, Sohail Khan also shared a touching family moment on his own Instagram account, recently.

The actor-filmmaker posted a picture that showcased his family, featuring his siblings and parents. The picture captured a lovely family gathering from their mother Salma Khan's birthday, with Sohail posing alongside his brothers, Salman Khan and Arbaaz Khan, and their sisters, Arpita and Alvira.

Their parents, Salim Khan and Salma Khan were also present in the photo, with Salma looking elegant in a traditional outfit, while the rest of the family kept their looks casual.

Sohail captioned the beautiful family portrait as, "Blessed," accompanied by a red heart emoji.

WHEN EMPOWERMENT TURNS TO ENTITLEMENT: EXPLORING MISUSE OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS



NAMRATA KOHLI

WOMAN WISE

A judge friend of mine who sits on dowry cases told me some ten years back, "I feel sorry for Indian men who are often the victim of dowry cases." I was quite surprised at her statement but she opened another dimension to this law. And pointed out how women are weaponizing legal provisions and leveraging protective laws as tools for extortion or harassment.

Section 498A IPC was meant to be a "shield" and not a "weapon" protecting the rights of women. However, over time, there have been instances of this provision being misused. The Supreme Court of India has acknowledged this issue, emphasizing the need for caution to prevent unnecessary harassment of innocent individuals.

The recent demise of Atul Subhash underscores the complexities surrounding the misuse of protective legal provisions. Atul Subhash was found dead in his Bengaluru apartment on December 9, 2024. He left behind a 24-page suicide note and a 90-minute video alleging harassment by his estranged wife, Nikita Singhania, and her family. Subhash claimed that false cases, including those under Section 498A, were filed against him, accompanied by demands for substantial financial settlements. The deceased techie alleged that his estranged wife and her



family falsely implicated him under these laws, leading to severe mental trauma, ultimately driving him to take his own life. His suicide note and video brings attention to the devastating effects of such misuse, not

just on individuals but also on the credibility of protective legal frameworks.

With every right comes a whole lot of responsibility. We must spend a minute to examine this issue and call

out the bluff where women are abusing these rights. Yes, there have been reported cases in India where Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), which is intended to protect women from cruelty by

their husband or relatives (often related to dowry demands), has been misused. In Preeti Gupta vs State of Jharkhand (2010), the Supreme Court acknowledged the misuse of Section 498A, stating that frivolous complaints can lead to harassment of innocent family members, including elderly parents and even distant relatives. In Arnesh Kumar vs State of Bihar (2014), the Supreme Court issued guidelines to prevent the automatic arrest of individuals in cases filed under Section 498A after realizing that the law was being used as a weapon rather than a shield. In Ramgopal vs State of Madhya Pradesh (2020), the court noted that false complaints under Section 498A often stem from marital discord unrelated to dowry demands, leading to harassment of the husband and his family.

My friend who is a Judge shared with me how many times women opt for aggressive legal action instead of seeking reconciliation or amicable so-

lutions, even when disputes are minor. In child custody cases, there are instances where mothers have manipulated the legal framework to alienate the father from the child, often leveraging false abuse allegations. And the worst of the lot is sexual harassment laws where the crime cannot be proved. These harassment laws are sometimes weaponized at workplace and domestic situations to settle professional rivalries or personal scores.

Anybody can be a victim of harassment, emotional abuse, or legal manipulation. It is essential to ensure that men are not unfairly vilified or victimized. True progress comes when society supports all victims of injustice and justice needs to be gender-neutral. Feminism is all about fairness, where both men and women are protected from false accusations and abuse. After all feminism at its core is not a battle of sexes, but a fight against injustice.

The Power of Community: Women Supporting Women in Business

TDG NETWORK

The journey of women in business is no longer just about breaking glass ceilings—it's about building bridges. Across industries and sectors, women entrepreneurs are creating thriving communities where collaboration trumps competition and collective success becomes the ultimate goal. The strength of these communities lies in their ability to amplify voices, share knowledge, and inspire innovation, proving that when women support women, extraordinary things happen. Through mentorship, shared experiences, and a commitment to uplift each other, women are not just shaping successful businesses but also redefining leadership and driving lasting societal impact.

Seema Bansal, Co-founder of DCGpac, As a woman in the packaging industry, my journey has been about breaking stereotypes and proving that this space isn't just for men. It's been a journey of resilience, vision, and a strong belief in making meaningful changes, not just in the industry but in society as well. Empowering women has always been close to my heart. At DCGpac, we've created an inclusive workplace where women can thrive, lead, and challenge societal norms. Today, we have women in key roles like fellows and team leaders, and I'm proud of how this has fostered economic independence, skill development, and personal growth for so many.

For me, it's not just about hiring women—it's about mentoring them, giving them the tools, confidence, and leadership opportunities they need to grow. Sustainability is another passion of mine, and I've



Seema Bansal, Co-founder of DCGpac worked to show how empowering women can go hand in hand with building a sustainable, eco-friendly business.

I truly believe that diversity isn't just the right thing to do—it's a smart business move. When women succeed, businesses and communities succeed. Through these efforts, I hope to inspire others to see how powerful and transformative it is to have women at the forefront of change.

Similarly, Neha Choudhry, Co-founder and Chief Idea Officer of Vikalp India, Being part of the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Women program has shown me the incredible power of a community where women actively support and inspire one another in business. This vibrant network of entrepreneurs is more than a community; it is a catalyst for growth and resilience. The training and insights I gained have been invaluable, but the ongoing collaboration and mentorship within this group have been transformative.

When women come together, we amplify our strengths, share solutions, and break barriers that once seemed insurmountable. It's about



Gangarani Mayengbam, Founder & Director

building a culture of collaboration where individual wins become collective achievements. Additionally, homeschooling, as an alternative learning model, can be especially beneficial to many girls, enabling them to access education despite societal or logistical challenges. Through this community, I've experienced firsthand how mentorship and shared experiences can empower women to lead with confidence and innovation. Together, we are shaping a future where women entrepreneurs thrive, creating not just businesses but also lasting impact.

The journey of Gangarani Mayengbam, Founder Director at 3C IT Solutions & Telecoms, adds another layer to this narrative. "Coming from a small village in Manipur, I have always felt a deep connection to my roots and a strong desire to give back to my people. My journey has shown me that with perseverance and hard work, anyone can achieve greatness, regardless of their background.

Women supporting women in business is a powerful force that creates opportunities, fosters

growth, and breaks barriers. My experiences, from humble beginnings to leading a successful enterprise, highlight the immense value of collaboration and mentorship among women.

In industries where women are still underrepresented, uplifting one another becomes even more vital. When women come together, they share knowledge, inspire each other to dream big, and create opportunities that drive meaningful change. Each act of support—whether it's offering guidance, sharing resources, or encouraging someone—has the potential to create a ripple effect of progress and success.

Throughout my career, I have seen how women's leadership brings fresh ideas, collaborative strength, and innovative solutions. Supporting one another isn't just about individual success; it's about building a future where women lead with confidence, determination, and unwavering support for each other."

These remarkable women highlight a universal truth: when women come together, their collective strength transforms not only businesses but also communities and industries. The power of women supporting women lies in its ability to inspire, innovate, and lead with compassion and determination. Together, they are building a future where barriers are broken, opportunities are multiplied, and success becomes a shared celebration.

The journey of these leaders reminds us all of the limitless potential of collaboration. By championing each other, women are shaping a world where entrepreneurship thrives, communities flourish, and dreams know no boundaries.

Letting Go of Self-Criticism



DR CHANDNI TUGNAIT

Self-criticism, while often viewed as a motivator for self-improvement, frequently acts as an invisible barrier to personal growth and emotional well-being. This internal dialogue of harsh judgment creates patterns of negative thinking that can significantly impact mental health, relationships, and overall life satisfaction. Understanding and addressing self-criticism becomes crucial for developing a healthier relationship with oneself, particularly in today's high-pressure environment, where personal and professional demands continuously increase.

Let's explore the essential dimensions of self-criticism that shape our internal experience-

● **The root of self-critical behavior:** Self-criticism typically develops as a protective mechanism, ironically designed to shield us from external criticism by beating others to the punch. These patterns often form during early life experiences, where high expectations, perfectionist tendencies, or perceived failures shape our self-evaluation methods. This internal critic becomes an automatic response to situations, creating a cycle of negative self-talk that can persist for years without intervention. Cultural and societal pressures often reinforce these patterns, making them seem normal or even necessary for success.

● **Physical and professional impact:** The toll of persistent self-criticism extends beyond mental well-being. Physical manifestations frequently appear through stress-related symptoms like headaches, digestive issues, and sleep disturbances. In professional settings, individuals often become increasingly hesitant to take risks or showcase their abilities, fearing potential failure or judgment. This can lead to missed opportunities for advancement, reduced job satisfaction, and strained

workplace relationships. The constant state of self-judgment can also impair decision-making abilities and creative thinking.

● **The self-compassion alternative:** Developing self-compassion proves crucial in overcoming self-criticism. This approach doesn't mean embracing mediocrity but rather treating oneself with the same understanding typically extended to friends or loved ones. When encountering setbacks, the practice involves responding with understanding rather than harsh judgment. Self-compassion allows for acknowledging mistakes while maintaining a sense of self-worth and motivation for improvement. This balanced approach leads to more sustainable personal

situations that trigger self-criticism

Develop mindfulness practices to create space between thoughts and reactions, allowing for more conscious responses to challenges

BREAKING THE PATTERN

The transformation requires viewing setbacks as natural parts of the learning process rather than confirmation of self-critical beliefs. Many report improved creativity, stronger professional confidence, and more authentic personal relationships as they develop healthier self-dialogue patterns. This process involves continuous practice and patience, as well as understanding that



growth and resilience.

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

Create a "success journal" documenting daily achievements, no matter how small, focusing on progress rather than perfection

Conduct regular "thought audits" to identify and challenge negative self-talk patterns, questioning the validity of self-critical assumptions

Implement a "three-perspective rule" when facing perceived failures, examining situations from past, present, and future viewpoints

Set realistic benchmarks rather than demanding perfection, breaking larger goals into manageable steps

Practice mood monitoring to track progress and improvements, noting

changing long-established thought patterns takes time and consistent effort.

The journey to releasing self-criticism leads to greater emotional resilience, improved self-awareness, and a more balanced approach to personal development. This shift allows for maintaining high standards while fostering growth in a supportive internal environment, ultimately enhancing both personal well-being and professional success. Remember, the goal isn't to eliminate all self-evaluation but to transform harsh criticism into constructive self-reflection, creating a foundation for sustainable personal growth and lasting positive change.

Dr Chandni Tugnait, MD (A.M) Psychotherapist, Life Alchemist, Coach & Healer, Founder & Director, Gateway of Healing

A surge in respiratory illnesses among children aged 6-13 in Delhi

TDG NETWORK

~ Viral infections such as RSV, flu, and pneumonia, allergy-related problems affecting both skin and respiration, and asthma exacerbation are commonly seen in children visiting the OPD-

There is a significant rise in respiratory illnesses among children aged 6-13, with viral infections such as respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), flu, pneumonia, and allergy-related problems affecting both skin and respiration. There has been a notable uptick in asthma exacerbations among children. Most children come to the OPD with symptoms such as runny nose, decreased appetite, coughing, sneezing, fever, body pain,

fatigue, cough with phlegm, and sore throat. The prevention strategies include maintaining good personal hygiene, eating a nutritious diet, wearing masks, social distancing, hand sanitizing, and regular check-ups with the doctor. Parents should stay vigilant when it comes to their child's well-being by following the proper vaccination schedule.

The alarming spike in air pollution and smog blanketing Delhi is not just a visible haze, but a silent threat to the children's health. As particulate matter (pm) toxic gases from vehicle emissions and industrial activities accumulate in the air, there's a disturbing rise in respiratory illnesses and skin problems among children.



"The air pollution and smog engulfing Delhi is wreaking havoc on the child's health, by raising the risk of respiratory and skin ailments. Viral infections like RSV, influenza, and pneumonia are rampant, manifesting as runny noses, persistent coughs, and fevers in children aged 6-13. Allergy-related issues are skyrocketing, affecting both the skin and respiratory systems. Most concerning is the spikes in asthma exacerbations, leaving children gasping for breath. Children are complain-

ing of decreased appetite, incessant sneezing, body aches, cough with phlegm, fatigue, and sore throats. Skin problems include dry skin, rashes, and allergies that will also require timely intervention. While the recent school closures have slightly decreased the number of cases, we're still treating 2-3 patients daily for these conditions," said Dr Sanjay Wazir, Medical Director (NCR)- Neonatology and Paediatrics, Motherhood Hospitals, Gurgaon

Dr Sanjay added, "It is essential for parents to follow the treatment plan recommended by the doctor, avoid self-medication, ensure their children practice good hygiene, maintain a balanced diet rich in vitamins, and

get adequate sleep. Likewise, regular hand washing, wearing masks in crowded places, and keeping children home when they show symptoms are crucial preventive measures. Moreover, children should avoid crowded places, and being around sick people. Parents should stick to the vaccination schedule by giving the child pneumococcal and influenza vaccines and opt for air purifiers at home to help children breathe freely. Those children with pre-existing asthma should keep the medication and inhaler handy. In case of skin problems, it is essential to use doctor-approved products. Children should stay indoors when the air quality outside is poor."

WHAT DO I MEAN BY 'GOD'?



MANDA PATEL

Even though I have been meditating for more than 43 years, in my early teens I never thought I would be looking for God. As I approached adulthood, some pressure was put on me to make some decisions and choices about how I wanted to live my life. I began to seriously consider the options. Being of Indian origin, though born and raised in the UK, one of the options was to

have an arranged marriage and bring up a family of my own. There was some part of me that did not find that particularly appealing, and I felt that life had more to give, and I had more to give to life, than creating a small world that would be very confining, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. It just so happened that my mother embarked on a spiritual journey at the very time I was to consider my future. I went along to the Brahma Kumaris with her, and it was there that so many things were clarified for me, not least of which was, who and what is God. I discovered through my own deep experiences what an amazing and incredible personality that Supreme Being is. The trajectory of my life became crystal clear, and I embarked on the spiritual quest to deepen my understanding of, and develop an intimate relationship with, God.



Technically, my religion was Hindu and the notion of God within that religion is

not a singular one, but that there are many gods. Growing up, I did not delve very

deeply into those multiple gods, but always had the sense that there IS a God,

but not who or what it was. It was with the Brahma Kumaris that I learned of God

as a Spiritual Being, an immense energy with a personality of unconditional love, profound peace, compassion, and mercy. I cannot claim after all this time that I completely understand this Being. But I know it to be true for me, that whenever or wherever I need to experience the love of the Divine, that holds me in an unconditional embrace, I only have to turn my mind to the Being I have spent over 40 years refining my relationship with. This truth of God is available to me at any time or in any place – just a thought away. All I have to do is hold that energy in my heart and in such a way that I become that. Then I must reflect that through the quality of my actions, interactions, thoughts, and feelings.

The whole journey really is to remove all that gets in the way of my experiencing God's energy. To remain untainted by the physical

world around me and to be truly present with my spiritual self that is, in a way, identical to that of God. To allow nothing to divert me from that, even though I may continue to have vestiges of the acquired self, that is, my personality. That acquired personality is not really who I am. I am that pure life force, that consciousness that resides inside this physical body. God does not have an acquired personality, because He is always peace, always unconditional love, and never takes ownership of anything physical.

This most beautiful journey is to recognise what happens to my consciousness when I engage with that eternally unchanging, Spiritual Force of love and light.

Manda Patel is a Rajyoga teacher based at the Brahma Kumaris Global Retreat Centre, Oxford, UK.

The intellect and devotion on the spiritual path



B.K. USHA

It is said that God rewards those who remember Him with love. Devotional feelings play an important role in our spiritual progress, acting as a bridge between the physical and the spiritual realms. These feelings, often expressed as love, reverence, gratitude, and surrender to a higher power, contribute significantly to our spiritual journey.

Devotion fosters a deep, personal connection with the Divine. Feelings of love and reverence take us beyond intellectual understanding to a heart-centred relationship with God, allowing us to experience His presence more intimately, making the spiritual path not just an intellectual pursuit but an experiential journey.

Intellectual effort alone is insufficient for complete

spiritual progress. Such effort primarily engages the mind, but spiritual growth requires transformation at the level of the heart and soul. While the intellect can help us understand spiritual concepts and teachings, it does not inherently change our character or emotional state. Spiritual progress involves cultivating virtues like compassion, humility, love, and forgiveness, which transcend intellectual knowledge and require inner experiences and emotional growth.

The intellect is limited by human biases, conditioning, and the constraints of logical reasoning. Indeed, on the spiritual path, the intellect can become an obstacle if it leads to over-analysis, attachment to ideas, or attachment to the ego. Intellectual understanding of spiritual principles can even lead to spiritual pride, where one may feel superior to others based on one's knowledge, creating a sense of separation rather than unity. This is the opposite of the spiritual ideals of humility, service, and recognizing all souls as children of God and thereby part of one spiritual family.

When we try to test spiritual principles with intellectual tools meant for the worldly



Devotional feelings are integral to spiritual progress, as they nurture a genuine relationship with God.

realm, the results might fall short of our expectations because those truths cannot be proved with formulaic thinking. They are meant to be experienced – thereby you can prove them to yourself, but you cannot prove them to others through argument or reasoning. It is said that seeing is believing, and we are warned not to believe anything with

blind faith. Spiritual truths are 'seen', or experienced, by the mind and the heart, not the physical eyes. What is called for is not blind faith, but a little humility and an open mind. When we approach spiritual truths cynically, with doubt and scepticism, we create a mental barrier that stops us from experiencing their purity and power. A little faith is re-

quired initially for us to experience, accept, and benefit from spiritual knowledge. Some doubt that spiritual experiences are real, and that they are only tricks played by the mind. If that is the case, why not set aside the doubt for some time and see what I get from my spiritual experience? If it helps me, over time, to become a better person – more peaceful, stable, resilient, and happier, is that a gain or a loss?

While the intellect can guide and clarify, it is the heart's devotion and the willingness to surrender to a higher power that catalyses deep spiritual growth and direct experience of the Divine. True spiritual progress is reflected in the transformation of our character, actions, and perceptions, which the intellect alone cannot bring about.

Moreover, devotion purifies the heart by directing our emotions towards love and service. Negative emotions such as anger, jealousy, and pride are gradually replaced by compassion, empathy, and patience. The cultivation of positive emotional qualities helps remove inner obstacles, making space for spiritual virtues like kindness, forgiveness, and inner peace. A heart thus purified is more attuned to spiri-

tual truths.

Devotion can even transform the experience of suffering. In the face of hardships and challenges, devotional feelings allow us to see suffering as part of a divine plan, and our faith provides us solace and strength. This spiritual resilience enables us to rise above temporary pain and focus on the greater purpose of life.

A practical benefit of devotion is greater focus. In prayer and meditation, devotional feelings provide the emotional intensity needed for deep concentration. The heart's devotion fuels the mind's focus, allowing us to transcend distractions and enter deeper states of meditation or communion with the Divine.

In essence, while intellectual effort is important for understanding spiritual teachings and concepts, devotional feelings are integral to spiritual progress, as they nurture a genuine relationship with God, foster emotional purity, and inspire selfless action. Through devotion, we can transcend the ego and cultivate virtues, transforming our inner and outer lives, and ultimately realize our highest potential.

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A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

We collect possessions like clothes, books, furniture, and other things. At some point my closets become full of unused items and I find myself living in a cluttered environment. I can also become cluttered spiritually, with a collection of worries, doubts and sorrow. I can clean my spiritual clutter in the same way a good spring cleaning helps me declutter my physical closets. To clean my inner closets, I must let go of emotional baggage and rearrange my thinking to a higher, more spiritual level. Today let me clean my inner closets and free myself from spiritual and emotional clutter.

The power of purity



B.K. SHEILU

Spiritual teachings assert that purity is one of the greatest powers one can have. What does this mean?

Power is generally understood as the ability to exert control over others or shape circumstances according to one's will. Such power is typically derived from sources such as wealth, status, political or social influence, or physical strength. Those who possess this power tend to have more security, success, and recognition. They can influence societies, corporations, and governments. Purity does not figure anywhere in this picture, so how

does it count as a power?

Purity is a spiritual quality and it operates subtly, so it is not easily recognised as a power. Complete purity includes pure intentions, feelings, thoughts, and actions. When there is such purity, our behaviour is informed by it.

A pure mind is free from the influence of weaknesses such as greed, ego, anger, and selfishness. Decisions taken by one with a pure mind would, therefore, not be tainted by any of these flaws: they will be reasonable, and not meant to harm anyone's interests. There are situations where people must compromise and give up or share resources or privileges in the best interest of everyone. But if the motive is pure, it fosters trust, and there is willingness to cooperate and collaborate. It is in the absence of purity that problems arise. If someone's intentions are suspect, others do not trust them, and are unwilling to cooperate. This creates tension in relationships which,



The transformative power of purity enables the soul to transcend the need to resort to gross forms of power.

if not managed prudently, can lead to conflict. It is in such situations that power, as it is understood by most people, is manifested in the

form of argument, coercion, threats, and tough actions. These are gross expressions of power that come into play when the power of purity is

lacking. Purity fosters within us several spiritual powers or abilities – the power to discern, to tolerate, accommo-

date, make the right decisions, and to face adversity. Spiritual power grows when we are aligned to a higher purpose, to divine will and

universal laws. While power in the worldly sense can be exploitative, hierarchical, and possessive, spiritual power is inherently ethical, as it is based on inner peace, humility, and love. The more we tap into it, the less we seek to dominate or control; instead, we are able to serve

form of assertive leadership, authority, or physical prowess, but it can be felt through the gentle and reassuring presence and energy of the individual.

Purity and the spiritual powers born of it uplift us to a higher plane of consciousness where our enlightened

While power in the worldly sense can be exploitative, hierarchical, and possessive, spiritual power is inherently ethical, as it is based on inner peace, humility, and love. The more we tap into it, the less we seek to dominate or control; instead, we are able to serve and inspire others.

and inspire others. And unlike worldly power, which may be exercised in arbitrary ways, creating divisions and inequalities, spiritual power fosters compassion, empathy, and mutual respect. Genuine spiritual power enables us to serve others without seeking recognition or control. Spiritual power may not be visible in the

choices and conduct obviate divisions and conflict. In other words, the subtle but transformative power of purity enables the soul to transcend the need to resort to gross forms of power. That is the power of purity.

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AUSTRALIA IN COMMANDING POSITION AT MELBOURNE

TDG NETWORK
MELBOURNE

A comeback spell from pacer Scott Boland put a screeching halt to India's rebuilding efforts by Yashasvi Jaiswal and Virat Kohli as the visitors were left five wickets down at the end of the second day's play of fourth Test against Australia at Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) on Friday.

At the end of the day's play, India stood at 164/5, with Ravindra Jadeja (6*) and Rishabh Pant (4*) unbeaten at the crease, facing a mounting task of trailing 310 runs.

India started the final session at 51/2, with Yashasvi Jaiswal (23*) being joined by Virat Kohli.

Jaiswal and Virat started to build a partnership, reaching the 100-run mark in 28.5 overs, thanks to a cracking boundary from Jaiswal.

Jaiswal reached his half-century, his ninth in Tests, in 81 balls, with seven fours.

Jaiswal upped the scoring rate after reaching his half-century and even Virat was looking in nice touch.

The century stand between the duo ended with a horrible mixup leading to Jaiswal being run out for 82 in 118 balls, with 11 fours and a six. India was 153/3 in 41 overs.

After that, India lost two quick wickets, with Virat falling to Scott Boland for 36 in 86 balls, with four boundaries. Once again the outside off-stump ball came into effect. Akash Deep, who came as a nightwatchman, was also dismissed for a duck, leaving India reeling at 159/5 in 44.3 overs.



BRIEF SCORES

Australia: 454/7 (Steve Smith 139*, Marnus Labuschagne 72, Jasprit Bumrah 3/97) vs India: 164/5 (Yashasvi Jaiswal 82, Virat Kohli 36, Scott Boland 2/24).

The pair of Rishabh Pant and Ravindra Jadeja ensured India didn't any further wickets in the day.

Earlier in the day, Australia started the second session on 454/7, with Steve Smith (139*) and Mitchell Starc (15*) unbeaten.

Ravindra Jadeja struck in the first over of the session, cleaning up Starc for 15. Australia was 455/8.

In the very next over, Smith faced an unfortunate dismissal at the hands of Akash Deep as the ball caught the inside edge of his bat and went crashing into the stumps while Smith travelled too

far from his crease. He went back for 140 in 197 balls, with 13 fours and three sixes. Australia was 455/9 in 114.1 overs. Nathan Lyon and Scott Boland stretched the innings further until trapped Lyon for 13 runs to end the innings at 474.

Bumrah (4/99) was the leading wicket-taker for India, while Jadeja also took three wickets. Akash Deep got two while Washington Sundar got one scalp.

The Indian batting was started by Yashasvi Jaiswal and skipper Rohit Sharma, who returned to the top of the order. However, his return to the top order was not memorable as a mistimed shot saw him spoon a catch to Boland at mid-on for just three runs. India was 8/1 in two overs.

Jaiswal was joined by KL Rahul, batting at number three. Both played some fine shots against Australian pacers. Rahul played some fine

drives through the covers and looked solid, like he has been throughout the series. India reached the 50-run mark in 13.1 overs.

However, on the last ball of the session, Cummins picked up KL Rahul for 24 in 42 balls, with two fours.

At the end of the first session, Australia was 454/7, with Smith (139*) and Mitchell Starc (15*) unbeaten. India simply did not have answers for Australian batters as 143 runs came in the session at a run rate of over five per over.

Australia started the day on 311/6, with Steve Smith (68*) and skipper Pat Cummins (8*) unbeaten.

Smith and Cummins took the game on against Indian bowlers and runs came briskly, with first 10 overs giving away 48 runs, concluding with an atrocious over by Akash Deep, which saw the duo smash him for three fours.

Bumrah bowls his most expensive spell of Test career

TDG NETWORK
MELBOURNE

In a rare bad day at work, Indian pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah delivered the most expensive over of his Test career during the second day of the fourth Test against Australia at Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) on Friday.

During the match, Bumrah, known for his pin-point yorkers and troubling line and lengths, was dominated like never seen before by Aussie batters. It all started with the debutant 19-year-old Sam Konstas playing some audacious shots, including a reverse ramp against Bumrah. Perhaps it was the surprise element that led to Bumrah conceding sixes against Konstas, for the first time ever after over 4,400 balls and since 2021.



But the rest of the Australian batting line-up took some notes from Konstas' carnage and a total of four sixes were hit against Bumrah, including one each by Steve Smith and Mitchell Starc. He ended with four wickets for 99 runs in 28.4 overs, his most expensive spell in terms of runs. His economy rate was 3.45. His previous most expen-

sive spell in terms of runs was against New Zealand in February 2020 at Wellington, where he took 1/88 in 26.5 overs at an economy rate of 3.38.

Bumrah is the leading wicket-taker in the ongoing Border-Gavaskar Trophy with 25 wickets in four matches at an average of 13.12, with two four-wicket hauls and two five-wicket hauls to his

name in seven innings. His best haul is 6/76.

Australia won the toss and elected to bat first. Half-centuries from Konstas (60 in 65 balls, with six fours and two sixes), Usman Khawaja (57 in 121 balls, with six fours), Marnus Labuschagne (72 in 145 balls, with seven fours) and Steve Smith (68*) justified the decision with their fine knocks, pushing Australia to 311/6 at the day one end despite India taking some quick wickets.

On day two, Smith scored a century and had a 112-run stand with skipper Pat Cummins (49 in 63 balls, with seven fours) which helped Australia end the first session at 454/7. In the second session, Smith was dismissed for 140 in 197 balls, with 13 fours and three sixes and Australia was bowled out for 474 runs.

Smith reacts to watching Konstas executing ramp shot against Bumrah

TDG NETWORK
MELBOURNE

Steven Smith was all in praise of young Sam Konstas, especially after witnessing him perfectly executing ramp shots off India's "national treasure" Jasprit Bumrah on the opening day of the fourth Border-Gavaskar Trophy Test at the iconic MCG.

The 19-year-old was called into the squad in place of Nathan McSweeney, who put in a shift to pile up runs across his name in the opening three Tests but eventually failed to deliver. With McSweeney faded away from the squad, Konstas had an uphill task to open for Australia in front

of a sell-out crowd against a proven Indian pace attack.

Konstas was exemplary throughout his stay on the crease and became a cherished face among the Australian fans. He made the headlines with a sublime ramp shot off Bumrah, declaring his intent to be aggressive even against the brand-new red ball. Smith, who witnessed the thrashing of the Indian pacers, didn't shy away from expressing his excitement and said in the post-day press conference, "I don't think much phases the young kid as we said yesterday he was reverse ramping Bumrah and I was having a heart attack in the box."

Shuttler Lakshya sails into semi-finals of King Cup

TDG NETWORK
SHENZHEN

India's Lakshya Sen came up with a spirited performance to overcome Hong Kong China's Angus Ng Ka Long in three games and sail into the semi-finals of the inaugural King Cup International Badminton Open here on Friday.

The 12th ranked Indian, who narrowly missed out on a bronze medal at the Paris Olympics after losing the playoff, defeated his 30-year-old opponent 10-21, 21-13, 21-13.

It was a slow start for Lakshya, but once he got things going against the 17th-ranked opponent, he won the next two games with ease

to beat Long for the first time in four attempts.

The 23-year-old from Al-mora, who ended a title-drought with his triumph at the Syed Modi Super 300 tournament in Lucknow earlier this month, is among eight leading shuttlers in the world competing for the top prize in the three-day event.

The tournament is the brainchild of two-time Olympic champion Lin Dan of China.

Paris Olympics silver medalist Kunlavut Vitidsarn of Thailand and world number 2 Anders Antonsen of Denmark are the highest-ranked players in the competition, which will not offer any ranking points as it is not part of the BWF calendar.

BEST MOMENTS OF INDIAN SPORTS IN 2024



Yukun Liu of China wins gold, Serhiy Kulish of Ukraine wins silver and India's Swapnil Kusale wins bronze in the 50m rifle 3 positions men's final in the Olympic Games Paris 2024.

Deepti Sharma's brilliant all-round performances guide India to series win; clean sweeps West Indies 3-0

AGENCIES
VADODARA

All-rounder Deepti Sharma's outstanding performance with both bat and ball powered India Women to a victory over West Indies Women in the third and final match of the ODI series at the Kotambi Stadium in Vadodara on Friday.

With this win, the Women in Blue completed a clean sweep of the Caribbeans in the three-match series.

Chasing a modest target of 163 runs, openers Smriti Mandhana and Pratika Rawal started the innings for the hosts. The duo managed a partnership of 22 runs before Mandhana was dismissed for just four runs.

At a score of 23, India lost



BRIEF SCORES

West Indies Women: 162 all out (Chinelle Henry 61, Shemaine Campbelle 46, Deepti Sharma 6/31) India Women: 167/5 in 28.2 overs (Deepti Sharma 39*, Harmanpreet Kaur 32, Deandra Dottin 1/27).

their second wicket as Harleen Deol, who had scored a century in the previous match, was dismissed for

only one run. After the loss of two quick wickets, skipper Harmanpreet Kaur joined Pratika Rawal at the crease.

The pair added 32 runs before Pratika was dismissed for 18 runs, which included four boundaries, leaving the team score at 55. Harmanpreet Kaur was the fourth wicket to fall at the team score of 73 in the 13th over. Deepti Sharma then came out to bat alongside Jemimah Rodrigues.

The duo stitched together a 56-run partnership before Jemimah was dismissed for 29 runs in the 25th over. India sealed the win in the 29th over with five wickets in hand. Deepti Sharma remained unbeaten on 39 runs off 48 balls, hitting three fours and a six. Meanwhile, wicketkeeper-batter Richa Ghosh scored a quickfire 23 not out off just 11 balls, including three sixes and one four.

Sporting icons pay glorious tributes to former PM



"Zamana kar na saka unke kad ka andaaza, wo aasman tha magar sar jhuka ke chalta tha. A salute to the former Prime Minister of the country, Dr. Manmohan Singh Ji. paying my respects, may God give peace to his soul."

- Sakshi Malik



"Dr Manmohan Singh ji's demise is a profound loss for India. His contributions to our nation shall always be remembered. My prayers are with his family and loved ones as we mourn his passing away. Om Shanti."

- Sachin Tendulkar



"Rest in peace, Dr. Mannoban Singhji. His quiet strength, wisdom, and humility were truly inspiring. I had a brief interaction with him in 2013 - he was kind, gracious, and left a lasting impression. My heartfelt condolences to his family,"

- PV Sindhu



I am deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Dr. Manmohan Singh ji. I had the privilege of meeting him after my Olympic win in 2008, and I will always remember his humility, wisdom, and quiet strength. His leadership was defined by a long-term vision for India's growth, and his contributions continue to shape our nation today.

- Abhinav Bindra