



4
DIASPORA HAS MADE INDIA PROUD, HELPED BOOST TIES: JAISHANKAR



11
IMRAN WARNS OF PLAN TO IMPOSE 10-YEAR DICTATORSHIP IN PAKISTAN



16
WOMEN'S ODI: INDIA BEAT IRELAND

PM Modi outlines vision for Viksit Bharat

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi outlined his vision of 'Viksit Bharat' emphasising on a 'problem free' India and 100 percent delivery of government schemes.

Speaking in a podcast with Zerodha Co-founder Nikhil Kamath, PM Modi said that his morale and dreams have grown in the third term. Sharing his vision of 'Viksit Bharat' he added that problems like toilets, water, electricity should be resolved by 2047.

When Kamath asked him if he has planned for the

time beyond him, training those he has faith in, not for today but after 20-30 years, Modi said, "I can see people with a lot of potential. When I was in Gujarat, I would say that I want to go after preparing (team) for the next 20 years. I am doing it. My success lies in how I prepare my team who will be able to deftly handle things. This is my benchmark for me."

He said politics needs continuous entry of good people who put mission over ambition, and summarised his ideology as "nation first".

Asked if he sees such potential in any young politi-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a conversation with Zerodha Co-Founder Nikhil Kamath during a podcast, in New Delhi on Friday.

cian, he said they are many of them.

"They toil, they work with a mission. If I say a name it will be injustice to many others. There are a lot of names and faces in front of me. I know details of a lot of people but it is my responsibility to not do injustice to others," he added.

"In the first term, the people were trying to understand me and I was trying to understand Delhi. In the second term, I used to think from the perspective of the past. In the third term, my thinking has changed, my morale is high and my dreams have grown. The essence of what

I'm saying is that I want 2047 to be Viksit Bharat. Which means everything should be free of problems. Toilets should be built for everyone. Electricity should be available for everyone. Water from taps should be available for everyone. Does the common man have to beg from their own government? Is this a British rule? It is his right. There should be 100% delivery of government schemes. Beneficiaries should get their due," PM Modi said.

PM Modi believed AI, which he described as "Aspirational India" will be the driving force behind

achieving his vision of 'Viksit Bharat'.

"There should be 100% delivery of govt schemes. This is real social justice and secularism. The driving force behind this is - AI-Aspirational India." PM Modi said.

PM Modi highlighted the necessity of stepping out of ones comfort zone in order to achieve success. He said that person must have a risk-taking capacity.

"The life I have lived I find joy in the smallest of things. I am happy with what I have. I think people fail in life because they become accustomed to

SAMBHAL MOSQUE WELL ROW: SC ORDERS STATUS QUO

Asks UP govt, Archaeological Survey of India and others not to take steps over a 'private well' near the Mughal-era Jama Masjid mosque

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Ordering a status quo, the Supreme Court on Friday asked the Uttar Pradesh authorities, the Archaeological Survey of India and others not to take steps over a "private well" near the Mughal-era Jama Masjid mosque in Sambhal.

The court directed that the notice issued by the Sambhal Nagar Palika regarding the well outside the Sambhal mosque should not be executed.

A bench of Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar issued notice to the Uttar Pradesh government and sought a status report from it within two weeks on an application filed by the Committee of Management, Shahi Jama Masjid, Sambhal.

The Mosque Committee has sought direction from the District Magistrate to ensure that the status quo is maintained with respect to the private well situated near the stairs/entrance of the mosque.

During the hearing, the

KEY POINTS

- Seeks status report from UP govt within two weeks
- UP govt tells court situation "very peaceful"
- November 2024, the top court stayed the trial court proceedings in the case
- Tensions in Sambhal had simmered after the local court ordered a survey of the mosque
- Opposing the survey, people clashed with police, resulting in the death of four persons.
- The survey followed a petition claiming that the site of the mosque was previously a Harihar temple



bench observed that there is no harm if someone else uses the well from outside the mosque.

"There is no harm if someone uses the well from outside, you have covered the well and let them use it, what is the harm?" asked CJI Khanna from counsel appearing for the committee.

The observation of the top court came after senior advo-

cate Huzefa Ahmadi, representing the mosque committee, brought the attention of the bench to the notice issued by Nagar Palika.

To which the bench asked what was the harm in allowing others to use the well.

"Now what they say is, in the notice it is called 'Hari Mandir', now they will start using it for pooja, bathing

Krishna Janmabhoomi case: SC 'disinclined' to interfere with HC order

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday expressed disinclination to interfere with the Allahabad High Court's order to consolidate or club all suits relating to the Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Eidgah dispute and hear them together.

A bench of Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna and Justice PV Sanjay Kumar said that clubbing all suits/ applications related to the case and hearing them together will benefit both sides in the case since it will avoid multiple proceedings.

The bench, however, did not pass any order and adjourned the matter for April's first week.

"Why should we interfere in the issue of consolidation? What difference does it make if it is consolidated? It is to your benefit and their benefit also that multiple proceedings are avoided. We will adjourn this. I do not know why everything needs to be contested. Re-list in the first week of April 2025," said CJI Khanna to counsel appearing for the Committee of Management Trust Shahi Idgah.

The top court has seized several petitions relating to the Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Eidgah mosque dispute.

The controversy is related to the Shahi Eidgah mosque at Mathura, which is alleged to have been built after demolishing the temple at the birthplace of Lord Krishna.

The civil suit was filed on behalf of a Hindu deity Bhagwan Shri Krishna Virajman and certain Hindu devotees claiming the mosque was built over Krishna Janmabhoomi land and sought its removal from its current site.

Haryana sacks women's panel vice-chief after her arrest on bribery charges

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH



The Haryana government on Friday terminated the services of Sonia Aggarwal, vice-chairperson of the Haryana State Commission for Women, following her arrest on bribery charges. The action comes nearly a month after Aggarwal and her driver were allegedly caught red-handed by the state Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) while allegedly demanding and accepting a bribe of Rs 1 lakh.

Aggarwal was accused of soliciting the bribe from a teacher to settle a case related to his marital dispute. The ACB also apprehended Aggarwal's personal secretary, Kuldeep, during the sting operation. Both were arrested from Aggarwal's residence.

The dismissal order, issued by Amneet P Kumar, Commissioner and Secretary of the Haryana Women and Child Development Department, stated, "As

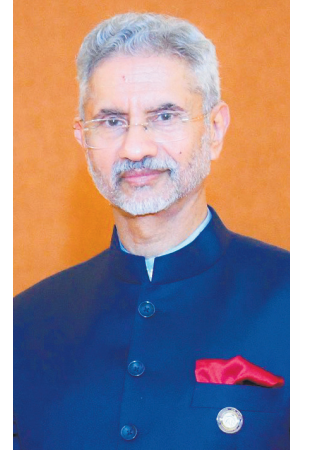
Jaishankar: Diaspora has made India proud

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday, lauded the contributions of the Indian diaspora and stated that they have left an "indelible mark" on the global society.

Addressing at the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards Ceremony on Friday, Jaishankar stated that the people of Indian origin are holding political offices and leading organisations, the EAM said that their "extraordinary achievements" have made Indians proud and have bolstered India's ties with other countries.

DETAILS P4



"Indian diaspora have left an indelible mark on global society"

SKM calls meet to forge united front to strengthen protest

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

In a significant move towards unity, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) has called for a critical meeting on January 15 in Patiala, with a focus to address differences among farmer unions and discuss the unity resolution passed during the Moga Mahapanchayat held earlier this month.

The call for solidarity comes as a delegation to SKM leaders visited Khanauri border where farmer

leader Daljit Singh Dallelwal is on fast unto death for the past 46 days.

Emphasizing the urgency of collective action, a six-member SKM delegation, accompanied by a 101-member farmers' group met leaders of the Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Morcha and SKM (Non-Political) at the Khanauri border. The meeting aimed to iron out internal differences and reaffirm their shared goal.

DETAILS P2



Colourful kites are ready for sale at a kite shop for the upcoming 'Makar Sankranti festival', in Nagpur on Friday. ANI

Family of 5 wiped out, rivalry suspected

AGENCIES
MEERUT

A family of five people was found dead at their residence in Uttar Pradesh's Meerut, police said, adding that the bodies of a couple and three children were recovered from their home.

Vipin Tada, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Meerut, said that police rushed to the location after getting information on Thursday night, where they recovered five bodies from a house that was locked from outside.

The deceased were identified as Moin alias Moinuddin (52), his wife Asma (45), and their daughters Afsah (8), Aziza (4), and Adeeba



(1). According to the police, based on the initial impression, the deceased had injuries on their head and there was a possibility that the crime had been committed due to reasons of rivalry.

"At Lisari gate PS, we got information that five bodies have been recovered at a house. Police reached the

spot and the people said that the house had been locked from outside. Inside the house, there were bodies of a couple and their three children, it seems like they had been hit on the head with a blunt object," SSP Tada said

The actual cause for the deaths will be revealed only after the post-mortem report comes, he said.

"The actual cause (for the deaths) will be known once the post-mortem report comes. Prima facie it appears to be a crime committed due to rivalry and by someone known to the victims. Investigation is underway," the police officer said.

The bodies of the parents wrapped in sheets and their three children, the youngest one-year-old, stuffed in sacks and kept in a bed box, police said. Two persons were detained for the grisly murders that shocked this Uttar Pradesh town. Several suspects have also been taken into custody for the killing that came to light on Thursday night. The bodies of the parents were

'Steve Jobs's wife to visit Maha Kumbh'

AGENCIES
PRAYAGRAJ

Swami Kailashnand Ji Maharaj on Friday, confirmed that Laurene Powell, wife of late Apple co-founder Steve Jobs, will attend the upcoming Maha Kumbh 2025 in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj.

He said that they have given Laurene Powell a Hindu name, 'Kamala.'

"She is coming to visit her guru here. We have named her Kamala and she is like

P3

SKM CALLS MEET TO FORGE UNITED FRONT TO STRENGTHEN PROTEST

Meet to be held on Jan 15 at Patiala, leaders urged to overcome differences, focus on common goals

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

In a significant move towards unity, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) has called for a critical meeting on January 15 in Patiala, with a focus to address differences among farmer unions and discuss the unity resolution passed during the Moga Mahapanchayat held earlier this month.

The call for solidarity comes as a delegation to SKM leaders visited Khanauri border where farmer leader Daljit Singh Dallewal is on fast unto death for the past 46 days.

Emphasizing the urgency of collective action, a six-member SKM delegation, accompanied by a 101-member farmers' group met leaders of the Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Morcha and SKM (Non-Political) at the Khanauri border. The meeting aimed to iron out

CALL FOR SOLIDARITY

- Emphasizing the urgency of collective action, a six-member SKM delegation, accompanied by a 101-member farmers' group met leaders of the Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Morcha and SKM (Non-Political) at the Khanauri border.

- The meeting aimed to iron out internal differences and reaffirm their shared goal of addressing the Central Government's "pro-corporate policies."

- Kaka Singh Kotra, leader of SKM Non-Political, dismissed the government's claims of a divided farmer movement. "Today, we have taken a step towards forming a unified struggle, similar to the one during the 2020-21 protests. We hope all unions will come together," he said



door Sangharsh Morcha and SKM (Non-Political) at the Khanauri border. The meeting aimed to iron out

internal differences and reaffirm their shared goal of addressing the Central Government's "pro-corporate

policies." "Our target should be the central government. There should be no attempts to compete or compare with

each other," stated a resolution circulated by SKM.

Prominent leaders, including Balbir Singh Rajewal, Joginder Singh Ugrahan, and Dr. Darshan Pal, visited Dallewal to express solidarity and discuss a common minimum program. Rajewal stated, "The whole country, especially Punjab, is worried about Dallewal's health. It's time to forget our internal differences and fight this battle together."

Farmer leader Joginder Singh Ugrahan emphasized the importance of disciplined communication, urging leaders to avoid media statements that could spark divisions.

Kaka Singh Kotra, leader of SKM Non-Political, dismissed the government's claims of a divided farmer movement.

SAD accepts Sukhbir Badal's resignation as party president

TARUNI GANDHI
CHANDIGARH



The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) working committee on Friday accepted Sukhbir Singh Badal's resignation as the party president, marking a significant development in the ongoing tensions between the party and the Akal Takht.

The decision follows a strong stance taken by the Akal Takht Jathedar during a meeting with SAD leaders earlier this week, where he criticized the delay in implementing his directions for the party's reorganization. SAD spokesperson Daljeet Singh Cheema announced the acceptance of the resignation after the committee's meeting.

The SAD had previously contended that its status as a political party registered under the Constitution required it to maintain a secular framework, which they argued could conflict with following directives from the Akal

The decision follows a strong stance taken by the Akal Takht Jathedar during a meeting with SAD leaders earlier this week, where he criticized the delay in implementing his directions for the party's reorganization.

Takht. However, the party eventually bowed to the pressure from the supreme temporal seat of Sikhism.

Sukhbir Singh Badal had ceased active leadership of the SAD on August 30, 2022, transferring responsibilities to the working committee under Balwinder Singh Bhundar. On November 16 of the same year,

Badal formally resigned from the presidency, reportedly ahead of facing religious reprimand from the Akal Takht.

This development underscores the growing influence of the Akal Takht in guiding the SAD's organizational decisions, further intertwining religious and political dynamics within the party.

Punjab govt rejects Centre's agricultural marketing draft policy

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

The Punjab government has rejected the central government's Agriculture Mandi Policy blueprint, citing concerns over its provisions that undermine the state's agricultural system, including issues related to private mandis, minimum support price (MSP), and commission agent rights, a statement

support price (MSP), and rural infrastructure.

Citing the rights of the state under Article 246 of the Indian Constitution, Punjab emphasised that agriculture is a state subject, as per Entry 28 of the Seventh Schedule-2. The letter urged the central government to reconsider the policy and leave such matters to the state, emphasising the need to address local agricultural challenges



said. A statement said that the Punjab government has formally rejected the central government's Agriculture Mandi Policy blueprint, calling it an attempt to reintroduce provisions from the three controversial agricultural laws that were repealed in 2021. In a letter sent to the central government, Punjab raised concerns about the proposed policy's impact on the state's agricultural landscape, particularly highlighting its provisions related to private mandis, minimum

and requirements. A statement highlighting the major objections raised by the Punjab government in the letter pertains to the complete absence of any mention of MSP in the new blueprint. MSP is seen as a critical factor for Punjab's farmers, and the lack of clarity on this issue has raised significant concerns. The blueprint also encourages the establishment of private mandis, which Punjab views as undermining its well-established mandi system.

Assam coal mine collapse: Rescue teams struggle to reach trapped workers

TDG NETWORK
DIMA HASAO

Five days after the coal mine collapse in Assam's remote Umrangso area, rescue teams seem to have made little progress, with eight workers still trapped underground.

Despite ongoing joint efforts by the Indian Army, Assam Rifles, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), and other agencies since January 6, major challenges persist, particularly in draining the water and safely reaching the trapped workers.

A heavy-duty pump from



Coal India, with a capacity of 500 GPM (Gallons Per Minute), has been brought in. An NDRF official mentioned that multiple pumps would be installed to drain the water from the mine.

NDRF 1st Battalion Commandant, HPS Kandhari, said, "Efforts are being made to pump out the water. One pump has been

installed, and more pumps have been brought. A heavy-duty pump has also arrived. NDRF is assisting in the process... it is a joint effort."

K Mere, General Manager of Northeastern Coal Field said that they have brought one high-capacity pump of 500 GPM from Nagpur, and it is being installed.

"We've also brought two generators to power this heavy pump. Installation will take about 24 hours to complete, and the installation work will continue in three shifts. The pump can drain 500 gallons of water per minute. We don't know the exact situation underground," Mere said.

Ex-Guv Raghubar Das returns to politics, re-joins BJP

TDG NETWORK
RANCHI

Former Odisha Governor Raghubar Das returned to active politics as he re-joined Bharatiya Janata Party on Friday in Ranchi.

Party's Jharkhand president Babul Marandi and others welcomed the former Jharkhand Chief Minister into the party.

Raghubar Das resigned from his post of governor on December 24. He was succeeded by Hari Babu Kambhampati, former governor of Mizoram.

Das return to active politics comes after BJP's loss in recently held Jharkhand Assembly election.



Hemant Soren-led JMM steered the INDIA bloc to victory with 56 seats in the 81-member Jharkhand assembly. The JMM won 34 seats, while its allies secured 22 seats.

Among the allies, the Congress won 16 seats, the RJD won four, and the CPI-ML won two seats. The BJP-led NDA won only 24 seats in Jharkhand.

ED raids 18 places in multi-crore bank fraud case involving RJD leader and ex-Bihar minister

TDG NETWORK
BIHAR

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday conducted search operations at 18 locations connected to Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader and former Bihar minister Alok Kumar Mehta in a multi-crore bank fraud case.

The raids are being conducted across Bihar, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, and Delhi in connection with an Rs 85 crore bank loan fraud involving the Vaishali



Shahri Vikas Co-operative Bank Ltd.

According to ED officers, the fraud was orchestrated through approximately

400 fraudulent loan accounts. "Funds were disbursed based on fabricated documents, including forged warehouse and Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) receipts."

The bank employees and other private persons who are the beneficiaries of the proceeds of crime and worked in connivance with Mehta and his associates are also covered in the search operations, said one of the officers privy to the devel-

opment.

"The investigation revealed the alleged involvement of bank employees and private individuals who conspired with Alok Kumar Mehta and his associates to siphon off the proceeds of the crime. These individuals are believed to have played key roles in facilitating the fraud and benefiting from the misappropriated funds," said the officer.

The ED's searches are aimed at uncovering addi-

tional evidence and tracking the flow of illicit money.

This case adds to the growing scrutiny of high-profile financial crimes in the country, with enforcement agencies tightening their grip on alleged perpetrators of economic offences.

Representing the Ujjairpur constituency as an RJD MLA, Mehta has been an influential figure in Bihar politics and is known for his close association with RJD supremo Lalu Prasad Yadav.

Army Air Defence Corps celebrates 32nd Corps Day

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Army Air Defence Corps commemorated its 32nd Corps Day on Friday with great pride and reverence. Established as an independent arm of the Indian Army after evolving from the Artillery, the Corps has played a pivotal role in safeguarding the nation's skies, an official release said.

To mark this significant occasion, a wreath-laying ceremony was held at the National War Memorial, India Gate, New Delhi. "Lieutenant General Sumer Ivan D'Cunha, SM, Director General & Colonel Commandant of the Corps, along with senior veterans and serving officers, paid homage to the brave martyrs who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. The event was graced by the presence of numerous serving officers, Junior Commissioned Officers (JCOs), and dignitaries, the release said. "The Corps of Army Air Defence stands as a testament to the Indian Army's unwavering commitment to excellence. Despite being one of the youngest arms, it has excelled in its mission of ground-based air defence, demonstrating exceptional courage and professionalism in all wars fought against adversaries.

Maha Kumbh 2025: CM Yogi flags off 100 new buses for devotees

TDG NETWORK
PRAYAGRAJ

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, flagged off special shuttle buses of the Uttar Pradesh Transport Corporation as well as electric buses named 'Atal Seva' on the second day of his tour to Prayagraj.

These new buses have been added to the Transport Corporation's fleet to enhance transportation facilities for devotees attending Mahakumbh.

The Chief Minister was on a visit to Prayagraj to review the arrangements for Maha Kumbh.

The ceremony, held in the parade area, witnessed the flagging off of 100 buses in the presence of Uttar Pradesh ministers Daya Shankar Singh, Nand Gopal



Nandi, and Swatantra Dev Singh.

Apart from this, while returning to the airport after concluding his Prayagraj tour, CM Yogi stepped out of his vehicle to walk along the road, captivated by its beauty. Following his lead, the accompanying ministers and officials also got down from their vehicles and joined him.

were present during this impromptu inspection.

Earlier in the day, CM Yogi inaugurated a special kitchen by the name of 'Maa Ki Raso', which is operated by Nandi Seva Sansthan at Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital in Prayagraj. He applauded the efforts of the organisation to maintain a clean kitchen with quality food that will serve the poor.

The Chief Minister also served 'thalis' to the people as he inspected the special kitchen during its inauguration. He launched 'Maa Ki Raso' and oversaw the arrangements made to feed people. Adityanath, accompanied by UP cabinet minister Nand Gopal Gupta Nandi, also took stock of the kitchen where the food was being prepared.

MAHA KUMBH 2025 UNDERWAY



Sadhus play a traditional instrument during the 'Dharam Dhwaja Puja' ceremony of Shri Panchayati Akhara Bada Udasin ahead of the Maha Kumbh 2025, in Prayagraj on Friday. ANI



Artists perform during a 'Chavni Praves' procession of Niranjani Akhara ahead of the Maha Kumbh 2025. ANI



UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath poses for a picture with 'Divya Bhavya Digital Mahakumbh 2025' board during the inauguration of the 'UP State Pavilion Exhibition'. ANI



Tents set up near illuminated ghats ahead of Mahakumbh Mela 2025, at Sangam in Prayagraj. ANI

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON CONDITION OF ROADS IN DELHI

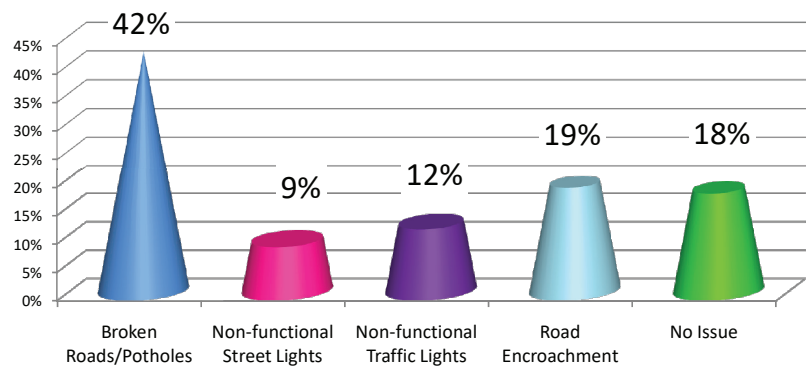
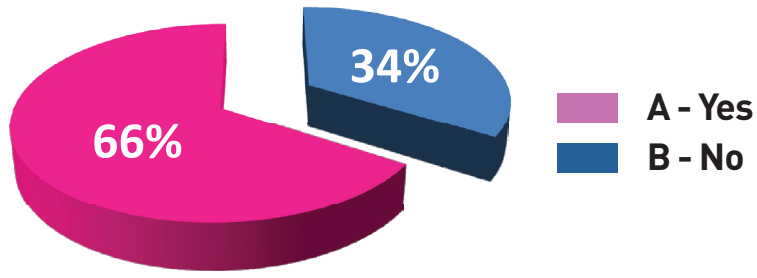
66% of respondents are not satisfied with the condition of roads in Delhi.

A recent survey conducted between 8 and 10 January 2025, with 1,595 respondents, revealed widespread dissatisfaction with Delhi's road conditions. About 66% expressed

dissatisfaction, citing broken roads and potholes as the biggest issue (42%), followed by road encroachment (19%). Public parking availability also emerged as a concern,

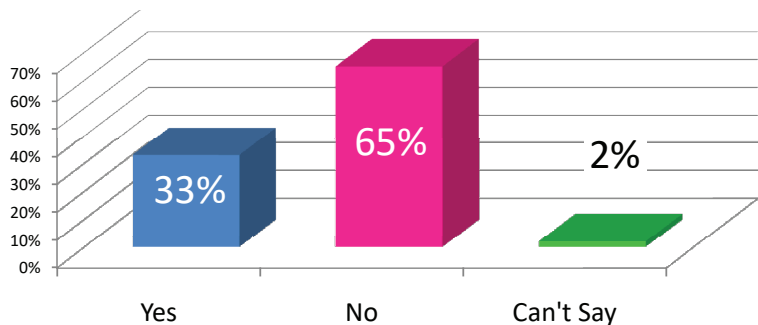
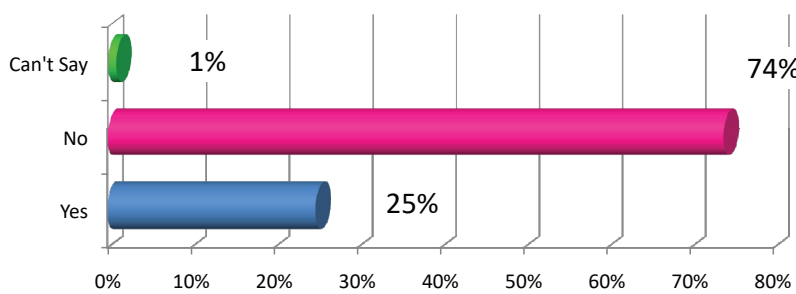
with 74% unhappy. Similarly, 65% of respondents were dissatisfied with sidewalks and pedestrian facilities, highlighting safety and accessibility challenges.

Q1. Are you satisfied with the condition of roads in Delhi?



Q2. What's the biggest issue with roads in Delhi?

Q3. Are you satisfied with public parking availability?



Q4. Are you satisfied with sidewalks and pedestrian facilities in Delhi?



Tourists enjoy the Shikara ride at Dal Lake on a sunny day, in Srinagar on Friday.

Govt lab confirms HMPV infection in 8-yr-old; cases in Gujarat rise to 3

AGENCIES AHMEDABAD

An eight-year-old boy from Gujarat's Sabarkantha district has contracted human metapneumovirus infection. I went to a labour colony...



Friday confirmed that the boy is infected with HMPV. He is currently under treatment and his condition is stable, said Sabarkantha District Collector Ratan...

Gujarat recorded its first case of HMPV on January 6, when a two-month-old boy from Rajasthan was found to be afflicted with the viral disease...

80-year-old man tested positive for the viral infection in Ahmedabad city. The patient, who has been suffering from asthma, is currently receiving treatment at a private hospital.

The boy, who belongs to a family of farm labourers from Prantij taluka, was found positive for HMPV in a test run by a private laboratory but health authorities had sent his blood samples to a government lab for

confirmation, he said.

The child, who is currently admitted to a private hospital in Himmatnagar town, had been considered a suspected HMPV case until now.

The government lab on

PM Modi outlines vision...

CONTINUED FROM P1

their comfort zone. Even if an industrialist doesn't come out of his comfort zone and take risks he may lose out. There must be a driving force. I think my risk-taking capacity has not been used fully. I don't care about my own benefit and that increases my risk-taking capacity," the Prime Minister said.

perception has changed around the world, PM Modi recalled saying that the day would come when the world would stand in line for an Indian Visa. "As a head of the state, America had refused me a visa. I held a press conference that day where I had said, "One day the world would stand in line for an Indian visa". I gave this statement in 2005. Now, it is 2025. I can

see that this is now is the time for India... I used to say publicly that you (NRIs) will regret if you don't come back to India, the world is changing," PM Modi said. "I recently visited Kuwait. I went to a labour colony... one labourer asked me when will there be an international airport in my district (in India) ...it is this aspiration that will make India Vikist in 2047," he added.

Family of 5 wiped out...

CONTINUED FROM P1

wrapped in bed sheets. And all five had deep head injuries and slash marks on their necks. Tada said, "Based on a complaint filed by the relatives of the deceased woman, a case has been registered against three named accused and some unidentified persons. Two named suspects and several others have been taken into custody for questioning."

and the police are investigating their background to find out more details. Moin, who is a mason, and Asma had been missing since Wednesday, Tada said. According to police, Moin's brother Salim was the first to witness the horrifying scene when he went to check on the family concerned over his brother's whereabouts. Salim arrived at Moin's house with his wife. After several unsuccessful attempts to open the door, they forced entry with the help of neighbours. Family's neighbour Imran Saifi told reporters the murders were committed in a very gruesome manner. He said the neighbourhood learnt about the incident when the deceased woman's brother arrived looking for her and found the family.

Sambhal mosque well row

CONTINUED FROM P1

etc.," Ahmadi said adding that the well was being used for the Mosque. The CJJ then said there was no harm in people using well from the outside. The Uttar Pradesh government told the top court that the situation was "very peaceful" and "they want to create an issue". The application of the Committee said posters have also been put up around Sambhal and near the mosque indicating purportedly the location of historical wells and therein the mosque has been shown as a temple. "District Administration, Sambhal is conducting a purported drive to revive old temples and wells in the city with reports indicating that at least 32 old unused temples have been revived and 19 wells have been identified which are being made operational for public

prayers/use," the application stated. "The District Administration, in its purported drive for the so-called revival of old temples and wells, is giving publicity to the proposed public access being granted to the use of the well, claiming the said wells to have religious significance," it added. The mosque committee said that it has apprehensions and has already given a legal notice on December 16, 2024, to the District Administration in this regard. "The District Magistrate has stated, as per news reports, that the well is not within the mosque and the interim order passed by this court is only concerning things inside the mosque. While the petitioner disputes this, what is apparent is that the said private well is situated at the entrance of the mosque and partly inside it, and opening the same for Hindu prayers will result

in mischief and disturb the fragile harmony and peace in the area at the moment," added the application. In November 2024, the top court stayed the trial court proceedings in the case, directing it not to hear the matter until the petition filed by the mosque committee against the survey order is listed in the Allahabad High Court. Tensions in Sambhal had simmered after the local court ordered a survey of the mosque on November 19. Opposing the court-ordered survey of the Jama Masjid people clashed with police, resulting in the death of four persons. The survey followed a petition filed by some persons in the local court, claiming that the site of the mosque was previously a Harihar temple, dedicated to Kalki, the last incarnation of Lord Vishnu, and built in 1526 after demolishing the temple.

According to the Lisari Gate police, Asma's brother, Shamim, had arrived and lodged a formal complaint late at night. He accused Asma's younger sister-in-law, Nazrana, and her two brothers of involvement in the suspected murders. The SSP, who visited the crime scene Thursday night along with other senior officers, said the family's house was locked from outside when locals and neighbours checked it in the evening. "After gaining access through the roof, they found the bodies," Tada told reporters. "The manner in which the house was locked suggests that the individual involved in the crime may have been someone known to the family." The SSP said the preliminary investigations point towards an old enmity as the possible motive behind the incident. "A detailed investigation is underway," he added. The SSP further said the legs of one of the deceased were found tied with a bedsheet, adding a forensic team and senior officers are collecting evidence. The family had recently moved to the area

and the police are investigating their background to find out more details. Moin, who is a mason, and Asma had been missing since Wednesday, Tada said. According to police, Moin's brother Salim was the first to witness the horrifying scene when he went to check on the family concerned over his brother's whereabouts. Salim arrived at Moin's house with his wife. After several unsuccessful attempts to open the door, they forced entry with the help of neighbours. Family's neighbour Imran Saifi told reporters the murders were committed in a very gruesome manner. He said the neighbourhood learnt about the incident when the deceased woman's brother arrived looking for her and found the family. "The entire family had recently moved to the Suhail Garden area and was living in a rented house. They were building a house of their own not far from there," Saifi said. Speaking about the family, Saifi said they were "decent" people. "They didn't have any issue with anyone, and they led a regular routine of going to work and coming back." When reporters again asked if the family had any conflicts or disputes with others, Saifi said he didn't notice anything of that sort but couldn't provide further details. Asma's brother Shamim told reporters he lives in Hapur and it was his sister's second marriage which happened nine years ago. When asked about who might be behind the murders, he said he had no idea. However, he emphasised that his sister was a good person who did not have conflicts with anyone. He appealed for justice. Speaking about Moin, he said he was a mason. He also revealed that some time ago, Moin's elder brother had been given Rs 4.5 lakh as a loan for acquiring some land.

Pune court grants bail to Rahul in defamation case linked to Savarkar remarks

AGENCIES PUNE

A special court in Pune on Friday granted bail to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in a defamation case related to his alleged objectionable remarks on Hindutva ideologue V D Savarkar. The MP/MLA court granted bail to the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha on a surety bond of Rs 25,000 after he appeared before it through video conferencing. Senior Congress leader Mohan Joshi stood as surety before the court.



Advocate Milind Pawar, representing Rahul Gandhi, said the court also granted permanent exemption to the Congress leader from appearing before it. The matter will now be heard on February 18, Milind Pawar added.

'Pariksha Pe Charcha' gets 2.7 crore registrations

AGENCIES NEW DELHI

The 8th edition of Pariksha Pe Charcha 2025 has achieved an unprecedented milestone with over 2.79 crore registrations from students, teachers, and parents across India and abroad, said an official press release from the Ministry of Education. As per the release, this remarkable response un-

derscores the growing resonance of the program as a true Jan Andolan. The flagship initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Pariksha Pe Charcha (PPC), continues to grow as a nationwide movement to transform exam-related stress into a festival of learning and celebration. The online registration for PPC 2025, hosted on the MyGov.in portal, commenced on December 14, 2024.

Haryana sacks women's panel...

CONTINUED FROM P1

per Section 4 sub-section (3) of The Haryana State Commission for Women Act, 2012, the services of Sonia Aggarwal, vice-chairperson, Haryana State Commission for

Women, are hereby terminated with immediate effect." The case has sparked significant outrage, with social organizations, including the Vaishya community, raising their voices against the corruption allegations. Despite their

protests, authorities took action only 25 days after Aggarwal's arrest. Aggarwal's arrest and subsequent sacking highlight the Haryana government's stern stance against corruption, especially within its institutions.

'Steve Jobs's wife to visit Maha Kumbh'

CONTINUED FROM P1

a daughter to us. This is the second time she is coming to India... Everyone is welcome in Kumbh," he said. He said that Powell is coming for her personal program, "She is coming here to meditate." When asked about whether Powell will be added to the Akhara's Peshwai, he said, "We will try to include her in the Peshwai. We will leave it



to her to decide. She will tour this Kumbh and meet the seers here. She will also feel good. We will also feel good that those who don't know much about our traditions want to learn. "Most people in the world are under the guidance of some guru. Many people are coming to Kumbh; some are coming for their personal program," he added. "This is a religious mela;

people from around the world and India visit Maha Kumbh to seek blessings," Swami Kailashnand Ji Maharaj stated. Earlier Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak said that all the preparations for the Mela had been completed. "All the arrangements for the Maha Kumbh have been completed... We are meeting all the saints and sages who have come to

Prayagraj on the occasion of the Maha Kumbh, taking their blessings and thanking them for coming to the Maha Kumbh. It is our responsibility to ensure that all the saints do not face any problems... Everyone is welcome... All arrangements have been completed," he said. Deputy CM Keshav Prasad Maurya assured that the devotees would witness and divine and grand Kumbh this time.

DIASPORA HAS MADE INDIA PROUD, HELPED BOOST TIES: JAISHANKAR

TDG NETWORK
BHUBANESHWAR

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday, lauded the contributions of the Indian diaspora and stated that they have left an "indelible mark" on the global society.

Addressing at the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards Ceremony on Friday, Jaishankar stated that the people of Indian origin are holding political offices and leading organisations, the EAM said that their "extraordinary achievements" have made Indians proud and have bolstered India's ties with other countries.

"The Indian diaspora has made outstanding contributions to both India and the world in diverse domains based on your immense talent, creativity, dedication, commitment and perseverance. From holding political offices and leading organisations to excelling in various domains and walks of life. They have left an indelible mark on global society," Jaishankar said.

"Their extraordinary achievements have made India and Indians proud and have strengthened our relationship with other peoples and nations. When the world thinks of India, its particular image or relationship is what is shaping our collective brand," he added.

The Foreign Minister affirmed confidence that the



awardees would continue to serve as effective bridges between India and the rest of the world.

"The Pravasi Bharatiya Saman awards that would be conferred by the President of India Droupadi Murmu on select members of the Indian diaspora are a recognition of their achievements.

At the same time, they are also a statement of the value that India attaches to its diaspora. I felicitate the Pravasi Bharatiya Samana awardees and I am confident that they will continue to be an effective bridge to the world," he said.

Stating that the current era is that of greater interdependence, technology flows and talent mobility, Jaishankar discussed the dual perspectives of "India first" and "Vasudeva Kutumbakam"

"We approach the world with the twin perspectives of India first and Vasudeva Kutumbaka. When India progresses, so does one-sixth of humanity. When we do global good, our own



Prez Murmu confers Pravasi Bharatiya Samman awards

BHUBANESHWAR: Trinidad & Tobago President Christine Carla Kangaloo and 26 others were conferred the prestigious Pravasi Bharatiya Samman award by President Droupadi Murmu on the last day of the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) convention

here. Murmu congratulated all the awardees and appreciated them for working for the society in different fields. She said that their success stories are not just a matter of pride for India, but they also inspire millions across the world to strive for excellence.

people stand equally to gain. This is now an era of greater interdependence, technology flows and talent mobility. In many ways, it is the diaspora that will help define our image as a resurgent civilization," he said.

"The PBD serves as a catalytic platform. It is a matter of great satisfaction that we have had productive and wide-ranging conversations in the last few days. My gratitude to President Droupadi Murmu for gracing the occasion as it culminates," the EAM added.

Jaishankar further

acknowledged the efforts by the Ministry of External Affairs in organizing the PBD convention for two decades, which has strengthened international relationships.

"For two decades now, the Ministry of External Affairs has been organizing the PBD convention across the country. Wherever we have gone, wherever we have met, it has helped to raise the international profile of the state and strengthen its diaspora bonding," Jaishankar said in his closing remarks.

'Cong should take blame for disarray in I.N.D.I.A'

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut has expressed concerns over the lack of coordination within the INDIA alliance, blaming Congress for its disarray since the Lok Sabha elections.

Speaking about the current state of the alliance, Raut agreed with National Conference leader Omar Abdullah's statement, which highlighted the absence of clarity about leadership, agenda, or INDIA bloc's existence.

"I agree with what Omar Abdullah said. We fought the Lok Sabha elections together and the results were also good. After that, it was the responsibility of all of us, especially Congress, to keep the INDIA alliance alive, sit together and show the way forward," Raut said.

Raut pointed out that since the elections, no meeting or



coordination has taken place among the alliance members, which he considers detrimental to the unity of the coalition. "But till now, not a single such meeting has taken place after the Lok Sabha elections. This is not right for the INDIA alliance," he added. Leaders from various parties, including Abdullah, Mamta Banerjee, Akhilesh Yadav, and Arvind Kejriwal, have reportedly expressed concerns over the alliance's future.

"Leaders like Omar Abdullah, Mamta Banerjee, Akhilesh Yadav, Arvind Kejriwal

all say that the INDIA alliance has no existence now," Raut observed. The Shiv Sena (UBT) leader emphasized that if the alliance were to break apart, it would be a permanent split.

"If such a feeling comes in the minds of the people, then the biggest party of the alliance, Congress, is responsible for this. There is no coordination, no discussion, no dialogue. This means that people have doubts about whether everything is fine or not in the INDIA alliance," Raut said.

Ajit Pawar slams police for rising crime in Pune

TDG NETWORK
PUNE

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar has expressed grave concern over the increasing crime rates in Pune.

Pawar has questioned the senior police officers' ability to control the situation despite the ample resources available.



"The Maharashtra CM and I have taken cognisance as I represent this part of the state," Pawar said, emphasizing that the state government is fully aware of the deteriorating law and order situation. He stressed that there will be no room for political interference in the matter.

"We don't allow any political interference in such things," he added.

Pawar pointed out that despite the deployment of substantial infrastructure, manpower, and facilities, including new offices for the Superintendent of Police (SP) and Commissioner of Police (CP) in Pimpri Chinchwad, crime rates continue to rise.

Crime against women: TN moves two Bills for stricter punishment

TDG NETWORK
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Friday introduced two amendment bills in the state assembly to make punishment stringent for crimes against women.

One bill seeks to strengthen the Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Harassment of Woman Act 1998 and the other aims to amend the applicability of Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita and



Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita in the state. Speaking at the state as-

sembly, while introducing the bill, CM Stalin said, "DMK government is a government which introduces many schemes for the benefit of women. Our government acts in a way to empower women in Social, Political and Economic. Because of this, women's social share has improved. Tamil Nadu is growing as a state where more women go to work and a state where women contribute more to society."

PM Modi Speaks

'DREAMS HAVE GROWN'

"In the first term, the people were trying to understand me and I was trying to understand Delhi. In the second term, I used to think from the perspective of the past. In the third term, my thinking has changed, my morale is high and my dreams have grown. I want solutions to all problems by 2047 for Viksit Bharat... There should be 100% delivery of government schemes."

MEANING OF MINIMUM GOVT, MAXIMUM GOVERNANCE

"We often misunderstand the concept of minimum government, maximum governance. Some believe that minimum government means fewer ministers and fewer employees. However, this is not my understanding. I made different ministries for skill, cooperatives, and fisheries. When I say minimum government... my point is that we took away 40,000 compliances to increase the speed of work. Otherwise, the different departments will demand the same things."

'CIRCUMSTANCES MADE ME'

"My life has not been built by me. It has been made due to the circumstances. The kind of life I have lived during my childhood has taught me a lot of things. In a way, it was my biggest university. University of trouble has taught me a lot and I have learned to love the trouble. I come from a state where I have seen mothers and sisters walk for two to three kilometres, carrying a pot on their heads... my activities are a result of empathy."



'One should enter politics not with ambition but with a mission'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that one should enter politics not out of personal ambition but with a mission. He was making his debut on a podcast titled, 'People By WTF,' hosted by Zerodha co-founder Nikhil Kamath. Speaking on the skills required to enter the field of politics, the Prime Minister said that winning the hearts of the people is the most important task of a politician. "Good people should come into politics. They should come with mission not with ambition. Mission should be above ambition," he said.

He said that people participated in the India's freedom movement out of their love for their nation. He said that there were many tall leaders in the post-independence period whose commitment to society was unparalleled. Talking about the difference between being an entrepreneur and a politician, he said that while the former wants to grow himself and his company, the latter should have the ability to sacrifice himself for the society.

"Entrepreneur's training is to how to grow, in politics it should be how to sacrifice. There (in entrepreneurship) it is how to make your company number one. In

politics it should be nation first. This is the difference," he said.

He said that enter politics is not necessarily about contesting election and that society accepts politician who have nation first mind-set. "Society accept nation first people. Life in politics is not easy. We have a worker called Ashok Bhatt. He lived in a small house all his life. He has been a minister. But He did not own a car. To enter politics is not necessary about contest election. The work is about winning the minds of people. To do that one has to live among them. Such people are still there in politics," he said. PM Modi underlined his

vision for the future saying that he envisages a solution for all problems by 2047 for Viksit Bharat.

"In the first term, the people were trying to understand me and I was trying to understand Delhi. In the second term, I used to think from the perspective of the past. In the third term, my thinking has changed, my morale is high and my dreams have grown. I want solutions to all problems by 2047 for Viksit Bharat... There should be 100% delivery of government schemes. This is real social justice and secularism. The driving force behind this is - AI-'Aspirational India'," PM Modi said.

'FOR PEACE, NOT WAR'

"During the Ukraine crisis, we were not neutral. We are in favour of peace. I said that to Russia, Ukraine, Iran, Palestine and Israel. They trust us. This is the reason that India's credibility has increased... the world has faith in what we say. During corona, our young people were at the centre of the pandemic. I request the Air Force to help with the evacuation. All of them agreed and brought our youth and even our neighbours."

'BELIEVE IN NATION FIRST'

"I am not the kind of person who changes his stance as per his convenience. I have grown up believing in only one (kind of) ideology. If I were to describe my ideology in a few words, I would say, 'Nation first'. Anything that fits into the tagline, 'nation first', doesn't bind me in the shackles of ideology and tradition. It pushed us to move forward. I am ready to leave old things and embrace new ones."

'NOT A FOODIE'

"I am not a foodie. Whatever is served to me in the country that I visit I relish it. But it is my bad luck that if you take me to a restaurant today and give me a menu and ask me to select then I won't be able to do it. It has been years since I have visited any restaurant. Earlier when I was in the Sangathan, Arun Jaitley was very fond of eating. He knew what was best at which restaurant in which city across the country. He was like an encyclopedia."

PM MODI CHAIRS BJP'S POLL BODY MEETS TO FINALISE CANDIDATES

Nadda reviewed BJP's election preparations with key leaders and committees.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The BJP's Central Election Committee, which includes Prime Minister Narendra Modi, met here on Friday to finalise the second list of party candidates for the Delhi Assembly polls.

The BJP's first list of 29 candidates for the polls to the 70-member Delhi Assembly came out on January 4. It has fielded former MP Parvesh Verma from the New Delhi seat against ex-chief minister and AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal.

The party has named another former MP, Ramesh Bidhuri, from Kalkaji, where Chief Minister and AAP candidate Atishi is in the fray. Besides Modi, Home

CORE COMMITTEE MEETING



- Amit Shah met JP Nadda for a core committee meeting on Delhi Assembly Elections 2025.
- Nadda reviewed BJP's election preparations with key leaders and committees.
- Leaders like Virendra Sachdev, Baijayant Panda, and Manoj Tiwari attended the discussions.
- Nadda urged members to secure a BJP victory, calling it a choice between "truth and development" and "Kejriwal's corruption."
- Delhi polls are on February 5, with results on February 8; nominations close on January 20.

Minister Amit Shah and BJP president J P Nadda joined the other members of the CEC in finalising

the names of candidates. After arriving at the BJP headquarters, Modi walked towards the media

contingent covering the meeting to extend greetings for the New Year and upcoming festivals.

Shah and Nadda were earlier in the day closeted with Delhi BJP leaders to deliberate on the list of probable candidates and the party's strategy.

The BJP is pulling out all stops to end the Aam Aadmi Party's 10-year-old reign in the national capital. Despite the party sweeping to victory in all seven Lok Sabha seats in three national

elections since 2014, the AAP has maintained a stranglehold on power in the city in two consecutive assembly elections in 2015 and 2020. Polling in the national capital will be held on February 5 and the votes will be counted on February 8.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal on Friday announced that RWAs will be provided funds to hire private guards to ensure security in the neighbourhoods, if his party returns to power in Delhi. Making the announcement in a press conference, Kejriwal said the guidelines on the amount and the number of guards will be laid down later.

The former Delhi chief minister slammed the BJP, saying its government at the Centre has failed to control the "escalating" crime

in Delhi. Asserting that the two crore people in Delhi were like family to him, he said their safety was the top priority of the Aam Aadmi Party. "If two crore people of Delhi



AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal addresses a press conference, in New Delhi. ANI

are hurt, I am hurt. After the AAP government is formed in Delhi, Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) will receive government funds to appoint security guards," he said.

The crime rate has "skyrocketed" in the city with "rampant" thefts, robberies, chain snatching and even gang wars, Kejriwal said.

Targeting the BJP, he said the BJP and its central government have no concern for the people of Delhi, which is why the party has

not been able to come to power in the past 27 years.

"I have been assuring people across the city that if the AAP forms the government, all RWAs will be provided with appropriate funds from the Delhi government to appoint security guards in their areas. A systematic approach will be developed to ensure fairness and proper implementation," he said. "It is true that no one can replace the police, and we do not intend to do so, these security guards will help maintain basic neighbourhood safety. For instance, if a thief tries to escape after committing a crime, these guards can catch them. They will also ensure that unauthorised individuals do not enter the area," he noted. Reacting to the new poll promise by AAP, the BJP slammed Kejriwal and accused him of making "false" promises on the RWAs again.

'No I.N.D.I.A bloc party officially backs AAP', says Congress

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Congress President Devender Yadav on Friday, brushed off the perception of the Aam Aadmi Party receiving the support of the I.N.D.I.A bloc for the upcoming Delhi Assembly Elections and said no party from the alliance has 'officially' extended support to AAP.

The Congress leader also accused AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal of attempting to undermine Congress in a bid to capitalise on the "growing public dissatisfaction" with AAP's governance.

"No party of the alliance has extended official support yet. As Kejriwal himself realises that the people of Delhi want a change from AAP, he is doing all this. He is trying to make sure that Congress is not able to fight this election well and that he can gain advantage from it," said Devender Yadav to ANI.

Earlier on Thursday, Kejriwal said that the Delhi as-



sembly elections will be a direct contest between the AAP and the BJP and not an election of the I.N.D.I.A alliance.

"Delhi assembly election is between AAP and the BJP. It is not the election of the I.N.D.I.A alliance. I wholeheartedly express my gratitude to all those parties for supporting us. Mamata Banerjee is supporting us. Akhilesh Yadav is supporting us. I have learnt through media that the (Uddhav) Thackeray ji's party is supporting us," Kejriwal told reporters on Thursday.

The Congress, which is in a direct fight with the AAP and the BJP, in Delhi has hit back at Kejriwal alleging that the AAP had always worked to defeat the Con-

gress. "Arvind Kejriwal may say anything but Aam Aadmi Party is the party in Delhi which defamed Congress. I don't remember him saying even a single word against BJP in 2012-13. AAP's method is that in all the elections they have gone only and only to defeat Congress. If you talk to any common man outside Delhi, he will also tell you that AAP contests only to defeat Congress. If you have so much aversion towards BJP and RSS, then why did you write a letter to RSS? Congress has never written such letters," Congress leader Sandeep Dikshit said. The Delhi assembly polls will be held in a single phase on February 5 and the counting of votes will take place on February 8. The last date for filing nominations is January 17. The date for scrutiny of nominations is January 18. While last date for withdrawal of candidature is January 20.

'BJP to project Ramesh Bidhuri as CM candidate'

TIKAM SHARMA
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Atishi on Friday challenged the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to reveal its Chief Ministerial candidate for Delhi, claiming that their likely choice is Ramesh Bidhuri, a leader notorious for his abusive language. Drawing a stark contrast between the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) CM candidate, Arvind Kejriwal—an IIT graduate and former IRS officer—and the BJP's alleged preference for Bidhuri, Atishi urged Delhiites to choose between a progressive, professional leader and one with a reputation for offensive behavior.

Speaking to the media, CM Atishi raised a pointed question for the BJP. "All of Delhi is asking the same thing: Who is the Chief Ministerial candidate of the 'Gaali-Galauch Party'? Whether in streets, neighborhoods, or parks, this is the hot topic. The Aam Aadmi Party has already announced Arvind Kejriwal as its CM candidate. People know that voting for AAP means Ke-



Delhi Chief Minister Atishi addresses a press conference ahead of state assembly elections, in New Delhi. ANI

Bidhuri, infamous for his derogatory remarks in Parliament, has even abused his own party members and physically assaulted Poorvanchali leaders.

riwal will lead Delhi. But if they vote for the 'Gaali-Galauch Party,' who will they get as Chief Minister?"

Atishi pointed out that the BJP's core committee and Parliamentary Board meetings were taking place and claimed that "reliable sources" indicated the BJP had decided on Ramesh Bidhuri as its CM face. She asserted, "Bidhuri, known for his abu-

Bidhuri, infamous for his derogatory remarks in Parliament, has even abused his own party members and physically assaulted Poorvanchali leaders. He has insulted figures like Priyanka Gandhi and targeted me and my family.

Yet, his party seems poised to reward him by elevating him to its highest position in Delhi." Atishi emphasized that the people of Delhi have two distinct choices. "On one side, there is Arvind Kejriwal—an IIT graduate, engineer, and former IRS officer—who has transformed Delhi with 24-hour electricity, piped water for every home, top-quality government schools, free healthcare, pilgrimage schemes for seniors, and free bus rides for women. On the other side is Ramesh Bidhuri, known for his abusive language and indecent remarks about women.

The contrast could not be clearer: an educated, progressive leader like Arvind Kejriwal versus an abusive leader like Ramesh Bidhuri from the 'Gaali-Galauch Party.'

Cong promises Chhath Ghat named after Sharada Sinha at Yamuna

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday said it will build a dedicated Chhath ghat at the Yamuna riverbanks, which will be named the "Sharada Sinha Ghat," similar to those at the Maha Kumbh. Bihar Congress president Akhilesh Prasad Singh, during a press conference, highlighted the contribution of the people from Poorvanchal in Delhi's development, particularly during the Congress-led government when the "city was transformed into one of the best in the world". However, Singh criticised the BJP and AAP for allegedly exploiting the Poorvanchali community as mere vote-banks, rather than addressing their concerns.

Both the BJP and AAP deeply hurt the sentiments of Poorvanchalis by preventing them from holding their most important religious festival, Chhath Puja, at the Yamuna river banks.

BJP Poorvanchal Morcha protests at ex-CM residence over 'fake voters' remark

TIKAM SHARMA
NEW DELHI

The Delhi BJP on Friday held a protest against the AAP for allegedly making "fake" claims about registration of voters from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in the electoral rolls ahead of assembly polls.

Protesters holding placards saying "Purvanchal Virodhi Kejriwal" raised slogans against AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal with several attempting to breach the barricades installed near his residence.

Slogans including "Purvanchal Virodhi Kejriwal murdabad", "Litti chokha khayenge, Kejriwal bhagayenge" were raised by the protesters. The protesters condemned his comments as offensive and disrespectful to the community. Slogans like "Litti Chokha Khayenge, Kejriwal Ko Bhagayenge" and "Daal Bhaat Khayenge, Kejriwal Ko Bhagayenge" echoed during the demonstration.

The protest, led by NDMC member Dinesh Pratap Singh and BJP Poorvanchal Morcha President Santosh Ojha, saw participation



Security personnel stop Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) workers during 'Purvanchal Samman March' from Ashoka Road to AAP National Convener Arvind Kejriwal's residence to protest against the latter's alleged remarks against the people of Purvanchal, in New Delhi. ANI

from Laxmi Nagar BJP MLA Abhay Verma, Media Head Praveen Shankar Kapoor, and thousands of Poorvanchalis. Protesters attempted to march towards Kejriwal's residence, breaking through police barricades, but were stopped by water cannons before being detained and taken to Mandir Marg police station. MP Manoj Tiwari later visited the detained protesters, who were subsequently released by the police with a warning. Speaking to the media outside Mandir Marg police station, Tiwari accused Kejriwal of in-

sulting not only the Poorvanchali community but also autorickshaw drivers, slum dwellers, and artisans who migrate to Delhi for work. He claimed the people of Delhi would not forgive Kejriwal's offensive remarks, adding that the Poorvanchalis would unite to bring the BJP to power. Tiwari also challenged AAP leader Sanjay Singh to question Kejriwal on his derogatory statements, given that Singh himself belongs to the Poorvanchali community. "Sanjay Singh, being a Poorvanchali, should ask his leader if he truly believes

the community is deceitful. Kejriwal has been openly disrespecting them," Tiwari said. Dinesh Pratap Singh accused Kejriwal of consistently demeaning the Poorvanchali community. Citing the COVID-19 pandemic, Singh criticized Kejriwal for abandoning Poorvanchalis at Anand Vihar after making false promises of rent relief. He asserted that the community would not compromise on its dignity and challenged Kejriwal to provide proof of his contributions to their welfare.

AAP accuses BJP of vote buying, fund embezzlement

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

AAP on Friday alleged that the BJP is buying votes ahead of the Delhi assembly elections, claiming that the saffron party's Delhi leaders have embezzled funds meant for "buying votes with money".

Addressing a press conference, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh alleged that the BJP has allocated Rs 10,000 per voter to its leaders for buying votes but only a fraction of the money reached the intended recipients.

"Instead of distributing the full amount, BJP leaders allegedly handed out only Rs 1,000 or Rs 1,100 to voters, pocketing the remaining Rs 9,000 for themselves," Singh said. There was no immediate response from the BJP. AAP convener and former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal took to social media platform X to accuse the BJP of resorting to "buying votes" and banking on "money" to win the election. "The abusive party is losing the Delhi elections badly. That is why it now wants



"The BJP has crossed all limits of fraud in the Delhi elections. The top leaders of the abusive party sent Rs 10,000 to distribute but to earn money, their leaders kept Rs 9,000 and distributed only Rs 1,100," Sisodia said on X.

to contest the elections by buying votes with money," Kejriwal said on X. Former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia described the situation as a "fraud" in a post on X and urged the Delhi residents to confront BJP leaders about the missing funds. "The BJP has crossed all limits of fraud in the Delhi elections. The top leaders of the abusive party sent Rs 10,000 to distribute but to earn money, their leaders kept Rs 9,000 and distrib-

uted only Rs 1,100," Sisodia said on X. He said people working with the BJP leaders know that the saffron party cannot win against Kejriwal in Delhi, "so why not take Rs 9,000 from the people of Delhi?" "People of Delhi, if they come to you asking for votes, ask them — where is the other Rs 9,000?" Sisodia added. Sanjay Singh further alleged that the BJP leaders had orchestrated this scheme, knowing they were likely to

lose the election to AAP, an official statement said.

He called on the Delhiites to question the BJP over the alleged stolen money and expose their "corruption", it added.

Delhi minister Saurabh Bhardwaj, also present at the press conference, accused the BJP of undermining democracy not just through vote-buying but also through voter list manipulation. He raised concerns about thousands of legitimate voters being removed from the list and fake entries being added.

The AAP leaders have called on the Election Commission to intervene and ensure a free and fair election process in Delhi, the statement said.

The people of Delhi are going to cast their votes on February 5 with counting to take place on February 8.

An intense political battle is unfolding in the national capital with assembly elections less than a month away and AAP aiming for a third consecutive term while the BJP pulling out all stops to defeat it and come back to power after more than 26 years.

FOG BLANKETS DELHI, OVER 100 FLIGHTS DELAYED AT IGI

Over 100 flights were delayed at Indira Gandhi International Airport, and 26 trains were late

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Dense fog enveloped Delhi, reducing visibility to zero and disrupting flight and train operations on Friday as the weather department predicted rain over the weekend. Over 100 flights were delayed at Indira Gandhi International Airport, and 26 trains were late, according to officials. The India Meteorological Department said zero visibility was recorded in Palam at 4.30 am.

At 5.30 am, visibility at Safdarjung was 50 meters, it said. The national capital recorded a maximum temperature of 17.6 degree Celsius, a notch below normal, with a minimum temperature of 6 degree Celsius, 0.9 notches below normal.

The weather department has predicted a cloudy sky with light rain and thunderstorms over the weekend. Dense fog is also likely in some areas in the morning.

The maximum and minimum temperatures are ex-



Men ride cycles amid dense fog on a cold winter morning, in New Delhi on Friday.

pected to settle around 15 and 8 degree Celsius, respectively.

The air quality in the city is nearing the 'severe' category, as the Air Quality Index (AQI) at 4 pm was 397 in the 'very poor' category on Friday, according to the CPCB.

Out of 29 monitoring stations, 18 stations, including Ashok Vihar, Bawana, Dwarka and Jahangirpuri, recorded AQI readings in the severe category, with readings above 400.

Abhishek Kar, Senior Programme Lead at the Council on Energy, Environment, and

Water (CEEW), said, The city recorded a minimum temperature of 6 degree Celsius in the early hours of January 10. "Dense fog reduces the amount of solar radiation reaching the ground, thereby lowering the mixing layer height and leading to the accumulation of pollutants near the ground," he said.

"CAQM has imposed GRAP Stage 3 in Delhi and adjoining areas. Authorities should strictly enforce CAQM's orders, including banning older vehicles from plying, intensifying public

THREE INJURED IN SEVEN-VEHICLE PILE-UP ON DELHI HIGHWAY DUE TO FOG

HAPUR (UP): Three people were injured on Friday morning when around seven vehicles collided on the Delhi highway due to dense fog, police said. According to police, a car en route to Delhi from Moradabad rammed into another car ahead of it in Babugarh area of Hapur, because of which the car driver Imran and his wife Heena were injured.

The third injured person has been identified as Faheem, who was travelling in another vehicle along with Zeeshan, Shanu and



Police personnel and people gather where several vehicles collided due to dense fog on the Delhi-Lucknow Highway near the Bahadurgarh station area, in Hapur on Friday.

Haryana Police constable Ramkumar, officials said.

A police team reached the spot and admitted the injured to the hospital. The damaged vehicles were

removed from the road with the help of a crane and the highway was made operational, Station House Officer Vijay Kumar Gupta said.

transport, introducing differential pricing to promote off-peak travel, and banning dust-generating construction activities, to improve air quality," Kar said.

Meanwhile, the movement of flights and passenger trains to and from

the National Capital continued to remain affected on Friday due to fog and adverse weather conditions. Amid the prevailing dense fog conditions, Delhi airport authorities on Friday issued an advisory and stated that flights that

were not CAT III compliant would be affected. Taking to social media X, the authority wrote in a post, "While landings and takeoffs continue at Delhi airport, flights that are not CAT III compliant may get affected."

LG issues gazette notification for assembly elections

MANOJ MANU
NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena on Friday has issued gazette notification for the assembly elections in the national capital, following recommendations from the Election Commission of India.

According to the official notification dated January 10, the election schedule has been announced in accordance with the Representa-



tion of the People Act, 1951. "As recommended by the Election Commission of India, the Lieutenant Governor of the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi is hereby pleased to call upon all the Assembly Constituencies in the National Capital Territory of Delhi, to elect members to the Legislative Assembly of the NCT of Delhi," the notification said.

The existing Legislative

Assembly of Delhi, unless sooner dissolved, shall continue up to and including February 23 and shall, thereafter, stand dissolved on the expiration of its duration, it added.

According to the notification, the last date for filing nominations is January 17, scrutiny is set for January 18 and withdrawals are allowed until January 20.

Voting will occur on February 5 from 7 am to 6 pm and the election process will

conclude by February 10, the notification said.

The current assembly will stand dissolved on February 23, paving the way for the formation of a new government, it reads.

Earlier on January 7, the Election Commission of India (ECI) had announced the Ninth Delhi Assembly election to be held on February 5 in a single phase for all its 70 constituencies with counting of votes on February 8.

Kalindi Kunj residents' Yamuna clean-up demand unmet ahead of elections

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

There was a time when Yamuna's water was clean and even drinkable, said Ram Paswan, a 58-year-old resident of Delhi's Kalindi Kunj. The lasting image of Yamuna now is a thick layer of white froth covering most parts of the water, with plastic and other waste strewn around. With assembly elections approaching in the national capital, pollution in Yamuna and the political blame game around the failure of the river's cleaning are back. The AAP, BJP and Congress are set for a three-pronged race to form the next government in Delhi.

Residents of the slums near the river at Kalindi Kunj, however, are demanding concrete steps from whoever comes to power after the February 5 elections.

"The authorities should build tanks near the drains that connect to Yamuna so that the (waste) water is filtered before it enters the river," he said. We want clean ghats, proper lighting and security. Right now, all we see is plastic and waste in

"The area smells so bad that you can't stand here for even a minute. My friend has to take a dip in this toxic water as part of the ritual. Politicians make tall promises, but where are the results?"

— Mithun, resident

"We have no option but to bathe in the river. It affects our eyes and skin and many of us have had to visit hospitals for checkups"

— Lambu Singh, resident

the river, Paswan said.

There are at least 25 drains that are connected with the Yamuna in the national capital, according to a report submitted by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to the National Green Tribunal in 2022.

According to a Delhi Pollution Control Board report dated December 23, 2024, at least 17 of the 25 drains fail to meet the 30 mg-BOD (biochemical oxygen demand) standard, with five of them exceeding 100 mg.

Pollution in Yamuna, the residents said, was not just an environmental issue, it was also a health hazard and a concern for those who depend on the river for various rituals.

Mithun, 36, who accompanied his friend for a funeral ritual at the Kalindi Kunj ghat, said "The area smells so bad that you can't stand here for even a minute. My friend has to take a dip in this toxic water as part of the ritual. Politicians make tall promises, but where are the results?"

Experts have warned against taking a dip in the river. For Lambu Singh, another resident, water from the Yamuna is a necessity despite the health risks. "We have no option but to bathe in the river."

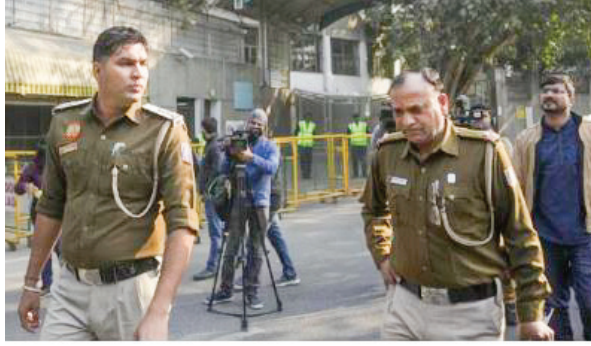
Class 12 student held over bomb threats to Delhi schools

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A student studying in 12th standard has been apprehended for his involvement in issuing bomb threats to multiple schools in Delhi via emails, police said.

According to the police, the last 23 threat emails received by different schools in the national capital were sent by the student, who admitted that he had sent such emails previously as well.

"The last 23 threat emails received by different schools in Delhi were sent by a 12th-



class student. During interrogation, he admitted that he had sent threat emails earlier as well," the police said.

Several schools in Delhi received bomb threat emails

on Wednesday, police said.

According to officials, the list includes Delhi Public School in Vasant Vihar and RK Puram, Blue Bells, and Tagore International. The emails claimed that a large

amount of explosives had been planted on the school premises.

Authorities are investigating the threats, which are similar to previous hoax bomb threats sent to schools in the city.

The e-mail warned the school of "massive and highly dangerous explosives" on its premises. "Your lack of strict bag checks for students entering the school has provided us with the perfect opportunity to carry out our plan," the e-mail, shared by police sources, read.

According to the mail, the sender of the mail knew about the exam schedule and the movement of students inside the school premises.

"During this time, everyone apart from the students writing the exam will either be standing outside on the field or wandering around the building. You will remain completely unaware of the devastating explosives that have already been planted in multiple key locations on your premises," mentions the email.

Fire breaks out at Gokalpuri Police Station, no injuries reported

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A fire broke out in a room on the fourth floor of the Gokalpuri Police Station here on Friday afternoon, causing damage to office equipment, an official said. No casualty was reported due to the fire, according to the official.

The fire department was alerted about the incident at 1.20 pm. The room housed LED panels, computer systems, and furniture, he said.

The fire department responded swiftly and

doused the flames, a police officer said.

Police said office equipment, including three LED panels and two computer systems, were damaged in the fire, but no one was injured in the incident.

Preliminary investigations suggest that the fire may have been caused by an electrical fault in the wiring or a malfunctioning of an equipment, the officer said.

The exact cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained and a detailed probe is underway, he added.



Bangladeshi migrant among two arrested in Rs 8 cr heroin bust: Police

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police arrested an illegal Bangladeshi migrant and his maternal aunt for allegedly possessing 768 grams of heroin, valued at Rs 8 crore in the market, an official said on Friday. The Anti-Narcotics Squad (ANS) of the southeast district arrested Hamidul and his aunt Naseema from the Sunlight Colony area in Delhi, the official said.

Hamidul (23) had entered India illegally three months ago and became involved in drug peddling to earn quick money, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southeast) Ravi Kumar said.

Naseema who previously worked for a news channel allegedly supplied the heroin, he added.



Hamidul (23) had entered India illegally three months ago and became involved in drug peddling to earn quick money, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southeast) Ravi Kumar said.

of 75 grams of high-quality heroin.

During interrogation, Hamidul revealed that Naseema had supplied the heroin to him for distribution and a subsequent raid at her residence yielded an additional 80 grams of heroin, Kumar said.

The team located her at a hotel in Sunlight Colony, where 693 grams of heroin were seized from her possession, said the DCP.

Hamidul disclosed that he joined the drug trade to make quick money after arriving in India illegally, the DCP said.

Police nabs murder accused on the run for 25 years

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police arrested a man who had been absconding in a murder case for the past 25 years, an official said on Friday. Ajay Kumar Dahiya (59), a proclaimed offender, was arrested from the Kala Amb area on the Haryana-Himachal border on January 7, the official said.

He had been living under a false identity for over two decades to evade the law, the official added.

The case dates back to August 2000, when Krishna Sethi accused Dahiya and her daughter-in-law, Saroj, of murdering her son, Ashwani Sethi.

Ashwani Sethi's body, which bore gunshot wounds, was found in the village of Birdhana in Haryana.

Suspicion fell on Saroj and Dahiya after the former disappeared, prompting Krishna Sethi to file an FIR against them at Uttam Nagar Police Station here.



Asbwani Sethi's body, which bore gunshot wounds, was found in the village of Birdhana in Haryana.

Dahiya and Saroj were declared proclaimed offenders in 2008, police said.

According to the police, interrogation revealed that Dahiya and Saroj were in a relationship complicated by Saroj's marriage to Ashwani.

In 2000, Dahiya lured Ashwani to his village and killed him to eliminate obstacles to their relationship. "The pair fled Delhi, living

in Himachal Pradesh before separating due to frequent conflicts. Saroj disappeared, while Dahiya remarried and assumed a new identity as Sompal. He worked various jobs and eventually ran a tea stall in Kala Amb with his second family," the official said.

"Dahiya had built a new life, even obtaining official identification under his false name, he added.

SEBI EXPLORES USE OF AI FOR FASTER PROCESSING OF IPOs

SEBI chairperson emphasized the importance of a Rs 250 systematic investment plan (SIP) for Mutual Funds.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch on Friday said that the market regulator is exploring the use of AI for faster approval of IPOs and Mutual Funds (MFs) applications.

"A large number of AI-driven projects are already on the way, within SEBI and one of the key utilisations of AI that we are deploying is to do faster processing of all applications so that we can turn this around even faster," said Buch during the inaugural session of SEBI Samvad symposium.

Buch highlighted that as of November 2024, only two IPO applications were pending approval for over six months, which is a significant improvement from 8 in March 2022.

She said same goes for applications for mutual funds,

as of November 2024, only one such fund application was pending that was six months old. This number was 69 in March 2022.

The introduction of AI will further reduce the timelines for IPOs and MFs approvals. Buch said the Indian IPO market is booming with a flood of applications being received every week.

"So, if we look at today, just in the last nine months, 3.3 lakh, crores of equity rays just in the last three months. So in the last nine months, so you can safely assume another for the balanced. Quarters will be roughly at about 4.3 lakh crores at the end of the year"

Even though capital raising via equity has increased over the years, sometimes, preference issues and rights issues go unnoticed in the primary market.

"We have tried to increase the rights issues by doing a Fastrack rights issue which

KEY POINTS



- SEBI to use AI for faster IPO and Mutual Fund approvals.
- Pending IPO and MF applications dropped significantly since March 2022.
- AI will further reduce approval timelines amid rising IPO market activity.
- SEBI proposes Rs 250 SIP to boost financial inclusion and discusses growth potential for REITs, InvITs, and muni bonds.

is followed by a preferential issue," Buch said.

Buch also stressed the need for a Rs 250 system-

atic investment plan (SIP) for MFs. She said that just as capital formation is important for the economy to

grow, inclusion is equally important and hence the proposed Rs 250 SIP is crucial to enhance financial inclusion.

Buch asked State Bank of India chairperson Challa Sreenivasalu who was also attending the event to support and popularise the micro-SIP by talking to its mutual fund business.

The Rs 250 SIP is slated to be launched shortly, but the date has not been officially announced yet.

The SEBI chairperson also covered the potential for REITs, InvITs, and muni bonds and said they have the potential to grow over the next 10 years.

SpiceJet to unground 10 aircraft by mid-April 2025

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

SpiceJet will unground 10 aircraft by mid-April 2025, in a move aimed at strengthening its network and operational capabilities.

As per the airline, these will include four Boeing 737 MAX planes.

This initiative is expected to significantly increase the current fleet size of 28 aircraft, even as some aircraft are redelivered to lessors during the same period.

SpiceJet added 10 planes to its fleet since October 2024, comprising three previously grounded aircraft brought back into service and seven inducted on lease.

Over the past three months, SpiceJet's network expansion strategy has



resulted in the addition of more than 60 new flights, further enhancing connectivity and service options for its passengers.

Ajay Singh, Chairman and Managing Director, of SpiceJet, said, "Our plan to bring 10 aircraft back into service by mid-April is a reflection of SpiceJet's unwavering commitment to its growth and operational

excellence."

"SpiceJet is on a strong path to recovery and growth, and we remain focused on providing reliable and affordable air travel to millions of Indians," he added.

Last month, SpiceJet signed an agreement with StandardAero Inc., a leading US-based engine MRO, for the restoration of its

grounded MAX fleet.

This agreement followed successful partnerships with CFM International, Inc., the OEM for LEAP-1B engines, and a key lessor, paving the way for the ungrounding and return to service of three Boeing 737 MAX aircraft.

In the past two months, SpiceJet has resolved disputes with several major lessors and partners, including Export Development Canada, Engine Lease Finance Corporation, Babcock and Brown Aircraft Management, Aircastle (Ireland), Wilmington Trust SP Services (Dublin) Limited, Shannon Engine Support Limited among others demonstrating its commitment to operational stability and growth.

Startups in every district by 2025: DPIIT

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has announced its ambitious vision to establish startups in every district of the country by the end of 2025.

Over the past nine years, the number of startups in India has surged from just 400 in 2014 to over 157,000 today. Addressing a press briefing Amandeep Singh Bhatia, Secretary, DPIIT highlighted the success of the Startup India Initiative, launched on January 16, 2016. "The program has been pivotal in supporting entrepreneurs, building a robust startup ecosystem, and transforming India into a nation of job creators instead of job seekers," he said.

DPIIT Joint Secretary Sanjiv shared, "Our focus is to ensure a thriving startup ecosystem in every district of India by 2025. Currently, 48 per cent of startups are emerging from tier-2 and tier-3 cities, indicating that entrepreneurship is no longer confined to metropolitan hubs."

Sanjiv said in 2016, startups existed in only 120 districts.

This has expanded to



STARTUP CORNER



over 750 districts today, with aspirations to cover all districts by 2025.

The number of unicorns has grown from 8 in 2016 to 118 in 2024. Unicorns are basically startups worth at least a billion dollars and not yet listed on a public exchange.

Startup funding has risen from USD 8 billion in 2016 to more than USD 155 billion today. The ecosystem

has generated over 1.7 million jobs. The secretary highlighted that the government launched 3 key schemes to strengthen the startup ecosystem.

To support the startup ecosystem, the government has launched several initiatives. A Fund of Funds for Startups was established and 144 Alternative Investment Funds (AIF) with a corpus of Rs 80,000 crores to provide financial support to startups.

Startup India Seed Fund Scheme provided early-stage funding to startups through incubators, acting as a model for nurturing innovation and enabled startups to access loans from banks by offering credit guarantees, easing financial hurdles.

Bhatia highlighted that the 2016 Startup India Action Plan introduced

measures such as tax exemptions and regulatory relaxations to ease the burden on startups. The Government Procurement System prioritizes purchases from startups, fostering business opportunities.

The government has also emphasized supporting deep-tech startups through targeted funding. Bhatia mentioned that as the ecosystem completes a decade, efforts will focus on collaborating with companies to develop innovative products and explore greater integration with international markets. With these efforts, it is expected that India is poised to solidify its position as one of the world's leading startup ecosystems, fostering innovation and creating new opportunities nationwide.

The DPIIT released figures of Startup performance in India as a curtain raiser to celebrate National Startup Day on January 16.

The government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with the objective of building a strong ecosystem for nurturing innovation, and start-ups and encouraging investments in the start-up ecosystem of the country, launched the Startup India initiative on January 16, 2016.

Household debt rises 158% after COVID-19: Report

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Household (HH) debts have gone up due to increased financial inclusion amid increased wealth because of increased investments in real estate and equities according to a recent report 'India Strategy' by DAM Capital.

"due to increasing financial penetration. 18.3 per cent of adults have some outstanding loan, rural male more likely to have debt. But, Wealth effect kicking in: HH's GFA totalled 158% of GDP in Q1FY25 vs. 124% at end-Dec-19, largely due to realty & equity investments." said the report.

The report says that higher indebtedness and wealth effect have increased inequality. The number of individuals with gross income of over Rs 1cr has increased by 70 per cent in the last two years.

The Q2FY25 GDP came at 5.4 per cent against RBI's expectations of 6.5 per cent is also because of this.

However, in the medium term, the growth will come to the pre-Covid level of 6.5 per cent.

"We expect medium term growth potential to 6.5%, at the pre-Covid rate, normalized from the post-Covid recovery 7-8% band"

Other components of the slowdown include GST implementation which has smashed the SME sector, almost 40 per cent of

and be protected by higher MSPs. The report expects RBI to ease regulatory tightening on unsecured lending & home loans by mid-2025 to revive consumption. The recent CRR cut and other measures by RBI will boost liquidity from Q4FY25.

Also, the recent populist measures like direct money transfers announced by many states like Maharashtra, Jharkhand, M.P., Karnataka etc will add to total spending of over Rs 2 trillion, which is equivalent to 0.7 per cent of the GDP.

These freebies programmes will benefit 34 per cent of women in these states and it will add to the average per capita rural as well as urban consumption.

Increased penetration of distribution, financialisation, digitalisation and convergence of wage growth are leading to reverse migration to rural areas. In addition, better physical infrastructure is leading to enhanced rural mobility and a decline in rural poverty vs. urban poverty, which is narrowing the gap in consumption inequality.

Rural households will benefit from food income

Stock indices slump with IT sector being only outlier

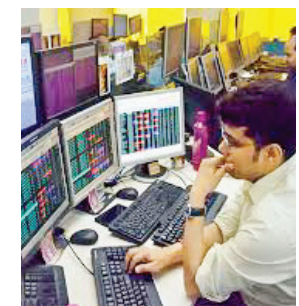
TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Indian stock indices settled in the red for the third straight day on Friday, the last session of the current week, due to looming uncertainties around President Donald Trump-elect's likely actions post his inauguration.

The Indian equity markets underperformed most global markets. The Sensex and Nifty index declined by 2 per cent this week, said Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research at Kotak Securities. Besides, consistent selling by foreign investors and weak domestic economic growth also reflected on the stock markets.

Sensex closed at 77,378.91 points, down 241.30 points or 0.31 per cent. Nifty closed at 23,440.00 points, down 86.50 points or 0.37 per cent.

All the sectoral indices were deep in the red except Nifty IT, which closed 3.44 percent higher. Nifty media, PSU bank, and realty were



the top losers.

"In the context of the looming uncertainty regarding President Trump's likely actions, the market is unlikely to rally in the near-term. There appears to be no respite to the sustained FII selling... This will continue to put pressure on the market," said V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services.

"Since the results season has started the market will witness lots of stock-specific action in response to the results. Results of TCS indicate that the IT sector will continue to remain resilient. Results of banking majors will be good but in the context of FII selling the sector may not perform in

response to the results," he added.

Nifty IT jumped today reacting to robust earnings reported by Tata Consultancy Services.

IT services major Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has reported a 12 per cent jump in net profit in the just-concluded October-December quarter, its earnings released Thursday showed. The net profit rose to Rs 12,444 crore in the December quarter, as against Rs 11,097 crore in the year-ago period.

With TCS releasing Q3 earnings, the corporate earnings season for the October-December quarter kicked off. Earning insights of India Inc. will give cues to market participants. Coming to revenue from operations, the IT services major reported a 5.6 per cent rise to Rs 63,973 crore in the December quarter, as against Rs 60,583 crore in the year-ago period.

TCS shares today closed 5.6 per cent higher at Rs 4,265.

Industrial production records multi-month high of 5.2% in Nov

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) growth rate for the month of November 2024 is 5.2 per cent (a multi-month high), which was 3.5 per cent the month prior, quick estimates released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation showed Friday.

The growth rates of the three sectors, Mining, Manufacturing and Electricity in November 2024 were 1.9 per cent, 5.8 per cent and 4.4 per cent, respectively.

The Quick Estimates of IIP stands at 148.4 against 141.1 in November 2023. The Indices of Industrial Production for the Mining, Manufacturing and Electricity sectors in November 2024 stood at 133.8, 147.4 and 184.1, respectively.

Friday's quick estimates will undergo revision in subsequent releases as per the revision policy of IIP.

Inflation will be major concern in FY26: Report

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Inflation remains the major risk going forward for the financial year 2026 due to the higher cost of raw materials, a DAM Capital report added.

The report added that inflation is a foremost concern for FY26, with a projected decline to 4.5 per cent from the current level.

The major reason behind the persistent inflation is domestic pressure. The pass-through effect of rising raw material costs, particularly in agriculture, food, and metals, is expected to contribute to persistent inflation. As demand increases, businesses are likely to raise prices of raw materials, impacting consumers.

External factors are also a concern, particularly the ongoing tariff war and the depreciation of the Chinese Yuan. Given China's vulnerabil-



ity, the report predicts that the Yuan will likely see a steeper devaluation compared to the INR, putting additional pressure on India's inflation levels.

Furthermore, geopolitical tensions and policies, such as former U.S. President Donald Trump's "Make America Great Again" agenda, could spur demand for the US dollar, further complicating India's inflation outlook.

Despite these risks, experts highlight that China's deflationary pressures and the resulting Yuan depreciation could provide some relief by making Chinese exports more competitive and potentially easing inflationary pressures in India.

MAHA KUMBH: TECH WILL ADDRESS CHALLENGES OF SCALE, SAFETY AND SUSTAINABILITY

OPINION

DR. K. VENKATAKRISHNA RAO

One of the rarest, exceptional Maha Kumbh Mela is set to take off on 13th, January and ends on 26th, February with Maha Shivaratri amounting to 44 days in Prayagraj of Uttar Pradesh. It takes place once for every 144 years, and is ordained by a rare alignment of four planets. Government expects that around 45 crore pilgrims are likely to take a dip in the holy river confluence for a spiritual rejuvenation.

As Maha Kumbh Mela is a massive religious and cultural event that draws millions of pilgrims, requiring extensive use of technology to ensure smooth operations. Some of the key technologies are typically deployed during the Holy program. For communication and updates, Maha Kumbh Mela Mobile App 2025 launched to provide pilgrims with program updates, navigation, event schedules, and emergency contacts. UP Police has already launched Maha Kumbh Police App to strengthen

security. Police personnel also started Digital lost and found centers. As millions of pilgrims expected to attend, extensive data is needed to analyse carefully for crowd management. AI enabled solutions are being used to improve inter agency coordination, detect potential threats promptly, and generate actionable intelligence for security. The UP government started a website Portal and Centralized platforms for real-time updates, registration, and event information for the pilgrims. Free public Wi-Fi services by various telecom companies also help visitors stay connected and access information. To cater the massive demand, 78 cell towers on wheels and 150 outdoor small cell towers have been deployed to ensure smooth communication in crowded zones.

The Park+ app for smart parking systems, it manages parking lots with real-time occupancy data and navigation tools such as digital maps and location-based services guide pilgrims to key areas like

ghats, tents, and temples. GPS Tracking has been used for real-time tracking of vehicles, security personnel, and key resources. To manage the crowd, AI and Big Data technologies have been used to analyze crowd density and predict movement patterns to prevent overcrowding. To ensure the safety of pilgrims Aerial surveillance drones have been installed. Drones will monitor crowds and ensure safety. To ensure Public Safety and Security, the State government has deployed 2751 CCTV Cameras across the Triveni Sangam including 328 AI enabled cameras and monitored by control room 24/7. To identify and help the missing persons and monitor potential threats, the state government has installed Facial Recognition Systems. Emergency response systems have been incorporated, Integrated systems connect control rooms with field personnel for quick response. Drones have been used for safety.

Apart from that, the Government has given high priority to Healthcare and Sanitation. Doctors and specialists provide consultations via video conferencing for remote camps. Smart Toilets for the pilgrims, which are Eco-friendly and technology-enabled sanitation facilities. As the pilgrims visit from the various parts



Global warming is a concern for many environmentalists due to pollution. To reduce the carbon emissions and pollution, E-rickshaws and Green Vehicles have been arranged, Sustainable transport options are encouraged by the UP state government. To ensure a healthy environment and to monitor the pollution levels UP state government is using the Air Quality Sensors.

of the country and due to climate change, health may get affected. To ensure the safety of Ganga water for bathing and drinking, a Real-time Water Quality Monitoring system has

been placed.

It seems the state government is committed to providing quality services to the visitors, boost in Infrastructure taking place at the Triveni Sangam in the

form of temporary smart Cities. They are fully functional temporary settlements equipped with energy-efficient street lighting and robust water supply. To reduce the dependency

on the electricity board and ensure the power supply fully solar panels have been installed. These solar panels provide energy for lights, charging stations, and other utilities. In addition, To improve the quality services and to increase the efficiency, the State government is encouraging the vendors to use cashless transactions such as Mobile wallets and UPI-based payments ease transactions for pilgrims and vendors.

Due to the aging or some other issues, some of the devotees may not participate in Maha Kumbh Mela in person. For them

Broadcasts enable global participation through live streaming.

As we all know, Social media platforms became part of our life. Many Social Media accounts have been created, to give updates, public announcements, and promote awareness.

Global warming is a concern for many environmentalists due to pollution. To reduce the carbon emissions and pollution, E-rickshaws and Green Vehicles have been arranged, Sustainable transport options are encouraged by the UP state government. To ensure a healthy environment and to monitor the pollution levels UP state government is using the Air Quality Sensors.

The state government is expecting around 45 crore pilgrims to participate in the Kumbh Mela. In such a situation, Waste management is one of the biggest challenges for any government. To address the issue, the Government adopted Waste Management Technology such as modern systems for garbage collection, segregation, and recycling.

These technologies will ensure efficient management of the event, addressing the challenges of scale, safety, and sustainability.

Dr. K. Venkatakrishna Rao, Assistant Professor in dept of CSE at NIT Warangal and Visiting Fellow at India Foundation, New Delhi

75 years of Constitution: Reflections on legal education, democratic values

OPINION

HARSH VARDHAN TIWARI



The 75th anniversary of the Constitution of India, celebrated on November 26, 2024, marks a significant milestone in the journey of the world's largest democracy. This occasion not only commemorates the adoption of a document that has shaped the nation's identity but also serves as a reflection on the evolution of legal education in India. The Constitution, which came into effect on January 26, 1950, has been a beacon of democracy, justice, and equality, embodying the aspirations of millions. As we celebrate this anniversary, it is imperative to recognize how legal education has evolved alongside our constitutional framework. The Constitution of India stands as a testament to the vision of its framers, who sought to create a robust framework for governance that would uphold funda-

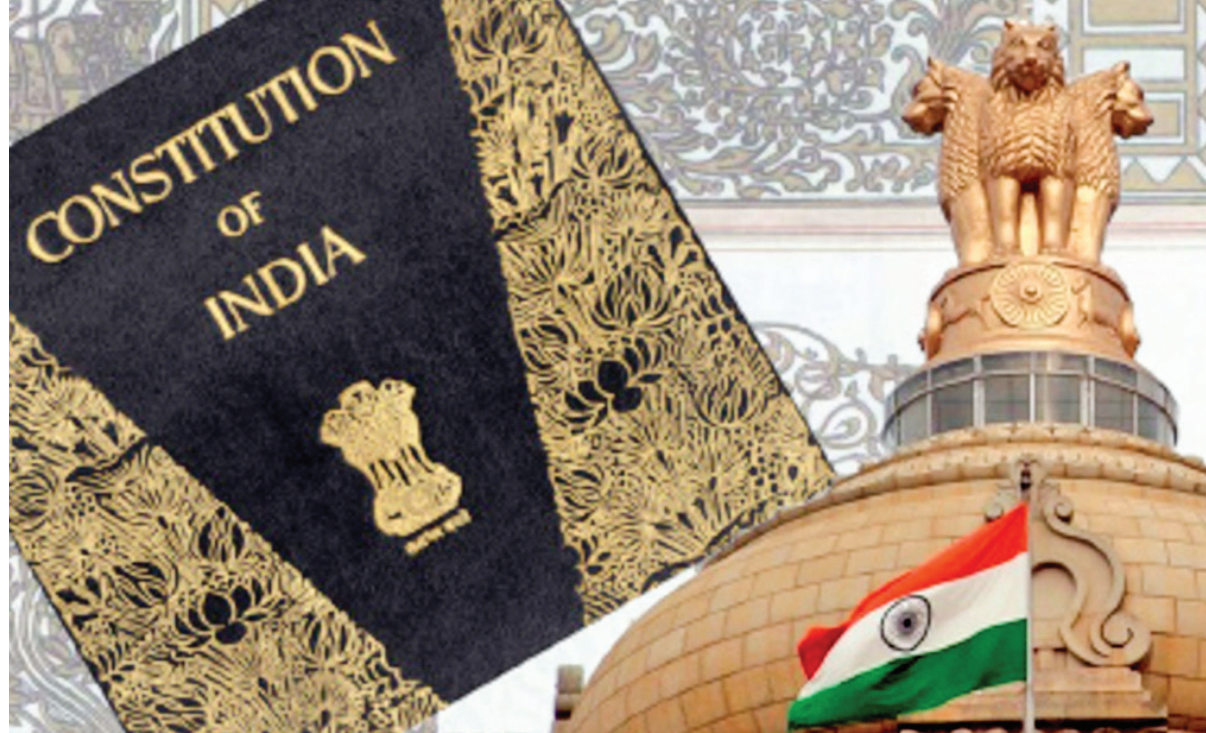
mental rights while promoting social justice. Over its 75-year journey, the Constitution has undergone numerous amendments—approximately 125—demonstrating its adaptability to the changing needs of society. This flexibility is crucial for maintaining relevance in an ever-evolving legal landscape and is mirrored in the development of legal education across the country. Legal education in India has witnessed transformative changes since independence. Initially dominated by traditional methods and curricula, it has gradually evolved to incorporate modern pedagogical approaches.

The establishment of National Law Schools in the late 20th century marked a pivotal shift towards a more structured and comprehensive legal education system. These institutions not only focus on imparting theoretical knowledge but also emphasize critical thinking, research skills, and practical training through clinical programs. The Bar Council of India (BCI) plays a vital role in regulating legal education, ensuring that it meets professional standards and aligns with constitutional mandates.

As we reflect on the past 75 years, it is essential to acknowledge both achievements and challenges within legal education. While significant strides have been made in enhancing quality and accessibility, issues such as outdated curricula, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient faculty remain pressing concerns.

The need for continuous reform is paramount to ensure that legal education remains dynamic and relevant. Efforts are underway to revise curricula to include interdisciplinary studies and practical training that bridge the gap between theory and practice. Moreover, there is an increasing emphasis on integrating traditional Indian values and ethics into contemporary legal education. This approach aims to decolonize legal studies by incorporating indigenous knowledge systems that resonate with India's rich cultural heritage. Such integration not only enriches the learning experience but also prepares future legal professionals to make ethically sound decisions that reflect societal values.

The celebration of the Constitution's 75th anniversary also provides an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to upholding its principles through legal education. The ideals enshrined in the Constitution—justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity—must be at the forefront of legal training. Educators and institutions have a responsibility to instill these val-



Global warming is a concern for many environmentalists due to pollution. To reduce the carbon emissions and pollution, E-rickshaws and Green Vehicles have been arranged, Sustainable transport options are encouraged by the UP state government. To ensure a healthy environment and to monitor the pollution levels UP state government is using the Air Quality Sensors.

ues in students, fostering a generation of lawyers who are not only skilled practitioners but also conscientious citizens committed to upholding democratic ideals. In addition to academic rigor, there is a growing recognition of the importance of practical experience in shaping competent legal professionals. Clinical legal education programs are being introduced across law schools

to provide students with hands-on experience in real-world scenarios. Such initiatives not only enhance learning outcomes but also contribute to community service by addressing access to justice issues faced by marginalized populations.

As we look ahead to the next 25 years leading up to the centenary of our Constitution, it is crucial for stakeholders in legal edu-

cation—government bodies, universities, and practitioners—to collaborate towards creating a more inclusive and effective educational framework. This includes enhancing infrastructure, promoting research initiatives, and ensuring that legal education remains accessible to all segments of society. The journey of India's Constitution is intertwined with the evolution of legal

education—a relationship that must be nurtured for future generations. As we celebrate this historic milestone, let us commit ourselves to not only preserving but also enriching our constitutional legacy through quality legal education.

By doing so, we can ensure that our Constitution continues to be a living document that guides us toward justice and equality for all. In this context, the recent inauguration of India's first Constitution Museum at O.P. Jindal Global University (JGU) serves as a beacon of hope for legal education and constitutional awareness. Opened on November 26, 2024, this museum is dedicated to showcasing the Constitution's history and significance while also providing

an interactive platform for learning about constitutional principles. Moreover, this initiative aligns with broader efforts to celebrate constitutional literacy across India during this commemorative year. Schools and institutions nationwide are encouraged to engage in activities that promote awareness about the Constitution's significance—ranging from mass readings of its Preamble to discussions on its impact on contemporary society.

Such initiatives reinforce the idea that understanding one's Constitution is not just an academic exercise but a vital part of civic responsibility.

In conclusion, India's 75th anniversary of its Constitution is an occasion for reflection on both our past achievements and future aspirations. The establishment of institutions like the Constitution Museum at JGU represents a significant step towards enhancing legal education and fostering a culture of constitutional awareness among future generations.

As we move forward, it is essential to uphold and promote the values enshrined in our Constitution while ensuring that legal education evolves to meet the needs of an ever-changing society. By doing so, we can ensure that our constitutional democracy remains vibrant and responsive to the aspirations of all citizens in India.

Harsh Vardhan Tiwari, Joint Director (Admissions) OP Jindal Global University

FROM GRAINS TO GROWTH: PROCESSED FOOD BOOM

India's processed food market set to reach \$535 billion by 2025, fuelled by rising demand and government initiatives.

Over the last ten years, India's processed food sector has undergone a remarkable transformation, fueled by evolving consumer preferences, economic growth, and strategic government initiatives. This shift has reshaped the nation's dietary habits and positioned India as a significant player in the global processed food industry.

RISING DEMAND

The Indian food processing market has grown substantially, increasing in value from USD 263 billion in 2019-20 to a projected USD 535 billion by 2025. This expansion mirrors a broader global trend, with the processed food industry expected to grow from USD 1,925.7 billion in 2020 to USD 3,407.2 billion by 2030, at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5.2%.

A major contributor to this growth is the increasing consumption of ultra-processed foods (UPFs) across India. Retail sales of UPFs have risen at a CAGR of 13% from 2011 to 2021, signaling a shift from traditional home-cooked meals to processed alternatives. This trend is evident in both urban and rural areas, with studies showing growing popularity of UPFs across diverse socioeconomic groups.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

The Indian government has implemented several initiatives to strengthen the food processing industry. The Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, with an outlay of INR 10,900 crore, is aimed at boosting domestic manufacturing, promoting exports, and creating employment in the sector. Furthermore, the government has set ambitious targets to enhance India's share in the global processed food market, currently valued at USD 4 trillion. India's share stands at just 2.4%, but efforts are underway to increase value-added exports by 40% over the next few years. The organic food market also holds considerable promise, with plans to quadruple India's share from 2.5% in the next five years.

TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS

To support these goals, investments in technological innovations and infrastructure development are being prioritized. The redesigned Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEEDA) portal offers improved user experience and valuable information for stakeholders. Additionally, the new Agri Exchange portal provides a user-friendly platform for data analysis and report generation on agricultural exports.

Moreover, the introduction of TraceNet 2.0, an upgraded traceability platform under the National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP), aims to streamline operations and enhance regulatory oversight. These digital initiatives are designed to boost transparency, efficiency, and compliance within the sector.

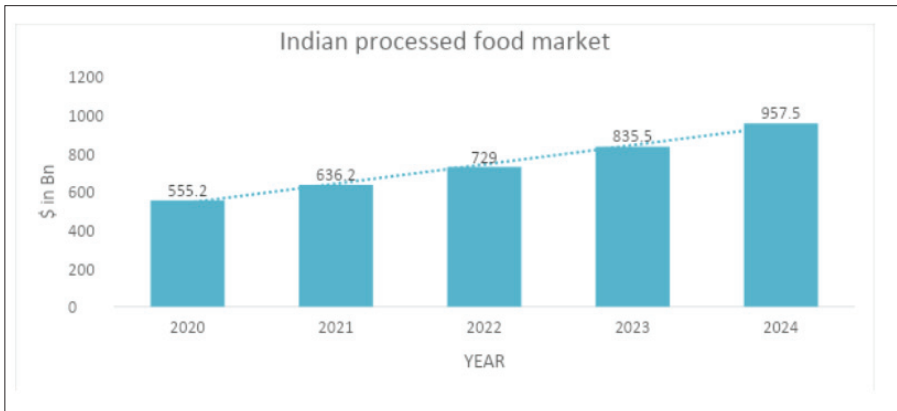
CHANGING CONSUMER PREFERENCES

Consumer preferences in



State-wise Food Processing Units and Key Contributions		
State	Number of Food Processing Units	Key Contributions and Highlights
Maharashtra	2,791	Accounts for ~13% of India's food processing output. Leading in wine production (~90% of India's total). Significant processor of mangoes and onions.
Uttar Pradesh	2,105	Major contributor in sugar production. Recent decline in sugar output due to delayed operations. 2024/25 sugar production: ~1.29 million tons.
Andhra Pradesh	5,653	Houses a substantial number of food processing units. Significant contributor to the state's economy.
Tamil Nadu	4,982	Focuses on dairy, poultry, and seafood processing. Among the leading contributors to India's food processing sector.
Gujarat	2,245	Significant player in dairy products. One of the leading milk-producing states in India.

Note: The number of food processing units is based on the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) 2018-19 data.



Source: insightsonindia.com



India have shifted significantly over the past decade. A report by the State Bank of India reveals a decline in

etary habits and increased demand for diverse and convenient food options, which the processed food industry is well-equipped to cater to. The ready-to-eat (RTE) segment has particularly benefited from these changing preferences. Constant product innovation to meet evolving consumer de-

India's Food Processing Sector

Overview of India's Food Processing Sector

- Global Standing:** 6th largest in the world.
- Economic Contribution:** 9% GVA in Agriculture.
- Market Potential:** \$535 billion by 2025.
- Employment:** 9 Million jobs by 2024.
- Exports:** 23% of India's Export.
- Growth Rate:** 8.3% CAGR in last 5 years (ending FY21).

Key Drivers for Growth

- Government Policies:** 1 FDI relaxation, tax breaks.
- Production Base:** India ranks 1st (Milk, Ginger, Spices, Bananas, and Mangoes), 2nd (Rice, Wheat, and various vegetables and fruits).
- Geographical Advantage:** 1 Diverse agro-climatic zones, soil types. 2 Largest arable land in the world.
- Rising Demand:** Driven by 1 Rising disposable incomes. 2 Demographic changes (nuclear families, working women).
- Online Food Delivery:** 1 Rapid growth in platforms like Zomato, Swiggy etc.
- Growth in Organised Retail:** 1 Tier 1 & 2 cities, mall culture. 2 Productivity gains across supply chains.

Challenges Faced by the Sector

- Unorganized Nature:** Over 40% of the sector is unorganized.
- Supply Issues:** Low surplus, seasonal losses, fragmented land.
- Financial Constraints:** Limited farmer finance, no VC fund.
- Innovation Gap:** Low R&D, tech transfer issues, limited investment.
- Branding Deficit:** Limited global branding for Indian products.

Way Forward

- Institutional Reforms:** APMC reform, land reforms, FPOs, agribusiness credit.
- Value Addition:** Emphasis on ready-to-cook/eat products.
- Innovation Fund:** Incentivize food tech innovations.
- Essential Commodities Act:** Exemptions for exporters, processors, retailers.
- Quality Standards:** Certified testing, training, information campaigns.

Source: pmfias.com



Top Food Processing Companies					
Rank	Company Name	Market Capitalization (Rs Lakh Cr)	Notable Brands	Product Diversification	Sustainability Initiatives
1	ITC Limited	5.84	Aashirvaad, Sunfeast, Bingo!	Diversified portfolio including packaged foods, personal care, and more.	Focus on sustainable agriculture and responsible sourcing.
2	Hindustan Unilever Ltd.	5.62	Knorr, Kissan, Brooke Bond	Extensive range in personal care, home care, and food products.	Commitment to reducing environmental footprint and sustainable sourcing.
3	Nestlé India Limited	2.10	Maggi, Nescafé, KitKat	Focus on nutrition and wellness with a wide array of food and beverage products.	Initiatives towards sustainable packaging and reducing carbon footprint.
4	Varun Beverages Limited	1.88	PepsiCo beverages	Beverages including carbonated drinks and fruit juices.	Efforts in water conservation and energy efficiency.
5	Britannia Industries Ltd.	1.18	Good Day, Marie Gold, Tiger	Bakery products including biscuits, bread, and dairy items.	Focus on sustainable manufacturing practices.

Criteria for Ranking
Market Capitalization: Indicates the company's market value, size, and investor confidence.
Revenue and Profitability: Reflects annual sales and profit margins, showing financial health.
Brand Equity: The strength and recognition of a company's brands.
Product Diversification: The company's ability to innovate and meet consumer preferences.
Supply Chain Efficiency: How effectively a company manages sourcing, manufacturing, and distribution.
Regulatory Compliance: Adherence to food safety and quality standards.
Sustainability Initiatives: Efforts towards environmental sustainability and corporate social responsibility.

Health Implications and Level of Processing			
Food Category	Examples	Level of Processing	Health Implications
Cereals & Grains	Rice, Wheat, Maize	Processed into flours, breakfast cereals, snacks	Can be healthy if minimally processed (whole grains), but refined grains may lead to weight gain and blood sugar spikes.
Fruits & Vegetables	Canned fruits, Fruit juices, Pickles	Canned, preserved, or juiced	Can be healthy, especially when minimally processed; excessive added sugar and preservatives may be harmful.
Dairy Products	Milk, Yogurt, Cheese, Butter	Pasteurized, fermented, or powdered	Generally healthy if minimally processed, but full-fat varieties and excessive consumption may increase cholesterol.
Meat & Poultry	Sausages, Ready-to-eat meals	Cured, canned, or packaged	Risky when processed heavily (e.g., nitrates in sausages); high salt and fat content can lead to cardiovascular diseases.
Beverages	Soft Drinks, Juices, Alcohol	Bottled, carbonated, sweetened	Sugary drinks are unhealthy (linked to obesity and diabetes); fruit juices can be healthy if without added sugars.
Ultra-Processed Foods	Instant noodles, Packaged snacks, Sugary beverages	High processing, additives, preservatives	Unhealthy; high in added sugars, unhealthy fats, and sodium, contributing to obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.
Minimally Processed Foods	Whole grain flour, Frozen fruits, Frozen vegetables	Lightly processed for convenience	Generally healthy as they retain most nutrients and are minimally altered.
Fortified Foods	Fortified cereals, Fortified milk	Added vitamins and minerals	Beneficial, especially for addressing nutrient deficiencies like iron or vitamin D.

mands is expected to push the RTE market to 25 billion Indian rupees by 2025. Additionally, there's a growing acceptance of plant-based and vegan options, further diversifying the market.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

The processed food sector plays a critical role in India's economy, contributing to GDP, exports, investment, and employment. The sector directly employs approximately 2.005 million people across 40,579 registered food processing factories. Foreign direct investment (FDI) has also been substantial, with the sector attracting \$12,955.90 million in FDI equity from April 2000 to September 2024, making up 1.83% of India's total FDI inflows.

In the 2023-24 period, the processed food segment contributed 23.5% to agri-food exports, underscoring its importance in India's export landscape. The government's focus on enhancing the blue economy, highlighted by initiatives like the Aqua Goa Mega Fish Festival, also complements the growth of the food processing sector by promoting fisheries and related industries.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

While the growth of the processed food sector presents economic opportunities, it also raises health concerns. The rising consumption of ultra-processed foods, often high in sugars, fats, and additives, has been linked to various health issues, including obesity and non-communicable diseases. A World Health Organization (WHO) report highlights the rapid increase in UPF sales in India over the past decade, prompting calls for regulatory measures to address the trend.

In response, there's growing emphasis on food safety and quality standards. The establishment of 100 new food testing labs aims to ensure food safety for all. Additionally, efforts are underway to extend the shelf life of perishable items to minimize losses and boost export potential. The government's commitment to bridging the gap between policy and industry is clear through initiatives that promote Indian food brands abroad, such as the Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Food Processing Industries (PLISFPI).

FUTURE OUTLOOK

The processed food sector in India is poised for significant transformation. With supportive government

policies, technological advancements, and a strong focus on quality and safety, India is well-positioned to enhance its presence in the global processed food market. The convergence of these factors, combined with the dynamic nature of consumer preferences, suggests a promising future for the industry, in line with the country's broader goals of economic development and global integration.

Unhealthy Processed Foods: Ultra-processed foods, such as instant noodles, sugary snacks, and beverages, tend to have high levels of unhealthy fats, added sugars, and salt. Regular consumption of these can lead to obesity, heart disease, and type 2 diabetes.

Healthier Processed Foods: Minimally processed foods, like whole grain flours, frozen vegetables, and dairy products, retain most of their nutrients and offer convenience. Fortified foods, such as cereals and milk, address nutrient deficiencies, particularly in rural areas, improving public health outcomes.

Impact of Raw Material Prices on the Food Processing Industry

Fluctuations in raw material prices significantly

influence production costs, pricing strategies, and consumer demand. Here's a breakdown:

Production Costs and Profit Margins: Rising costs of essential ingredients, like wheat, elevate production costs. Companies may adjust prices to maintain profit margins, potentially affecting consumer purchasing behavior.

Consumer Demand: Price-sensitive consumers may opt for alternative or unprocessed foods, which can reduce demand for processed items. However, the sector's growth depends on consumer purchasing power and adaptability to price increases.

Government Policies and Support: Interventions to stabilize raw material prices and infrastructure investments, such as the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana, are aimed at reducing volatility and enhancing supply chain efficiency.

Long-Term Growth: Despite short-term challenges, the sector is projected to grow at a CAGR of 15%, reaching \$535 billion by 2025/26, driven by increased consumption in Tier-II and III cities, government support, and foreign investments.

KRISHNA JANMABHOOMI-SHAHI IDGAH DISPUTE: SUPREME COURT EXPRESSES RELUCTANCE TO INTERFERE WITH CONSOLIDATION OF SUITS

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Committee of Management Trust Shahi Masjid Idgah v. Bhagwan Shrikrishna Virajman & Ors. observed and has expressed reluctance to interfere with the order of Allahabad High Court to consolidate all suits relating to the Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Eidgah dispute.

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

The bench in the case orally observed that the consolidation would be in the benefit of both sides.

The bench did not pass any order today and adjourned the matter.

The bench in the case was

hearing the Special Leave Petition filed by the Shahi Idgah Mosque Committee challenging the order passed by the Allahabad High Court in January 2024 to consolidate all 15 suits filed by Hindu parties raising claims over the mosque at Mathura. In May 2023, thus, the High Court had transferred to itself all the suits from the trial court.

The counsel appearing for the Mosque Committee submitted before the court that complications will arise since all the suits, which have been clubbed together, are not of the same nature.

The bench of Chief Justice of India, CJI Khanna stated that, 'It does not make a difference.'

The bench of CJI Khanna stated that, 'Why this court would interfere in the issue



of consolidation? What difference does it make if it is consolidated? Anyway, think about it, we are adjourning it, but I think consolidation makes no difference at all, relist 1st of April 2025.'

The Supreme Court is also considering the petition filed by the Mosque Committee challenging the transfer of the suits to the High Court.

Another petition is filed by the, challenging the High

Court's refusal to reject the complaints as barred by the Places of Worship Act is pending in the Supreme Court.

Last Year, the Supreme Court in the case stayed the order of High Court to appoint an advocate commissioner for the inspection of the mosque.

BACKGROUND OF THE CASE

The controversy is related to Mughal emperor Au-

The Supreme Court in the case Committee of Management Trust Shahi Masjid Idgah v. Bhagwan Shrikrishna Virajman & Ors. observed and has expressed reluctance to interfere with the order of Allahabad High Court to consolidate all suits relating to the Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Eidgah dispute.

rangzeb-era Shahi Eidgah mosque at Mathura, which is alleged to have been built after demolishing a temple at the birthplace of Lord Krishna. In 1968, a 'compromise agreement' was brokered between the Shri Krishna Janmasthan Seva Sansthan, which is the temple management authority, and the Trust Shahi Masjid Eidgah allowing both places of worship to operate simultaneously.

Therefore, the validity of this agreement has now been challenged in the fresh suits by parties seeking various forms of relief in courts with respect to Krishna Janmabhoomi. It has been contended by the litigant that the compromise agreement was made fraudulently and is invalid in law. Claiming a right to worship at the disputed site, many of them have sought the Shahi Eidgah mosque's removal. In May 2023, the Allahabad High Court transferred to itself all suits which are pending before the Mathura Court pray-

ing for various reliefs pertaining to the dispute. The court stated that looking at the fact that as many as 10 suits are stated to be pending before the civil court and also there 25 should be more suits that can be said to be pending and issue can be said to be seminal public importance affected the masses beyond tribe and beyond communities having not proceeded an inch further since their institution on merits for past two to three years, provides full justifi-

cation for withdrawal of all the suits touching upon the issue involved in the suit from the civil court concerned to this Court under Section 24(1)(b) of Civil Procedure Code, CPC. The said transfer order was challenged in the Supreme Court by the mosque committee, and later by the Uttar Pradesh Sunni Central Waqf Board. In December 2023, the High Court allowed the petition filed seeking the appointment of a court commissioner to inspect the Shahi Idgah Mosque. The order was passed on an Order 26 Rule 9 CPC application filed by the deity (Bhagwan Shri Krishna Virajman) and 7 others. In January 2024, the Supreme Court stayed the implementation of the order. The court extended the stay.

Supreme Court dismisses two PILs challenging deferment of women's reservation in Lok Sabha and state assemblies

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Dr. Jaya Thakur Versus Union Of India And Anr and National Federation Of Indian Women, NFIW versus Union Of India observed and has dismissed the two Public Interest Litigations, PILs filed which relates to the implementation of the Constitution (One Hundred and Sixth Amendment) Act, 2023 and challenging the delimitation clause respectively.

The court orally remarked that there being no question of violation of fundamental rights least Article 14 of Constitution of India and therefore, Article 32 jurisdiction will not be entertained.

In the first Public Interest Litigation, PIL filed by Congress leader Jaya Thakur, it was claimed that the Constitution (One Hundred and Sixth Amendment) Act, 2023, which proposes to introduce 33 percent women's reservation in the Lok



Sabha, the upper houses of the state legislatures, and the Delhi legislative assembly, once passed with overwhelming support in a special session called for the purpose, cannot be withheld.

The court observed that although the constitutional amendment was made into a law after the assent of President Droupadi Murmu in September 2023, the act will not be implemented until a delimitation exercise is conducted following the next census.

The bench comprising of Justice Bela M. Trivedi and Justice PB Varale was hearing the present matter.

The bench in the case observed and has dismissed the writ petition as infructuous as the counsel, Advocate Varun Thakur appearing for the petitioner stated that he had challenged the Bill, which has now become legislation. Earlier, the court in the Public Interest Litigation, PIL expressed reservations about directing the Union Government to

The bench in the case observed and has dismissed the writ petition as infructuous as the counsel, Advocate Varun Thakur appearing for the petitioner stated that he had challenged the Bill, which has now become legislation. Earlier, the court in the Public Interest Litigation, PIL expressed reservations about directing the Union Government to immediately implement before the 2024 general elections, the 2023 Act.

immediately implement before the 2024 general elections, the 2023 Act. In second PIL filed by the National Federation of India Women, represented by Advocate Prashant Bhushan, the Court stated that it is not inclined to entertain. The bench of Justice Bela stated that the petitioner could approach the High Court if it wants to challenge the constitutional duty.

Further, the bench of Justice Bela stated that, 'if there is any constitutionality involved, you may challenge before the High Court. In the NFIW's petition, the challenge was to the 'delimitation clause' which sought to defer its implementation and urged the union government to dispense with the requirement of conducting a census and a delimitation exercise first.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Daliben Valjibhai Versus Prajapati Kodarbhai Kachrabhai observed and has reiterated that the period of limitation in such cases begins from the date when knowledge of fraud (underlying the challenged sale deed) is acquired, and not the date of registration. The Supreme Court in the case was dealing with the dismissal of suit filed seeking cancellation of a sale deed, on the ground of limitation.

The bench comprising of Justice PS Narasimha and Justice Manoj Misra was hearing the present matter. The bench in the case stated that while the High Court came to the correct conclusion that under Article 59 of the Limitation Act, a suit can be instituted within 3 years of the knowledge, it proceeded to return a finding that in cases where the document is registered, the knowledge must be presumed from the date of registration... there being no justification for the High Court in allowing the application under Order 7 Rule 11, on issues that were not evident from the plaint averments itself. The High Court was also not justified in holding that the limitation period commences from the date of registration itself. The court referred to the case of Chhotanben v. Kirtibhai Jalkrushnabhai Thakkar, wherein the suit is filed for cancellation of sale deed was opposed through an application under Order 7 Rule 11 Civil Procedure Code, CPC which being on the ground of limitation and the Supreme Court specifically held that limitation in all such cases shall arise from date of knowledge.

On the other hand, the respondent opposed the suit by an application under Order 7 Rule 11 CPC on grounds including that the case was barred by limitation, having been filed after a gap of 13 years since the execution of the sale deed. In 2018, the Trial Court allowed the application and dismissed the suit. In appeal, the First Appellate Court ruled in favor of the appellants. Aggrieved with the same, the respondent approached the Gujarat High Court, which allowed their appeal. Against the decision of High Court, the appellants filed the present appeal before the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court in the case observed that the High Court proceeded to decide the case on merits, instead of restricting its scrutiny to the averments in the plaint while dealing with OTRII CPC. The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case stated



Aggrieved with the same, the respondent approached the Gujarat High Court, which allowed their appeal.

Against the decision of High Court, the appellants filed the present appeal before the Supreme Court.

know of it only in 2017, when they were issued notice on an application filed by the respondents for correction of revenue entries and having found that there signatures of them were forged, the appellants instituted the suit in 2017 for a declaration and cancellation of the sale deed.

On the other hand, the respondent opposed the suit by an application under Order 7 Rule 11 CPC on grounds including that the case was barred by limitation, having been filed after a gap of 13 years since the execution of the sale deed. In 2018, the Trial Court allowed the application and dismissed the suit. In appeal, the First Appellate Court ruled in favor of the appellants.

Aggrieved with the same, the respondent approached the Gujarat High Court, which allowed their appeal. Against the decision of High Court, the appellants filed the present appeal before the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court in the case observed that the High Court proceeded to decide the case on merits, instead of restricting its scrutiny to the averments in the plaint while dealing with OTRII CPC. The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case stated

that, This court is of the opinion that the findings of the High Court are primarily factual. The High Court seems to have got carried away by the fact that the suit was filed 13 years after the execution of the sale deed and the question being whether the plaintiffs had the knowledge of the execution of the sale deed.' Adding to it, the court stated that, 'While the High Court came to the correct conclusion that under Article 59 of the Limitation Act, a suit can be instituted within 3 years of the knowledge, it proceeded to return a finding that in cases where the document is registered, the knowledge must be presumed from the date of registration.'

The High Court in the case observed and has examined the issue while exercising jurisdiction under Section 100 CPC.

The Supreme Court in the case stated that reversal of the judgment of the first Appellate Court on facts was impermissible.

The court set aside the High Court judgement and that of the First Appellate Court restored. Since the suit was of the year 2017, the Court directed the trial Court to dispose of the suit as expeditiously as possible. Accordingly, the court allowed the appellant's appeal.

Delhi High Court seeks Patanjali's response on Dabur's fresh injunction plea over 'disparaging' Chyavanprash ads

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court in the case Dabur India Limited v. Patanjali Ayurved observed and has sought response of Patanjali Ayurved on a fresh injunction petition filed by Dabur in its suit wherein it alleged that the former was running disparaging advertisements against its Chyavanprash product. Last year, on December 24, Summons in the writ were issued along with the notice on Dabur's application seeking an interim injunction against the advertisements.

In the present matter, a fresh injunction application was filed by Dabur wherein it alleged that after issuance of summons, Patanjali ran 6,182 advertisements against its product in last one week. The counsel, Senior Advocate Sandeep Sethi appearing for Dabur submitted before the bench of Justice Mini Pushkarna that Patanjali, in the advertisements, claims that



However, while denying the submissions made by Senior Advocate Sandeep Sethi, Mehta stated that all the ingredients which are used in Patanjali's product are as per prescribed formula and fit for human consumption.

its product is made using more than 51 herbs whereas only 47 herbs have been used.

The counsel, Senior Advocate Sandeep Sethi appearing for Dabur stated that Patanjali was using mercury in the product which is not fit for con-

sumption of children.

It was also submitted before the court that Patanjali advertisement specifically refers to Dabur's product made with using 40 herbs as 'ordinary.' Senior Advocate Sandeep Sethi also drew court's attention to Dabur's product

which states that it is made using 40 plus herbs.

Sethi also submitted before the court that Patanjali's reference to the product made using 40 herbs clearly refers to Dabur who is the market leader in the product having more than 60% of the market share.

He also stated that, 'They refer to us as ordinary. They make a market leader ordinary.' Senior Advocate Sandeep Sethi stated that there being disparagement carried out by Patanjali by calling Dabur as ordinary as if to show that the former is the

only one who follows the books and not the latter. It has also been alleged by him that there was misrepresentation on Patanjali's part to show false number of herbs used in its product.

On the other hand, the counsel, Senior Advocate Jayant Mehta appearing for Patanjali raised strong objection to the second interim injunction application.

However, while denying the submissions made by Senior Advocate Sandeep Sethi, Mehta stated that all the ingredients which are used in Patanjali's product are as per prescribed formula and fit for human consumption. The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case observed and has issued notice on the second interim injunction application and sought Patanjali's response.

Accordingly, the court listed the matter for further consideration on January 20, 2025.

TOP OF THE DAY

ISRAEL APPOINTS SIX NEW AMBASSADORS

TEL AVIV : The Appointments Committee for appointing heads of missions abroad of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs headed by Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar decided Thursday on the following ambassadorial appointments Walid Abu-Hiya, who serves in the Economic Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was appointed to the position of Israel's ambassador to Georgia. Maya Kadosh, who serves as director of the Coordination and Political Planning Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and as head of the political staff of Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar and who served as a senior political advisor to former Foreign Minister Israel Katz, was appointed to the position of Israel's ambassador to Hungary.

PAK PILGRIMS DEPART FROM AJMER SHARIF

AJMER : Pakistani pilgrims visiting Ajmer for the 813th Urs of Sufi Saint Khwaja Garib Nawaz have concluded their three-day stay and have departed today. Pakistani pilgrims visiting the Dargah of Sufi Saint Khwaja Garib Nawaz were escorted under strict police security. They were taken from the Central Girls School in Old Mandi to the Dargah, where they completed their visit under the same police cordon. Following the pilgrimage, they were escorted back to the Central Girls School. While giving information, Suresh Sindh, former ADM of the city said, "They are departing today and will go back by train at 3:00 pm."

ATTACKS: ISRAEL REPORTS SURGE IN 2024 TERROR

TEL AVIV : Facing attacks on seven fronts, Israel recorded 18,365 terror attacks in 2024, according to the National Public Diplomacy's annual summary report on terrorism released on Thursday. Israel faced attacks from seven fronts, including Iran, Lebanon, Syria, Gaza, Iraq, Yemen, and internal threats. The 18,365 terror attacks of 2024 resulted in 134 fatalities and 1,277 injuries.

CHINESE HACKERS BREACHED US AGENCIES

BEIJING : Chinese hackers breached the Committee on Foreign Investment in the U.S. (CFIUS), a government agency that reviews foreign investments for national security risks, CNN reported on Friday, citing three U.S. officials familiar with the matter. The breach was part of a broader incursion by the hackers into the U.S. Treasury Department's unclassified system, the report said. It did not say when the hack took place. The U.S. Treasury Department and CFIUS did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment outside regular business hours.

IMRAN WARNS OF PLAN TO IMPOSE 10-YEAR DICTATORSHIP IN PAKISTAN

Khan has been lodged at the Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi since mid-2023 in multiple cases and his party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf has been at loggerheads with the federal government.

AGENCIES LAHORE

Pakistan's incarcerated former prime minister Imran Khan has said that economic progress can never happen as long as the current "fascist system" is in place and warned that there is a plan to impose a "10-year dictatorship" in Pakistan.

Khan, 72, has been lodged at the Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi since mid-2023 in multiple cases and his party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has been at loggerheads with the federal government since the general elections in February 2024.

Several leaders of the PTI are currently in talks with the government and Khan on Wednesday said his party will participate in the third round of talks to help ease the political tension in the country.

He said that economic prosperity needs investment, adding that it is only possible when institutions adhere to their boundaries and responsibilities as defined by the Constitution. He also stressed that surging terrorism in Pakistan has also caused irreparable

THE DICTATORSHIP INFERENCES

- Imran Khan, former PM of Pakistan, claims a "fascist system" hinders economic progress.
- Warns of a planned 10-year dictatorship in Pakistan, with two years already passed.
- Khan, imprisoned since mid-2023, criticizes judicial and police system for promoting oppressors.
- PTI party in talks with the government; Khan confirms participation in third round of talks.
- Khan stresses that economic prosperity requires constitutional adherence and stable institutions.
- Highlights growing terrorism's impact on investor confidence in Pakistan.
- Criticizes military for focusing on suppressing PTI rather than combating terrorism.
- Calls for putting national prosperity over personal interests.



damage to the confidence of the investors.

Here's what Imran Khan said in a post on X, Khan said, "There is a plan to impose a ten-year dictatorship in Pakistan, of which two years have already passed. Judges or police officers who become a party to oppression are rewarded with promotions here".

"Judge Humayun Dilawar, who gave an illegal verdict against me was promoted, while judges from Rawalpindi and Sar-

godha, who gave fair decisions, were dismissed," he pointed out and added, "Such actions have obliterated merit and rule of law in the country."

Pakistan government vs Imran's PTI

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Imran Khan's party, remains at loggerheads with the federal government since the general elections in February 2024 as Khan remains imprisoned. Leaders of PTI are in talks with the govern-

ment as Khan said that his party will participate in the third round of talks to ease the political tension in the country.

Khan also made reference to the military as he said, "Tragically, those responsible for countering terrorism are using all their resources and energy to corner our party."

He suggested rising above personal egos and temporary gains and focusing on the decency and prosperity of the country.

Lebanon Army Chief Joseph Aoun elected as country's new President



Lebanon's parliament elected Army Chief Joseph Aoun (in Centre)

AGENCIES BEIRUT

Lebanon's parliament elected Army Chief Joseph Aoun as the country's new president on Thursday, bringing an end to a prolonged political deadlock and presidential vacancy, CNN reported.

Aoun was elected after two rounds of voting, following extensive efforts by the United States and Saudi Arabia to garner support for him. Both countries have close ties with Aoun, who is aligned with Washington and Riyadh.

After his election, Aoun

stepped down from his military role and arrived at the parliament in civilian attire to be sworn in.

In his acceptance speech, Aoun declared the start of a "new era" for Lebanon, vowing to address the country's ongoing economic and political crises. He also made a rare pledge to "monopolise weapons" under the state's authority, signalling his intention to disarm Hezbollah, the Iran-backed militant group, which has significant military influence in Lebanon, as reported by CNN.

Notably, Hezbollah, the most heavily armed mili-

tant group in the Middle East, had significant influence in several countries until it suffered heavy losses in a recent war with Israel. This conflict, along with the weakening of its ally, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, has reignited domestic debate on disarming the group. The US-brokered ceasefire agreement signed in November further weakened Hezbollah's position by stipulating its withdrawal from the border area with Israel, and Israeli forces are required to leave Lebanese territory by the end of January, as reported by CNN.

Dissanayake's next week visit to Beijing of great importance: China

TDG NETWORK BEIJING

China on Friday termed the upcoming three-day visit of Anura Kumara Dissanayake as significant as the Sri Lankan president seeks to balance ties with Beijing weeks after his India visit.

Dissanayake will pay a state visit to China from January 14 to 17 at the invitation of Chinese President Xi Jinping, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying announced here on Friday.

Another Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun told a media briefing: "The upcoming visit will be Dissanayake's first visit to China after taking office, and is of great importance to the development of China-Sri Lanka relations."

A host of issues, including permitting Chinese "research vessels" regarded as spy ships by India; Sri Lanka's debt commitments to China, stated to be Colombo's largest creditor, and expansion of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) investments are expected to figure in Dissanayake's talks with X.

B'desh condemns India's claims of mistreatment of fishermen

AGENCIES DHAKA

The Bangladesh Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) on Thursday called India's allegation of the "mistreatment of Indian fishermen" as "baseless and fabricated".

The Bangladeshi MOFA said that the allegations undermine the spirit of trust between the two countries.

"Bangladesh expresses its utter dismay and deep disappointment over the unfounded remarks and fabricated allegations of ill-treatment including physical abuses of the detained Indian fishermen by the Bangladesh authorities. Bangladesh firmly rejects such unfounded allegations which undermines the spirit of trust, goodwill and mutual respect between Bangladesh and India. Concerned authorities of Bangladesh have confirmed that, under no circumstances, were the detained fishermen physically abused. The matter was thoroughly investigated and it was found that no such ill-treatment or incident of physical abuse happened," the statement said.

The MOFA further claimed that they treated the Indian detainees appropriately.

"Bangladesh wishes to mention that the detained 95 Indian fishermen/crew members were treated appropriately during their stay in Bangladesh. As per international norms, consular accesses were duly granted



Representative image of fishermen at sea.

to the representatives of the Indian High Commission in Dhaka, who visited the fishermen during their detention. The representatives of the Indian diplomatic missions were also present during the release of Indian fishermen from the jails on 02 January 2025 and during the fishermen's departure from Mongla on 04 January 2025. The relevant hospitals completed the health screenings of all Indian fishermen, confirming that they were medically fit. During their journey towards the maritime border, Bangladesh Coast Guard authorities extended all necessary support and provisions," the statement added.

The MOFA said that they expected the repatriation from India to be amicably solved.

"The reciprocal repatriation process of the fishermen manifests the commitment of the Government of Bangladesh in resolving humanitarian issues amicably and collaboratively with the Government of India. Bangladesh

calls upon all parties to avoid making such unfounded allegations that undermine the spirit of cooperation and mutual respect between the two countries," it said.

"The reciprocal repatriation of 90 Bangladeshi fishermen/crew detained in India and 95 Indian fishermen/crew detained in Bangladesh was successfully completed in the afternoon of 05 January 2025 near the International Maritime Boundary Line. In the presence of the representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Fisheries, and Border Guard Bangladesh, the Bangladesh Coast Guard received 90 Bangladeshi fishermen/crew members and handed over 95 Indian fishermen/crew members to the Indian Coast Guard. Simultaneously, the exchange of detained vessels was also completed, two Bangladeshi fishing vessels, "FV Laila-2" and "FV Meghna-5", were returned to Bangladesh, while six Indian fishing boats were returned to India," the statement added.

'Huge potential for investment between Oman, India'

AGENCIES MUSCAT

Khalid bin Sulaiman Al Salhi, Director General in the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayen), Oman on Thursday spoke about investment potential between the two countries and said there is a huge potential between the two countries when it comes to investment between Oman and India.

Speaking with the media, Khalid bin Sulaiman Al Salhi, Director General in the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayen), Oman on Thursday spoke about investment potential between the two countries when it comes to investment between Oman and India. "I think there is a huge potential between the two countries when it comes to investment between Oman and India. And definitely we at Madayan, the industrial states, we are looking forward to receive investments from India to discuss the new technology in different sectors. We are currently focusing on ICT, we are focusing on also food processing and pharmaceuticals, infrastructure as well. So these are the major sectors we are focusing on when it comes to Oman and



Khalid bin Sulaiman Al Salhi, Director General in the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayen), Oman

India bilateral investments." Being asked about whether two nations have a plan of action towards collaboration in investment, the Omani official replied in optimism.

"Yes, of course. The joint investment fund is one of the major things that the Sultanate and India is working on. And when it comes to investment from us, we are definitely going to facilitate any kind of inquiries or investment coming from the Indian side as well," he said. Oman is a strategic partner

of India and an important interlocutor at the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Arab League, and Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) fora.

India and Oman are linked by geography, history, and culture and enjoy warm and cordial relations. While people-to-people contact between India and Oman can be traced back 5000 years, diplomatic relations were established in 1955, and the relationship was upgraded to a Strategic Partnership in 2008, as per the Indian Embassy in Oman.

Taiwan announces arrival of new missile defence systems from US by year-end

AGENCIES TAIPEI

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence (MND) has announced that out of the three new weapons procurement contracts signed with the US in 2024, one of them will be delivered by the end of 2025, Taipei Times reported.

Taipei Times, citing the MND said that the three contracts are for Norwegian Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Systems (NASAMS), an L-band electronic array radar and a non-L-band electronic array radar. The Taiwan Defence Ministry noted that given the



Taiwan has announced that out of the three new weapons procurement contracts signed with the US in 2024, one of them will be delivered by the end of 2025, Taipei Times has reported.

frequent military activities in the Taiwan Strait by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the NASAMS and new radar

systems will deepen Taiwan's air defense capabilities.

UAE sends 700 tonnes of food to flood victims in Somalia

AGENCIES ABU DHABI

As a part of the UAE's continuous humanitarian efforts to support nations impacted by natural disasters, the UAE has dispatched 700 tonnes of urgent food supplies to the victims of floods that hit several areas in Somalia.

The aid follows the directives of the UAE's leadership to strengthen humanitarian endeavours and alleviate the suffering of the brotherly Somali people. The shipments included essential food packages to meet the needs of approxi-



mately 150,000 individuals from the affected families and provide urgent assistance to communities impacted by the floods. In this regard, Ahmed Juma Al Rumaithi, UAE Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Somalia, affirmed that the aid demonstrates the

UAE's commitment to stand in solidarity with the brotherly Somali people during these difficult circumstances.

He added, "The initiative reflects the close bilateral relations between the UAE and Somalia, underscoring the commitment of the UAE's wise leadership to provide all kinds of aid and support to the impacted communities. The UAE will continue to work alongside local and international entities to ensure that aid reaches as many people in need as possible, which will contribute to alleviating their suffering and accelerate the recovery process."

THE HELIOS



Artist Luke Jerram at the unveiling of his latest astronomical sculpture, Helios, in the Ball Room at Bath Assembly Rooms in Bath, UK. Source: Ben Birchall

Russia welcomes Trump's dialogue offer on Ukraine

AGENCIES
MOSCOW

Russia welcomes the stated willingness of U.S. President-elect Donald Trump to resolve problems through dialogue, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Friday, reaffirming Russian President Vladimir Putin's readiness for talks with Trump.

There may be progress on setting up a meeting between Trump and Putin after Trump is sworn in on Jan. 20, Peskov told reporters. Trump said on Thursday a meeting was being set up between him and Putin, but offered no timeline.

Trump said repeatedly during his election campaign that he could end the Russia-Ukraine war within 24 hours, but he and advisers have suggested more recently that it could be re-



Donald Trump, in his first term as U.S. president, gestures during a bilateral meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the G20 leaders summit in Osaka, Japan, June 28, 2019. File Photo

solved within months of him taking office.

His impending return to the White House has sparked hope of a diplomatic resolution, but it has also led to fears in Kyiv that a quick peace deal could come at a high price for Ukraine. Peskov said Putin had repeatedly stated his willingness to hold talks with international leaders, including Trump. "No

conditions are required for this, (only) a mutual desire and political will to conduct a dialogue and resolve existing problems through dialogue is required," he said.

"We see that Mr. Trump also declares his readiness to resolve problems through dialogue, we welcome this." Peskov said there were no specific plans for a meeting yet, but that Russia was working

on the assumption that both sides were open to it. "Apparently, after Mr. Trump enters the Oval Office, there will be some movement."

Trump said on Thursday: "President Putin wants to meet. He has said that even publicly and we have to get that war over with. That's a bloody mess."

Advisers to Trump have floated proposals to end the war that would effectively cede large parts of the country to Russia for the foreseeable future.

Peskov said Russia's position was consistent as laid out by Putin last June. Putin said then that Russia was willing to end the war if Ukraine renounced its NATO membership ambitions and withdrew entirely from four regions that Russia partly controls and has claimed as its own.

Hush money case: Trump sentenced to 'unconditional discharge'

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON DC

President-elect Donald Trump won't be facing any jail time or penalties in the hush money case, as he was sentenced to an 'unconditional discharge' by Judge Juan Merchan on Friday, CNN reported.

The sentencing, which was expected, means Trump will remain a felon but face no jail

time, penalties or probation for his conviction in the hush money case.

According to CNN, Trump showed no visible reaction as the judge concluded the hearing.

During his sentencing hearing, he reiterated that he was innocent at his sentencing hearing this morning. "The fact is I'm totally innocent. I did nothing wrong," he said.

"It's been a political witch

hunt, it was done to damage my reputation," Trump added.

Earlier, Trump also put a request to the Supreme Court, to pause his sentencing in the hush money case, scheduled for January 10, CNN reported.

Trump's attorneys argue that delaying the sentencing is necessary "to prevent grave injustice and harm to the institution of the presidency and the operations of the federal

government."

Notably, Trump was convicted in May 2023, of falsifying records to conceal payments to his then-lawyer Michael Cohen, who reimbursed USD 130,000 hush money payment made to an adult film star Stormy Daniels for her silence about an alleged affair with Trump before the 2016 election. Trump has denied the affair.

NATO WON'T BACK TRUMP'S NEW DEFENCE SPENDING TARGET

NATO won't heed Donald Trump's proposal for a massive hike in defence spending but will likely agree to go beyond its current target, according to officials and analysts.

AGENCIES
BRUSSELS

The U.S. president-elect declared on Tuesday members of the military alliance should spend 5% of gross domestic product (GDP) on defence – a huge increase from the current 2% goal and a level that no NATO country, including the United States, currently reaches.

Trump's comments – at a press conference that also generated a blizzard of headlines on Greenland, Canada and Panama – were a reminder of his focus on NATO spending during his first term and his threats not to protect allies that fail to meet the target.

Officials from NATO countries said they agreed defence spending needs to rise further but did not endorse the 5% figure, which analysts said would be politically and economically impossible for almost all members. It would require hundreds of billions of dollars in extra funding.

However, a new target is likely to be agreed at

THE SPENDING TARGET

- Trump proposes 5% defence spending target for NATO, higher than current 2%.
- NATO countries agree on the need for increased spending, but 5% is seen as unrealistic.
- New target expected at June NATO summit, possibly around 3% of GDP.
- Poland spends highest on defence (4.12%); Italy and others lag behind 2% target.
- NATO's total defence spending estimated at \$1.474 trillion in 2024.



U.S. army soldiers stand in formation during the visit of NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte to the multinational battle group at the Novo Selo training ground, Bulgaria, December 19, 2024. File Photo

EXPORTS TRAVERSING UKRAINE

Shocked by Russia's war in Ukraine, many European countries have ramped up defence spending in recent years.

But with public finances tight, and defence spending not politically popular in some countries, it would

not be easy for governments to find the extra billions that even a move to spend 3% of GDP on defence would entail.

While Trump has likened NATO defence spending to alliance membership fees, they reflect budgets set by national governments.

a NATO summit in The Hague in June, spurred by fears that Russia may attack a NATO country after Ukraine and by Trump's exhortations, officials said.

The key open questions are what that new target will be and whether it will be enough to satisfy Trump.

Some expect NATO's 32 members to agree, after

much wrangling, to a target of around 3% of GDP. But even that would be a stretch for many, who barely meet or fall short of the 2% goal now – a decade after it was set.

"It seems there will be a shift," Italian Defence Minister Guido Crosetto told Reuters. "I don't think it will be 5%, which would be impossible for almost every nation in the world right now but... it will not be two (percent), which we are already struggling to reach, but it will be more than two."

Canada's Indian-origin MP Chandra Arya aspires for PM post

AGENCIES
OTTAWA

Canada's Indian-origin MP Chandra Arya has announced that he is running to be the next Prime Minister, hours before his Liberal Party announced that their next leader will be chosen on March 9.

The development comes days after Justin Trudeau announced to step down but said he will continue to



Chandra Arya, Member of Parliament for Nepean

be the prime minister till the next leader is chosen.

Arya, the MP from Nepean, Ottawa, who was born in Karnataka, made the an-

ouncement on X Thursday morning ahead of the Liberal Party's meeting later in the evening.

"I am running to be the next Prime Minister of Canada to lead a small, more efficient government to rebuild our nation and secure prosperity for future generations," he said in the post on X and added a long statement with it.

Stating that Canada is "facing significant structur-

al problems" that haven't been seen for generations, Arya said, adding that solving them will require tough choices. "For the sake of our children and grandchildren, we must make bold decisions that are absolutely necessary."

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) highlighted that Arya wants to lead a small, more efficient government "with a cabinet select on merit.

UK claims highest deportations of illegal migrants

AGENCIES
LONDON

The UK government has claimed to have exceeded its target of deporting illegal migrants to countries of their origin, hitting the highest rate of removals since 2018 leading to 16,400 people with no right to be in the UK being removed.

Home Office figures re-

leased on Thursday claim enforced returns were up 24 per cent compared to the same 12 months prior, including the removal of 2,580 foreign criminals – marking a 23 per cent increase on last year.

The government said "bespoke charter flights" have removed immigration offenders to countries around the world, including four of

the biggest "returns flights" in the UK's history carrying more than 800 people.

Individuals removed since the July 2024 election are said to include criminals convicted of drug offences, theft, rape and murder.

This government was elected on a promise of change and within just six months we have redeployed resources for a scheme that

returned just four volunteers and instead worked to remove 16,400 people with no right to be here, said Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

Our message to those wanting to come here illegally is clear you are wasting your money putting your trust in these vile gangs and will be returned swiftly. No more gimmicks.

TRUDEAU RESIGNS AS CANADA PM; RUSSIAN GAS EXPORTS TRAVERSING UKRAINE CEASED; FRENCH MILITARY FORCES ATTACK IS IN SYRIA

From the ever-changing canvas of global affairs, picking up only a few developments every week is not easy. There are events, incidents, talks, exercises and much more! But the developments that impact global politics by and large indeed need to get featured. This week also remained happening considering such affairs. Russian gas exports through the Soviet-era pipelines traversing Ukraine ceased, signalling the conclusion of Moscow's long-standing influence over Europe's energy sector. Despite nearly three years of ongoing conflict, gas supplies had continued; however, Gazprom, Russia's state gas company, announced the cessation of exports following Ukraine's decision not to extend a transit agreement. On the other hand, French military forces conducted airstrikes against Islamic State positions in Syria. Also, as expected, Trudeau resigned

as Canada PM this week.

It will be really interesting to see what unfolds for Trudeau now. I had commented in my previous writings that if Trudeau does not understand his priorities well, he would face serious repercussions of his own decisions. He supported extremists and spoiled India-Canada relations. The diplomatic brawl between Canadian and Indian government started after Trudeau alleged Indian government for playing a pivotal role in the Khalistani terrorist Nijjar's killing. Due to Trudeau's false allegations, India-Canada relations suffered like never before. After a series of provoking diplomatic actions from Canada and a befitting response from India, the bilateral relations between the two nations faced the worst phase. Also, concerns regarding Trudeau's leadership intensified following the resignation of Chrystia

WORLD RECAP

ANSHU JOSHI



Freeland, the former finance minister, from his Cabinet in December 2024. Freeland had been vocal in her criticism of Trudeau's economic management, particularly in light of the significant tariffs that Trump had threatened. Just prior to Freeland's announcement, the housing minister of the country also stepped down.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy characterized the cessation of gas transit through Ukraine to Europe as a significant setback for Moscow. He called upon the US to increase its gas supplies to Europe, emphasizing that a greater availability of energy from genuine partners would expedite the resolution of the lingering

adverse effects stemming from Europe's reliance on Russian energy. Furthermore, he highlighted the collective responsibility of Europe to assist the former Soviet republic of Moldova during this critical phase of energy transition.

Over the course of fifty years, Russia and the former Soviet Union established a significant presence in the European gas market, reaching a peak share of approximately 35+ percent. However, following the onset of the conflict in Ukraine, the EU has significantly reduced its reliance on Russian energy sources. This shift has been facilitated by increased imports of piped gas from Norway and LNG from

Qatar and the US. Ukraine, having opted not to renew the transit agreement, has indicated that Europe has effectively chosen to move away from Russian gas. In a statement, Ukraine's Energy Minister German Galushchenko remarked on the cessation of Russian gas transit as a historic milestone, emphasizing that Russia is facing a decline in its market presence and will incur substantial financial repercussions.

The EU has also indicated that the it is well-prepared for the potential disruption. A spokesperson for the Commission stated that the European gas infrastructure possesses the necessary flexibility to supply gas from sources other than Russia. Furthermore, they highlighted that substantial LNG import capacities have been added since 2022 to bolster this capability.

Also, the anticipated halt in gas supplies may not be affecting the consumer prices also within the EU, contrasting sharply with the situation in 2022 when reduced deliveries from Russia led to unprecedented price surges, exacerbating the cost-of-living crisis and undermining the bloc's competitive edge. Remaining EU nations that previously relied on Russian gas through Ukraine, including Slovakia and Austria, have successfully secured alternative sources of supply, while Hungary will continue to receive Russian gas through the Turk-Stream pipeline that runs beneath the Black Sea.

On the other hand, the French military forces conducted airstrikes against Islamic State positions in Syria, as announced by Defence Minister Sebastien Lecornu. This marks the first military action in Syria since the regime of Bashar al-Assad came to an end. According to the defence ministry's statements,

Rafale fighter jets and US-manufactured Reaper drones were deployed, successfully dropping seven bombs on two Daesh military targets located in central Syria.

Since 2014, France has been a member of the Inherent Resolve international coalition aimed at combating the Islamic State in Iraq, and it extended its involvement to Syria in 2015. French military personnel engaged in these operations are stationed in the region, notably in the UAE. As the situation in Syria evolves following a surprising offensive by radical Sunni-led rebels that threatens the regime of Assad, there are growing concerns that this turmoil may create an opportunity for the Islamic State to regain its foothold. As it is a known fact that despite the dismantling of its declared caliphate between 2014 and 2019, the group has managed to persist in both

Iraq and Syria.

In light of the persistent global conflicts, these recent developments contribute to growing concerns. Despite numerous attempts to address the issues, the crises in the Levant and the tensions between Russia and Ukraine remain unresolved. Moreover, as time progresses, an increasing number of stakeholders are becoming engaged in the conflicts in West Asia. It may be an opportune moment for multilateral platforms to seek viable solutions to these pressing challenges.

Political, social or economic, the games that are played on the international turf impact a common man at the end of the day. The leaders need to remember that their influence is not everlasting and hence they need to play for the betterment of humanity, not for power.

The author is Professor, School of International Studies, JNU

REVIEW: BHARAT HAIN HUM – SEASON 2 *****

BHARAT HAIN HUM – SEASON 2



PRAVEEN NAGDA

Patriotism is the day's flavor, and why should it not be? Every nation's rise is always based upon thousands of unsung heroes who give their sweat, blood, and lives to form a foundation to support future generations. Many of these heroes remain in the books of history, many remain in stories passed from generation to generation, and many appear and disappear within the textbooks depending upon the political establishments.

Sacrifices made by our forefathers irrespective of their caste, creed, and gender need to be told to our next generation time and again. When it comes to India, our great motherland, which presents the most diverse culture in the world it becomes all the more interesting representing unity in diversity. Bharat Hain Hum, from Graphiti Studios, is one such brilliantly made animation series as a part of the Krish, Trish, and Baltiboy franchise. Season 2 of the animation series, like Season 1, is available simultaneously across Doordarshan, Netflix, and Amazon Prime Video.

Season 2 of Bharat Hain Hum features eight (8) episodes of unsung heroes including Chima Ji Appa, Veer Sawarkar, Kanhoji Angre, Alluri Sitharaman, Saraswati Rajamani, and Lachit Borphan covering the stories of unbelievable courage, bravery, and sheer grit fighting the Portuguese and the Britishers. These stories are inspiring for children and adults equally well stirring you to the deepest level when you come across the hardships and sacrifices made by them brilliantly presented in animated form.

Krish the monkey, Trish the cat, and Baltiboy the donkey, recount the yesteryears where Sanskriti, the Conch Shell creates a digital storyboard that narrates these stories of valour. Funny, sarcastic, and joyful exchanges between Krish,

Trish, and Baltiboy sets a humorous narrative leading to the seriousness of each story. Graphics are simply beautiful, dialogues are impactful, and stories are intriguing, making you remain hooked. Beauty is that you remain and end up binge-watching even though each story is completely different and unique.

Created by Munjal Shroff and Tilakraj Shetty, the 2nd season is written by Neelu Singh, Shivam Kansal, Dr. Smita Gaurav Verma, and Sweksha Bhagat. Being an animation series, it has the voices of Tarun Ratnani (as Krish), Smita Malhotra (as Trish), Deepak Chachra (as Baltiboy), and Aarushi Talwar (as Sanskriti, the Conch Shell).

Co-produced by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and Graphiti Studios, Krish, Trish & Baltiboy is a wonderful story that celebrates India's local culture and storytelling. Streaming on Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, WAVES and Doordarshan, the series is available in 12 Indian languages—including Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Punjabi, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Assamese, and Odia—and seven international languages—French, German, Spanish, Russian, Korean, Chinese and Arabic making it accessible to a global audience in 150 countries.

Season 1 had earlier featured Indian freedom fighters like Rani Abbakka and Tilka Manjhi to Tirok Singh, Peer Ali, Tatya Tope, Kotwal Dhan Singh, Kunwar Singh, Rani Chennamma, and Tikendra Jeet Singh among others.

Season 2 of Bharat Hain Hum is as inspiring as Season 1, and it not only instills a strong patriotic feeling but also makes you aware of our unsung heroes. It's a series that's a must-watch with families!

Released on OTT platforms NETFLIX, AMAZON PRIME, WAVES & DOORDARSHAN in December 2024.

HRITHIK ROSHAN RECEIVES A BIRTHDAY SHOUT OUT FROM EX-WIFE SUSSANNE

TDG NETWORK MUMBAI

Bollywood star Hrithik Roshan maintains a cordial relationship with his former wife and interior designer Sussanne Khan. As it's his birthday today, Sussanne did not forget to wish him on social media with a special message.

Taking to Instagram, Sussanne penned a note wishing Hrithik loads of happiness.

"Happyyyy happiest birthday Rye.. and huggge celebrations for 25 years of KNPH.. and I know the bestttt of your talent and personality starts now," she wrote, adding a group picture with Hrithik.

The snap shows Sussanne sharing smiles with Hrithik and his girlfriend Saba Azad. We can also spot Sussanne's partner Arslan Goni in the picture.

Hrithik and Sussanne parted ways in 2013. They got married in 2000 but after 13 years of living together, the duo announced their separation. They con-



tinue to co-parent their two sons, Hrehaan Roshan and Hridhaan Roshan.

While Hrithik is currently dating actor-singer Saba Azad, Sussanne is in a relationship with Arslan. They all are friends with each other and often spotted hanging out together.

Meanwhile, on the work front, Hrithik this January completed 25 years as an actor. His debut film 'Kaho Naa... Pyaar Hai' re-released in theatres on his birthday today, leaving fans excited and nostalgic.

PICTURE PERFECT

Actor Hrithik Roshan poses for a picture during the trailer launch of upcoming Netflix's Documentary 'The Roshans', in Mumbai on Thursday. (ANI Photo)



AJAY DEVGN'S NEPHEW AAMAN TO STAR IN HORROR COMEDY 'JHALAK'

TDG NETWORK MUMBAI

Bollywood star Ajay Devgn's nephew Aaman Devgn will be seen in a horror comedy 'Jhalak'.

The film will be created under Devgn Films and Panorama Studios. Umang Vyas, acclaimed for his directorial work on the Gujarati blockbuster 'Jhamkudi', has come on board to direct 'Jhalak'. Tushar Ajgaonkar, the celebrated writer of the hit horror comedy 'Munjya', has also joined the team.

Excited about the project, Ajay in a statement said, "After Shaistaan, we wanted to explore a genre that brings together the best of horror and comedy. Jhalak offers the perfect blend, and with the talented team



behind it, we believe audiences will thoroughly enjoy this unique experience."

Panorama Studios Chairman Kumar Mangat Pathak added, "Jhalak is a project close to our hearts, as it not only continues our collaboration with Devgn Films but also brings a refreshing

new story to the audience. We are confident that this film will strike a chord with viewers, blending fear and laughter in an unforgettable way."

The film is currently in pre-production, with shooting expected to commence soon. More details

about the supporting cast and release date will be announced in the coming months.

In a conversation with the media, Aaman shared his experience of working with horses in the film.

Aaman said he had to build a strong connection with the horse for the role. The actor shared that he even spent time "sleeping near the horse, feeding it, and cleaning its stable."

"There were many scenes with the horse. We attended workshops and classes to understand the horse's energy. We also took horse-riding lessons. I even spent time sleeping near the horse, feeding it, and cleaning its stable. This was essential because animals don't act like humans—they won't say their lines.

Kangana meets Anupam Kher's mother to seek blessings

TDG NETWORK MUMBAI

Anupam Kher shared an adorable video of a conversation between Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut and his mother recently. During the interaction, the actress sought blessings from Anupam's mother for her upcoming film 'Emergency'.

Taking to his Instagram handle, Anupam Kher shared a funny banter between him and his mother in which he playfully teased her for not getting properly dressed to meet actress Kangana Ranaut.

Sharing the video, he wrote, "Kangana and Dulari: Two strong women of the mountains. A few days ago Kangana suddenly decided she would like to take blessings from her mother! Mom didn't get a chance to dress up. I teased them a lot



for this!" Anupam's mother gave a heartfelt blessing to Kangana for her upcoming film 'Emergency' and wishes her success.

"Dulari gave Kangana full of love and blessings. My beauty was mentioned in the same excuse. The best dialogue of the mother is, "What happens with clothes, must have a good

heart! Dearest #Kangana-Ranaut for meeting Mom. She was so happy to meet you. You both are the biggest example of #Women-Empowerment! I pray to God that our film #Emergency becomes a big success. Hail to you!" wrote Anupam Kher.

Kher and Kangana's film 'Emergency' will be released in theatres on January 17. It also stars Shreyas Talpade and late Satish Kaushik.

Recently, both Kangana and Kher sat down with ANI and discussed working with each other in the upcoming film, which delves into the Emergency, that was imposed by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi for 21 months from 1975 to 1977, and its aftermath.

RAJAMOULI...POST-PRODUCTION FACILITY AT ANNAPURNA STUDIOS

TDG NETWORK HYDERABAD

Filmmaker SS Rajamouli has launched Dolby certified postproduction facility for cinema at veteran actor Nagarjuna's Annapurna Studios in Hyderabad here.

Launched in collaboration with Dolby, the state-of-the-art facility aims to "redefine the audio-visual standards of Indian filmmaking, ensuring cinematic experiences that meet global benchmarks."

Happy to unveil the facility, Rajamouli said, "During the time of RRR, when we wanted to grade the film in Dolby Vision, we had to



travel all the way to Germany. It was a bit disheartening that I couldn't experience my film in Dolby Vision within my own country. But today, I'm thrilled to see a Dolby Vision grading facility right here at Annapurna Studios."

"Even more exciting is the fact that, by the time my next film releases, there will be multiple Dolby Cinema across India. Watching

a film in Dolby Vision is an entirely different experience—the crystal-clear clarity and the way it enhances the nuances of every frame take storytelling to a whole new level.

BRAIN PICKING



I think a woman should be wholesome, voluptuous and sizzling.



—VIDYA BALAN (Indian Actress)

THREE-TIME GRAMMY-NOMINATED SINGER ANITA BRYANT PASSES AWAY AT 84



AGENCIES WASHINGTON

A three-time Grammy-nominated singer and TV personality, Anita Bryant passed away at her home in Edmond, Oklahoma at the age of 84. The singer's death was announced in an obituary in The Oklahoman on January 9. The cause of the death was not revealed.

As per the obituary, Anita Bryant died on December 16. Born on March 25, 1940, in Barnsdall, Oklahoma, Bryant grew up in a Christian family, with her love of music. With her talent, the singer led her own TV show at the age of 12.

At 18 she was crowned Miss Oklahoma and appeared on the CBS variety show hosted by Arthur Godfrey, and the Dick Clark-hosted American Bandstand.

As per Deadline, in 1971, Bryant sang at the Super Bowl. She cohosted the na-

tionally televised segment of the Orange Bowl Parade for nine years. Her chart hits in the late 1950s and early 1960s included "Till There Was You," "Wonderland by Night," "Paper Roses" and "In My Little Corner of the World," the latter two made the Top 10 on the Billboard Hot 100 in 1960, as per the Deadline.

Bryant reportedly sang at the White House for President Lyndon B Johnson (and at his graveside service), and in 1968 sang at both the Republican and the Democratic national conventions.

The singer was popularly known as Orange Juice Pitchwoman for her voice in commercials that often featured the animated "Orange Bird" character. Bryant sang the earworm jingle "Come to the Florida Sunshine Tree" and made the tagline "Breakfast without orange juice is like a day without sunshine" a national catchphrase.

VIRAT, ANUSHKA ALONG WITH KIDS VISIT SPIRITUAL GURU IN VRINDAVAN



TDG NETWORK MUMBAI

Star couple Virat Kohli and Anushka Sharma, along with their two kids, were seen visiting renowned spiritual leader Premanand Maharaj at Vrindavan Dham.

A video of their visit has gone viral on social media, showing the couple seeking blessings from the spiritual guru and engaging in a conversation with him.

In the videos circulating on the internet, Anushka, while conversing with guru Premanand, says, "Last time we came, I had some questions in my mind. I thought I would

ask something, but everyone sitting there had already asked similar things. It felt like I was speaking with you within our own heads. The next day, I would open Ekanth's sermons (streamed online), and someone would be asking the same question."

She concluded by saying, "I would like to ask you to give us prem-bhakti (divine love)."

Anushka was seen carrying their younger child, Akaay.

While, the 'Sui Dhaaga' actress was speaking to the spiritual leader, Virat was seen holding their elder daughter, Vamika, and interacting with her.

BEYOND JEWELLERY: GOLD IS UNSPOKEN GUARDIAN & TRUSTED ALLY



NAMRATA KOHLI

WOMAN WISE

Did you know that the sheer volume of gold owned by the Indian woman surpasses the combined reserves of the top five gold-holding countries: USA, Germany, Italy, France, and Russia, as per the latest report by World Gold Council. We hold a staggering 24,000 tons of gold, which is far more than any country's gold holdings individually.



What's more, the

quantity is growing with each passing year despite the fact that the gold rate has been increasing.

Even the latest Deloitte report "Sparkling Success: Renaissance in India's Gems and Jewellery Sector" states that "Gold remains the dominant choice for jewellery, with a 97% preference."

Have you ever wondered why this gold fixation even though the jewellery and big fat Indian wedding circuit is largely dominated by Kundan, Polki and diamonds. These may be admired for their aesthetic appeal, but gold has outdone any other jewellery simply because gold is beyond jewellery. For generations, Indian women have seen gold as a form of liquid savings that can be leveraged during times of need, providing a sense of economic independence.

Let me elaborate on this point. During the devastating 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, entire communities were displaced, and many lost access to their homes, belongings, livelihoods. But for these fisherwomen wearing gold on their bodies, this gold became their lifeline - they sold their jewellery to buy essential sup-



plies, rebuild homes. And that is why even though gold prices have been galloping Indians continue to invest in this metal. Today if the price of gold is, for example, 6,000 per gram (as of recent market trends), 10 grams of gold would be worth 60,000. This amount could cover a month's rent in many Indian cities (tier-2 or tier-3 cities) or buy you a high-quality smartphone or sponsor a domestic vacation.

The best part is that it's a "secret resource" of women that can be controlled by her independently, be used to meet unforeseen needs without de-

pendence on others and hence a source of empowerment.

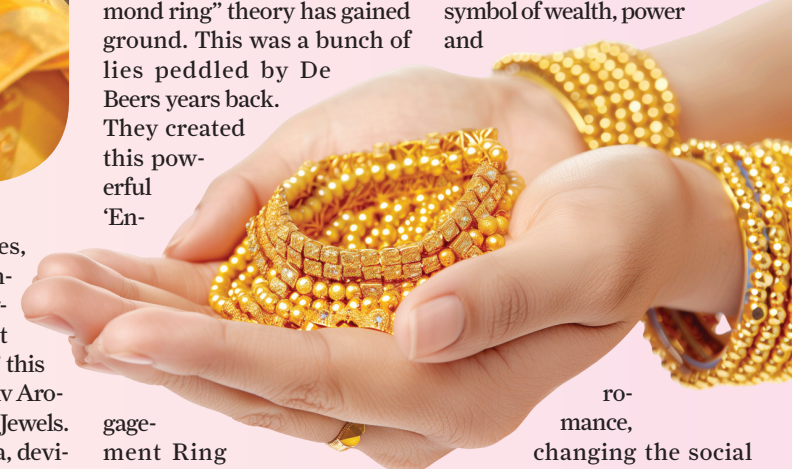
Heard of Stridhan, where stri means woman and dhan means property - it mostly included jewelry made of gold given by the girl's parents, husband or in-laws during and throughout her married life, on which she has absolute ownership. It also carries sentimental value - as gold is gifted during milestone occasions and carries love, memories, and blessings. It's a symbol of heritage as gold is often passed down through generations, becoming a tangible connection to ancestors and family legacy and a continuity

of traditions. "If you see any statues, sculptures of ancient India, you may still find figures without clothes but never without jewelry," this fact was narrated by Rajiv Arora, founder of Amrapali Jewels. He told me that in India, devideva are always wearing ornaments. If we go far back in time, jewelry was not just an adornment, but it had therapeutic and medicinal value. There was an ornament for every part of one's body - mathapatti for the head, math for the nose, earring, choker for the neck, bajubandh for the arms, belt, hathphool for

the hand, kade or bangles for the wrist and feet, bichua for feet's toe, and so on. There were acupuncture points on the nose and ears and people always believed that it's good for health. If you wear a kamarbandh (jewelry for the waist) or a hasli (collar-like necklace) and you walk, your waist or neck will never bend and your spine will be erect due to the weight of stiff silver, copper, gold and brass ornaments.

Then how come "no engagement is complete without a diamond ring" theory has gained ground. This was a bunch of lies peddled by De Beers years back.

They created this powerful 'En-



agement Ring Story' that still rules the minds of many - no engagement is complete without a diamond ring. It was marketed as a symbol of love and commitment; but financially, it isn't actually an asset at all. If you know the truth, diamonds are intrinsically worthless - this was an open confession from

former De Beers Chairman and billionaire Nicky Oppenheimer. The fact is that diamonds actually decay, faster than most rocks and, therefore, diamonds are not forever. De Beers knew their product was not intrinsically valuable like gold or silver, so they hired the ad agency N.W. Ayer in the early 1900s, who successfully turned a failing market into a psychological necessity. This big branding exercise by De Beers actually manipulated the demand for diamonds, positioning it as a symbol of wealth, power and

romance, changing the social attitudes and convincing people that every marriage needs a diamond ring.

But in the search of the diamond, let's not lose our gold. Because gold is beyond jewellery - it is the unspoken guardian and the trusted ally of Indian women in a patriarchal society.

A Personal Guide to navigate the methods of Contraception: Taking control of your reproductive health

DR VIBHA BANSAL

A woman's relationship with her body is deeply personal, shaping not just her health but her entire life journey. Having access to a variety of contraceptives offers women the fundamental freedom to manage their reproductive health and determine their future. Understanding these options is crucial for making informed decisions that align with their health, preference, and personal goals.

Yet globally, these choices remain out of reach for many - an estimated 40% of pregnancies worldwide are unintended, and according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), out of 1.9 billion women in the reproductive age group (15-49 years) worldwide, 164 million have an unmet need for contraception. In India, there is a growing awareness about the importance of contraceptive choices, particularly among the youth. With 72 unintended pregnancies per 1,000 women aged 15-49, and unsafe abortion remaining the third leading cause of maternal mortality, the need for better access to contraceptive choices has never been more crucial.

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT CONTRACEPTION?

India offers a wide range of contraceptive options, empowering individuals and couples to make choices that best suit their needs. Different methods cater to various lifestyles, health conditions, and family planning goals, ensuring that everyone can find a solution that works for them. When choosing a birth control, knowing its safety, effectiveness, delivery mechanism, duration of protection and frequency of use and potential effects on the body is key. It's important to consider current health conditions, life goals and convenience when choosing a method.

It is ideal if a couple chooses their contraceptive method together after discussing their options with a healthcare provider to understand



Short-Acting:	Long Acting:
Pill, Vaginal ring, Diaphragm, Cervical Cap, Spermicide	Implants, Hormonal IUDs, Copper IUD
Who should use this: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals who need a contraception method that can be started or stopped quickly Individuals who prefer active involvement in their birth control Are comfortable with regular administration 	Who should use this: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals who want reliable contraception method with minimal effort Individual who are seeking for long-term protection without daily attention Prefer minimal user intervention
Key considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires consistent and correct use Offers immediate reversibility Provides more personal control over contraception Allows for quick transition to pregnancy planning 	Advantages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 99% effective in preventing pregnancy as it reduces risk of human error Immediately reversible upon removal Provides continuous protection for 3-10 years Ideal for women who are looking to space-out two pregnancies, schedule child-birth

the benefits, side effects, and implications pertaining to their chosen method. Open communication with joint counselling can enable partners to make an informed decision together.

Nearly all women use contraception at some point in their lives, so it's important to evaluate the effectiveness of various contraceptive methods, from traditional to modern methods. The WHO's 'Medical Eligibility Criteria Wheel for Contraceptive Use' is a widely accepted scientific mechanism that guides family planning providers in recommending safe and effective contraceptive methods to women with medical conditions.

Long-acting and short-acting contraceptive methods: A comparison

Women can make a choice between temporary and permanent methods. Permanent methods like

tubectomy for women and vasectomy for men are permanent and cannot be reversed. It doesn't have any adverse side effects on either males or females. However, couples should be certain of their decisions, long term goals and discuss options with their gynaecologist.

Among temporary methods that provide long term protection, women can choose from a wide array of options which provide protection from three to five years, and with some products even longer. Women can choose between uterine and non-uterine methods. Copper Intra Uterine Device (IUD) or Hormonal (IUD) are long term methods that are highly effective. These are T shaped devices which are placed in the uterus and are commonly used by women for birth spacing and even after completing families.

The sub-dermal implant is a non-uterine method which is a small hormone eluting device placed under the skin of the non-dominant arm. It provides long term protection from pregnancy and according to WHO, is 99.99% effective. Implants are discreet, non-uterine, suitable for women who want to delay their first pregnancy, for birth spacing, and for limiting family size. The return to fertility with implants is very quick; therefore, its often a choice of method for many.

A wide range of short-acting methods is also available to couples. Methods like condoms, diaphragms, cervical caps, and spermicides are to be used during the intercourse. They act as barrier methods and prevent unwanted pregnancies. Condoms provide an added advantage of protection from Sexually Transmitted Infec-

tions (STIs) and HIV.

Among other short-term methods, couples can choose options such as daily oral pills, vaginal rings and injectables. Based on your health condition and contraceptive needs, your doctor can suggest a suitable method for you. Many hormonal methods are also used for the treatment of acne, irregular periods, symptoms of PMS, endometriosis, and polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). Short-acting methods require adherence to a daily regimen.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT CONTRACEPTION AND UNDERSTANDING YOUR OPTIONS:

Planning for post-delivery contraception is as crucial as preparing for childbirth itself. It's important to discuss post-partum birth control options with a gynaecologist well before delivery. This will allow couples enough time to make informed decisions about their contraceptive choices. While most medical practitioners recommend at least 3 years gap between two children, the Government of India also advocates for a three-year interval for optimal maternal and child health outcomes. This spacing gives the mother's body adequate time to recover fully from pregnancy and childbirth, replenish vital nutrients, and prepare for future pregnancies. Research shows that shorter interpregnancy intervals (less than 18 months) are associated with increased risks of preterm births and low birth weight babies.

In conclusion, access, availability, and affordability of contraceptives are crucial, equally important is empowering couples with knowledge about family planning options and their benefits. This comprehensive approach is vital for achieving her short and long-term health outcomes, family well-being and career outcomes.

The author is the Sr. Technical Director, Obstetrician and Gynaecologist at Sai Poly Clinic.

Nanoship-Relationship: A Silent Disruptor of Women's Mental Peace



JEEVIKA SHARMA

In an era dominated by digital connections and hyper-connectivity, the concept of "nanoship-relationship" has emerged, blending brief, superficial interactions with the illusion of emotional depth. While these relationships may seem harmless or even liberating on the surface, they are quietly wreaking havoc on women's mental well-being.

Understanding Nanoship-Relationships Nanoship-Relationships refer to fleeting, often online-based connections that prioritize convenience over commitment. These connections are characterized by minimal effort, lack of emotional depth, and an absence of long-term intention. While they are appealing due to their low-maintenance nature, their underlying lack of authenticity can leave a profound emotional void.

The Allure and the Impact The digital age has made forming connections easier than ever before. Social media platforms, dating apps, and instant messaging services have replaced traditional forms of relationship-building with quick interactions that mimic meaningful bonds. For many women, especially those juggling careers, education, or caregiving responsibilities,



the simplicity of nanoship-relationships may appear as an attractive alternative to the complexities of traditional relationships. However, the consequences of engaging in such relationships often outweigh the perceived benefits. The emotional inconsistency—moments of intense attention followed by abrupt disengagement—can lead to feelings of confusion, inadequacy, and self-doubt. This roller-coaster of emotions takes a toll on mental health, fostering anxiety and diminishing self-esteem.

The Role of Societal Expectations Society's portrayal of modern relationships further exacerbates the problem. Women are often conditioned to seek emotional fulfillment while simultaneously being urged to embrace independence and avoid vulnerability. Nanoship-relationships exploit this dichotomy, offering just enough emotional engagement to meet societal expectations without the sta-

bility or support required for genuine connection.

Breaking Free from the Cycle To preserve mental peace, women must prioritize self-awareness and intentionality in their relationships. Recognizing the patterns and emotional impact of nanoship-relationships is the first step. Building authentic connections that value mutual respect, effort, and emotional investment is essential. Additionally, seeking support from trusted friends, therapists, or support groups can help navigate the complexities of modern relationships.

The Need for a Cultural Shift Addressing the mental health implications of nanoship-relationships requires a broader cultural shift. Encouraging open conversations about emotional well-being, redefining relationship expectations, and promoting the value of deep, meaningful connections can counteract the rise of superficial interactions.

In conclusion, while nanoship-relationships may seem convenient in today's fast-paced world, their impact on women's mental health cannot be ignored. By prioritizing authenticity and emotional depth, women can reclaim their mental peace and foster connections that truly enrich their lives.

Write something...

IGNITING THE LIGHT OF HUMAN GOODNESS FOR GLOBAL PEACE



MAUREEN GOODMAN

"The root of war is a deficit of love."

The need for the practice of non-violence could not be greater than it is today. Non-violence is not about the absence of violence, it is about igniting the inherent love within us all. This love, that does not seek any reciprocation, that is totally altruistic, is what can become the healing force that the world needs. This is why igniting human goodness is essential for global peace. Human goodness seeks to love, to be kind and compassionate, to heal, to accept, to be just. Human

goodness is the truth of who we are, and falsehood cannot stand in the face of truth. Human goodness is the original state of each and every human being.

What is a human being? A life force that works through the physical form. You may use the term soul, being, consciousness for that life force. We generally derive our identity from our physical form, that is our body, the identity of our gender, our culture, our ethnicity, and as we grow up and progress, the aspects of identity increase – our profession, wealth, status in society, and so on. And with each identity I have a different set of responses, which then form my personality, and a different set of obligations which can become burdensome. There are problems with this identity; one is that it changes from time to time and so my personality also changes, and this means that my identity is defined by the circumstances around me, rather than from within. The other

aspect is that it needs verification from someone or something else. This is the root of many difficulties; it leads to insecurity, ego, fear, and to possessiveness.

This is because there is an intimate connection between what is happening inside of us, in our hearts and minds, and our external world. Caring first for my own innermost feelings and thoughts helps us to have the strength to care for and offer comfort to others. When anger, fear, and hatred can wreak so much havoc, what can the power of fearlessness and love not do?

Dadi Janki, the late Administrative Head of the Brahma Kumaris, was once asked:

"How can you maintain inner goodness when there is so much evil in the world? Where is the place of righteous anger about what is happening in the world and how do we overcome injustices unless we fight it?"

Dadi replied: "If the seed is poison, then the fruit can



The inherent goodness within us is the healing force that the world needs.

only be poison. Even if you nurture, water, care for, and shield the tree, it can never

bear good fruit. When you are the seed of peace, then everything you do contrib-

utes to sharing who you are with the world. When you are anger, hatred, and

violence, you cannot be an agent for peace."

In 2022, I had the privilege of joining a group of religious leaders on a visit to Ukraine just after the war began. On return I was asked in an interview: "Where is God in all this? Why has God allowed this war?"

I asked another question: "Where is humanity in all this? What have we done that we have brought ourselves to this point...?"

As I contemplated on this further, I understood the importance of faith and our connection with a higher being or a greater force than ourselves that is essential to gain the strength that is needed for such a profound transformation in the world. Faith means that our task of peace cannot fail, if we always remain honest in everything we do. We have faith that our honesty and strength of conviction is the kind of courage that attracts God's help. In this way, we will never be alone and we are sure to receive the sup-

port that we need. We have a saying that we take one step of courage and God takes one thousand steps towards us.

The culture and atmosphere in which we live can facilitate healing or perpetuate suffering. An atmosphere of authenticity and love, especially in leadership, can enable reconciliation, forgiveness, trust, and ultimately healing. There is the possibility of environments of collective care, where well-being is the highest priority, where healing is built into the structure of our communities, institutions, and systems. This is the foundation upon which our societies and the natural world can flourish.

Let us continue to nurture true love within us so that we all together can be the hope for humanity.

Maureen Goodman is the Programme Director for the Brahma Kumaris UK, and BKNGO representative to the United Nations in Vienna.

Creating harmony through spiritual patience and tolerance



JIM RYAN

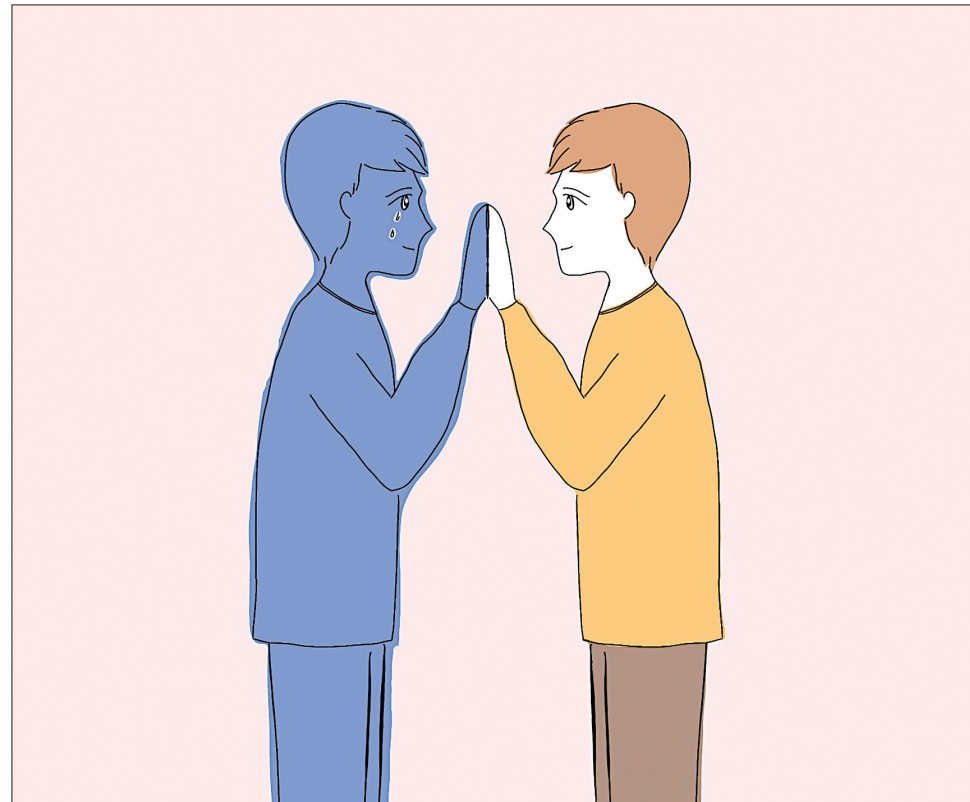
Seeing the millions of our vast world family before us, it is incredible to think that each one is entirely different from the next. Each has a unique personality, attitude, and take on life. More and more people are continuously entering this huge arena of life, adding to and voicing their needs, wants, and opinions. At the same time, being so absorbed with themselves, most are oblivious to hearing and considering the needs and situations of others.

Each one thinks they are right, that things should be changed, and changed now,

immediately. Even though things do slowly get done, they never seem to be accomplished quickly enough, or in the manner or with the result that pleases everyone. With many wanting resolution and satisfaction, desires will inevitably be delayed or subverted, placing incredible strains on our patience and tolerance.

What is needed is an immense capacity for patience and understanding. Spiritual tolerance and patience create in us an atmosphere of protective vibration. This helps us to pull us back from the precipice of the surrounding turmoil, enabling the emergence of feelings of friendship and empathy, and the awareness that others, though under so many influences, are also trying to connect to their own particular truth.

The remedy can be found in the inner power of soul-centred awareness. Soul-centred awareness is the realisation of the eternal nature of the self – a being of consciousness and yet dealing with a human experience, in the physical



Developing our patience and tolerance makes us generous and accepting of others.

world. With this awareness and self-empowerment, the self's natural nature of tolerance emerges. This enables the individual to remain in

any high-demand situation or crisis and yet be unaffected – and have the ability to respond with understanding, care, and compassion.

The mind, becomes free from the surrounding turmoil, and is centred in the soul's energy field of calmness and patience. This spiritual

What is needed is an immense capacity for patience and understanding.

Spiritual tolerance and patience create in us an atmosphere of protective vibration.

position creates the opportunity to link the awareness to the incredible light of God, the spiritual sun – and absorb the purity, peace and light that immediately floods in. It not only brings empowerment and healing for the self, but also spreads out and reaches others in the sphere of chaos, and brings the calm needed for resolution.

Jim Ryan has a background in education. He is an author and a Brahma Kumaris Rajyoga teacher, based at the Global Retreat Centre, Oxford, UK.

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

The natural state of the soul is fullness. The experience of emptiness is unnatural and creates discomfort. The discomfort of emptiness drives me to seek fulfilment through experiences, books, objects or relationships. Paradoxically, the constant gobbling of new input numbs me to my emptiness but does not awaken my fullness. Taking moments to find the peace within allows me to experience fullness and awakens a memory of my natural state. Today let me experience natural fullness.

Building friendships of joy



DEBBIE CASTLE

There are many kinds of friendship that we can form throughout our lives. By their very nature, friendships are designed to bring comfort, support, and joy. When we participate authentically in such relationships, friends become the ones who can really see us, understand us, and help us to see ourselves, deeply. We can develop friendships with peers, older and younger people, animals, and with the natural world. A friendship is a relationship with another being with whom we cultivate a close bond and mutual regard. It is forged with an-

other whom you know well, and have affection for.

In reality, there are only two lifelong friendships we have in life. All other friendships are optional – that is, they may come and go in our lifetime for a variety of reasons. They may dissolve due to time, geography, conflict, death, or other circumstances. Some friends are meant to accompany us on our journey for a particular reason, and when that purpose is satisfied, the friendship itself may weaken and dissolve.

There are only two lifelong friendships that are essential. The first one is with the self. To make this relationship and friendship work, we have to recognise "who I really am." We have to be able to dissociate ourselves from the many roles we play, and realise "that's not me..."; it is one of the many roles I play. When I come to know and understand the true me, the inner self, as a conscious being filled with virtues and powers, then I can be consistent in the regard I hold for the inner being, the soul. Self-doubt and being hard on the self will

damage this relationship. And it is foundational to all other relationships and friendships that we form, that we know who we are and what we bring to any relationship.

The second 'non-optional' friendship is with the Divine, the Highest Power, the Supreme – by whatever name you call that One, who resides outside of this physical world that we are experiencing. To make this relationship work, as a friendship, we must recognise the eternal, unchanging nature of this Highest Power and the creative role this Being plays in the world. The relationship begins with learning from the One about what is really going on inside me. To nurture this friendship requires that I make effort to bring this Being into my consciousness, in both happy and difficult times. This happens through meditation when we learn to accept the immense love this Source is ready to give us, and open ourselves to that love.

To make the other, optional friendships function well throughout life, for however



Friendship with God enriches us, enabling us to be at our best in all other friendships.

long they remain active, we must recognise the unique virtues and qualities of the other, which may be very different from our own. In these friendships, we must be creative and celebrate the good times to boost happiness. It is essential to communicate with love and regard, and support one another through periods of challenge. We must also be aware that these relationships may not last forever, and express gratitude for what they do bring while we are in them.

For all these friendships, both the 'forever' and the 'optional' ones, the qualities that help build joy into them are:

Communication – to listen well and with openness.
Creativity – to know how to celebrate the good times.
Consistency – to develop a sense of belonging and keep the connection present.

Curiosity – to find out more about what interests both and to explore those things deeply, even if initially it has no interest for us. These shared interests will require a recognition of boundaries – when one

of us feels uncomfortable to share further with the other, then curiosity may have gone too far.

Friendships are a kind of creation, a 'tasty thing' baked with love! There are three ingredients to add for greater sweetness:

1/4 cup of justice – to have the power of discernment, and be interested in doing the right things in society with their company.

1/2 cup of openness – to make our original, real self, available to the other, using the qualities you hold most dear and leaving opinions aside.

1/4 cup of a yielding nature – to be able to adapt and go with the flow, see mistakes as part of the learning process, and keep moving forward. Friendships are precious. The most precious of all is the eternal friendship with the Divine. Meditation is the direct route to establish and sustain this very unique and beloved friendship.

Debbie Castle is an educator and writer who coordinates the Canadian Brahma Kumaris Virtual Centre.

WOMEN'S ODI: INDIA BEAT IRELAND

AGENCIES
RAJKOT

India defeated Ireland by six wickets in the first women's ODI to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series on Friday.

Opting to bat, Ireland skipper Gaby Lewis struck a fine 92 and shared a 117-run partnership with Leah Paul (59) as the visitors scored 238 for 7.

India opener Pratika Rawal (89) and Tejal Hasabnis (53 not out) then scored fifties to help the hosts overhaul the target in 34.3 overs.

Earlier, Lewis scored her runs off 129 deliveries, studied with 15 boundaries, as she almost single-handedly guided Ireland to a fighting total after they were reduced to 56 for 4 in the 14th over.

Spinner Priya Mishra was the most successful India bowler, returning figures of 2/56. Deepti Sharma (1/41) and Titus Sadhu (1/48) took a wicket each.

Following India Women's six-wicket victory over Ireland in the first match of the series on Friday, Women in Blue opener Pratika Rawal said that she had a good start in the game at Saurashtra Cricket Association



Stadium in Rajkot.

Rawal was named the 'Player of the Match' following her 89-run knock while chasing Ireland's total of 238. Speaking at the post-match presentation, Pratika Rawal said that it helped her to have Smriti Mandhana on the crease. The youngster added that they had to carry on the momentum. The opener added that she looks to play big shots in the upcoming matches.

"I'm comfortable [while playing]. It helps a lot [having Mandhana]. I enjoy watching from the other

BRIEF SCORES

Ireland 238 for 7 in 50 overs (Gaby Lewis 92, Leah Paul 59; Priya Mishra 2/56)
India 241 for 4 in 34.3 overs (Pratika Rawal 89, Tejal Hasabnis 53 not out; Aimee Maguire 3/57).

end. It eases me down. We were just trying to keep it simple. We had a really good start. We just had to carry on the momentum. At the end, Tejal played really well. I'm just trying to do what I

do best... just keeping it one match at a time. Whenever the ball is in my slot, I look to play big shots; otherwise, I look to take singles," Pratika Rawal was quoted by ESPNcricinfo as saying.

India Women (Playing XI): Smriti Mandhana(c), Pratika Rawal, Harleen Deol, Jemimah Rodrigues, Tejal Hasabnis, Richa Ghosh(w), Deepti Sharma, Sayali Satghare, Saima Thakor, Priya Mishra, Titus Sadhu

Ireland Women (Playing XI): Sarah Forbes, Gaby Lewis(c), Una Raymond-Hoey, Orla Prendergast,

Laura Delany, Leah Paul, Coulter Reilly(w), Arlene Kelly, Georgina Dempsey, Freya Sargent, Aimee Maguire

Earlier, India had swept the West Indies 3-0 in the ODI series, following a 2-1 triumph in the T20 series. The Irish team on the other hand boasts of some quality all-rounders, with Prendergast likely to be a key player. Having gained experience in Australia and the WBBL, she will look to bring that to the fore as Ireland takes on the formidable India at home.

Chirag-Satwiksairaj sail into semi-finals

AGENCIES
KUALA LUMPUR

Indian shuttlers Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy advanced to the semi-finals of the men's doubles event at the Malaysia Open 2025 badminton tournament in Kuala Lumpur on Friday.

Chirag-Satwik, ninth in the men's doubles badminton rankings, saved four game points in the opening game against the world No. 24 local challenge of Ong Yew Sin and Teo Ee Yi before winning the quarter-final 26-24, 21-15. Both pairs started strongly but Chirag and Satwik edged ahead with an 11-9 lead at the break. The Indian badminton players were on the brink of victory at 19-16 but Ong Yew Sin and Teo Ee Yi fought back to level the score at 19-19 and then took a 21-20 lead. Chirag and Satwik held their nerve, saving four game points before clinching the win. The Malaysian pair responded by taking a three-point lead in the second mid-game break. However, Chirag and Satwik equalised



Chirag and Satwik won five of the next six points from there to secure their sixth win over Ong Yew Sin and Teo Ee Yi.

at 11-11 and raced to a two-point lead at 16-14. Chirag and Satwik won five of the next six points from there to secure their sixth win over Ong Yew Sin and Teo Ee Yi.

Earlier in the round of 16, Chirag-Satwik defeated Nur Mohd. Azriyan Ayub-Tan Wee Kiong of Malaysia in straight games after opening the campaign against Lu Ming-che and Tang Kai-wei of the Chinese Taipei with a three-game win. In the semi-finals of the BWF Super 1000 tournament, seventh-seeded

Chirag and Satwik will play the unseeded yet formidable South Korean duo of Kim Won-ho, the Paris 2024 mixed doubles silver medallist, and Seo Seung-jae, one half of the reigning men's and mixed doubles world champions. Paris 2024 Olympians Lakshya Sen and HS Prannoy were eliminated in the earlier rounds of the Malaysia Open, which will conclude on Sunday.

Two-time Olympic medalist PV Sindhu has given the tournament a miss.

Invest in grassroots coaching to awaken India's sports

RUPINDER SINGH
NEW DELHI

Each passing day in sports in India is a reminder that you have to invest in world-class coaches at the school and university levels in India to make a mark in sports. The Australian Open Tennis from 12th January is the first big sports event of 2025. Guess who Novak Djokovic's first-round opponent is in this tournament. Indian-origin Basavareddy is up against his Serbian idol.

The 19-year-old has however as expected learned boys tennis in the USA where he is studying at Stanford University and is already ranked 133 in the men's singles category.

Compare Basavareddy's progress to any 19-year-

Guess who Novak Djokovic's first-round opponent is in this tournament. Indian-origin Basavareddy is up against his Serbian idol.

old in India and you will see the difference. Before Sumit Naval India's top tennis player was Somdev Devraman who also learned his tennis in the USA University. Instead of spending huge sums of money on India's elite athletes in the TOPS scheme of India, you need to spend much less on giving world-class coaches to schools and universities. Indian schools have good economics commerce, and English maths teachers why not attempt to have quality sports coaches?

Kalinga Lancers outclass Gonasika

AGENCIES
ROURKELA

The Vedanta Kalinga Lancers secured their second consecutive win of the season, defeating Team Gonasika 2-1 in an intense Hero Hockey India League 2024-25 match on Thursday at the Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium in Rourkela.

Notably, Antoine Kina (28th minute) and Aran Zalewski (33rd minute) found the net for the Lancers. Meanwhile, SV Sunil (14th minute) scored the lone goal for Gonasika. Consequently, the Lancers moved to third place with seven points, while Gonasika remained in seventh with four points. To begin with, Gonasika controlled possession and created early opportunities. Eventually, in the 14th minute, SV Sunil opened the scoring. Jack Waller delivered a precise cross into the circle, which Sunil calmly swept past Krishan Bahadur Pathak. Subsequently, Arajieet



Singh Hundal came close to doubling Gonasika's lead in the 21st minute. Jack Waller's pinpoint pass found Hundal near the circle, but the forward's shot missed the target. Earlier, the Lancers failed to capitalize on their penalty corner when Alexander Hendrickx's drag flick flew wide.

In the 23rd minute, the Lancers appeared to have scored through Nicolas Bandurak. However, the umpire disallowed the goal, ruling a raised ball in the buildup despite the TV umpire finding no clear evi-

dence. Nonetheless, the Lancers equalized in the 28th minute. After a defensive error from Gonasika, Antoine Kina gained possession and struck a powerful shot past Oliver Payne. As a result, the match was tied at half-time.

Shortly after the break, the Lancers took the lead in the 33rd minute. Aran Zalewski deflected Hendrickx's pass into the goal. Due to multiple players obstructing goalkeeper Suraj Karkera's view, the ball slipped past him into the net.

Later, Gonasika earned a penalty corner in the 43rd minute. However, Struan Walker's drag flick was brilliantly saved by Pathak. Meanwhile, the Lancers focused on maintaining their defensive structure and denied Gonasika any clear chances in the fourth quarter.

In the 53rd minute, the Lancers missed a chance to seal the game. Angad Bir Singh displayed exceptional dribbling to beat defenders and set up Dilpreet Singh. However, with an open goal, Dilpreet shot over the bar, leaving the scoreline unchanged.

As the game neared its conclusion, Gonasika pushed hard for an equalizer. Despite their efforts, the Lancers held firm and secured a hard-fought victory.

Overall, this win propelled the Lancers into the top three of the league standings, while Gonasika continues to struggle for form.

Djokovic accuses Melbourne authorities of food contamination

AGENCIES
MELBOURNE

Novak Djokovic has made a startling claim about being poisoned with "lead and mercury" during his stay in Melbourne. This occurred before he was deported from Australia for refusing to take the COVID-19 vaccine ahead of the 2022 Australian Open.

As Djokovic prepares to compete for an 11th Australian Open title, he is also aiming for a record-breaking 25th Grand Slam title and 100 ATP Tour-level titles. While his experiences in Australia have been memorable, they also include some darker moments.

Previously, Djokovic had openly opposed the COVID-19 vaccine, believing it was his right to



decide what went into his body. As a result, he was detained in a Melbourne hotel and later deported, preventing him from participating in the Australian Open.

Upon returning to Serbia, Djokovic discovered a high presence of "heavy metals and mercury" in his body. "I had some health issues. And I realized that in that hotel in Melbourne, I was fed with some food that poisoned me," he explained. He added, "I had a really high level of lead and mercury."

India announces final squads for Kho Kho World Cup

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The Kho Kho Federation of India (KKFI) and the International Kho Kho Federation (IKKF) have officially announced the final squads for the upcoming Kho Kho World Cup 2025. The prestigious tournament will take place at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in New Delhi from January 13 to 19. The first edition of this global event will feature 23 countries, with 20 men's teams and 19 women's teams set to compete, making it a monumental occasion for the sport.



Team India for Kho-Kho World Cup 2025

The men's team will be led by Pratik Waikar, an Eklavya Award winner and a prominent figure in Indian Kho Kho. Waikar's journey with the sport began at the age of eight, inspired by his

neighbor. Though he holds degrees in Computer Science and Finance, he chose Kho Kho as his professional career. Waikar made his India debut in 2016 and has since captained Telugu

Yoddhas in the Ultimate Kho Kho League, where the team finished as runners-up. He also led Maharashtra to victory in the 56th Senior National Championship, clinching a gold medal.

For the women's team, Priyanka Ingle has been selected as captain. A seasoned player with 23 National appearances over 15 years, Ingle's career highlights include winning the Ila Award for best sub-junior player and the Rani Laxmi Bai Award at the 2022 Senior Nationals. She was also part of the gold-winning team at the 4th Asian Kho Kho Championship 2022-23. Despite her professional commitments at the Income Tax Department in Mumbai, Ingle continues to train rigorously, solidifying her position as one of India's top Kho Kho players.



Utah Jazz guard Collin Sexton, right, drives with the ball against Miami Heat guard Jaime Jaquez Jr. (11) during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Thursday, Jan. 9, 2025, in Salt Lake City. (AP)

World Padel League to be played in Mumbai from February 8

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

Following its tremendous success in UAE, the World Padel League (WPL) is all set to make its mark in India with a thrilling showcase of the sport, featuring 32 of the world's top padel players, across 4 teams.

Scheduled to take place at the Nesco Center, Mumbai

from February 5-8, WPL will exhibit the exciting, high-action format that has made padel one of the fastest-growing sports globally. Spectators are in for a treat with unmissable court-side action over 4 days and 7 matches.

Elite international padel players such as Claudia Fernandez Sanchez (Women's World No. 3), Marta

Ortega Gallego (Women's World No. 7), Sofia Araujo (Women's World No. 8), Alejandra Salazar Bengoechea (Women's World No. 15), Federico Chingotto (Men's World No. 4), Jon Sanz (Men's World No. 9), Carlos Daniel Gutierrez (Men's World No. 19), and many other stars will compete for the first time on Indian soil.



With increasing participation and growing infrastructure across major cities, padel has been

growing rapidly in India. The partnership between WPL and IPF is set to further accelerate the sport's development, inspiring a wide range of sports enthusiasts. With little less than a month to go for the World Padel League (WPL), Sneha Abraham Sehgal, President of the Indian Padel Federation (IPF) expressed, "The preparations for the

World Padel League are in full swing, and we're looking forward to witnessing its highly anticipated debut in India. With some of the biggest names in padel set to showcase their skills, this event promises to elevate the sport's profile in India. It surely marks a new chapter for padel, inspiring more Indian fans across age groups to engage with this

exciting sport." Navdeep Arneja, COO of the World Padel League added, "We are proud to bring the World Padel League to India, where the sport is growing rapidly. In the last 2 years, padel has seen a remarkable uptake in the Indian market and it is a great time to help kickstart a notable padel revolution in India."