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## BJP UNVEILS MANIFESTO, VOWS RS 2,500/PM TO WOMEN IN DELHI

Promises to implement Ayushman Bharat Yojana in Delhi, attacks AAP's Mohalla Clinics, calling them den of corruption

TIKAM SHARMA  
NEW DELHI

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) National President and Union Minister J.P. Nadda unveiled the party's Delhi Assembly election manifesto, titled the Sankalp Patra, on Friday. Among the key promises is a monthly allowance of Rs 2,500 for every woman in Delhi under the Mahila Samridhi Yojana. The BJP also pledged to continue all existing welfare schemes currently operational in the national capital.

Highlighting the central government's flagship health initiative, the BJP vowed to implement the Ayushman Bharat scheme for 51 lakh residents of Delhi, providing health insurance coverage of Rs 5 lakh from the very first cabinet



Union Minister and BJP National President J.P. Nadda addresses a press conference for the Delhi Assembly Elections, in New Delhi on Friday. Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva is also present. ANI

### TOP PROMISES

- Rs. 2,500 every month to every woman in Delhi through Mahila Samridhi Yojana.
- LPG cylinders at Rs 500 to women from poor sections. One free cylinder on Holi and Diwali
- 6 nutrition kits and Rs 21,000 will be given to every pregnant woman.
- Rs 2,500 pension for senior citizens between the age of 60-70.
- Atal Canteens in slums, JJ clusters

### BJP trying to contest on our manifesto: Kejriwal

NEW DELHI: AAP National Convener Arvind Kejriwal came out heavily at the BJP after the latter released its poll manifesto for the upcoming Delhi polls, and alleged that the ruling party has "no ideas or vision" and is only following 'Kejriwal's governance model'. He took a dig at the BJP, saying that both BJP President JP Nadda and Prime Minister Narendra Modi are saying that all schemes of the Delhi government will continue.

meeting. "Once we form the government in Delhi, the Ayushman Bharat scheme will be implemented for 51 lakh people who were deprived of its benefits under the AAP government. Additionally, we will offer an extra Rs 5 lakh insurance cover," Nadda stated.

Calling the manifesto a "foundation for a developed Delhi," Nadda expressed confidence in winning the election. He emphasized that the Sankalp Patra was prepared after extensive public consultation, which included over 12,000 meetings and feedback from approximately 1.8 lakh individuals. The party also used 41 LED vans to gather ideas directly from the people.

Criticizing the ruling AAP government, Nadda accused it of corruption, P3

## Gukesh, Bhaker, Harmanpreet, Praveen get Khel Ratna Award

President Murmu also presents Arjuna and Dronacharya Awards to sports icons

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Double Olympic medalist Manu Bhaker, World Chess Champion Gukesh Dommaraju, Indian men's hockey team captain Harmanpreet Singh and Para Athlete Praveen Kumar received the country's highest sporting honour Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award by the President of India, Draupadi Murmu, at the Rashtrapati Bhawan on Friday.

Earlier on January 2, the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports released a statement and announced the names of recipients of the prestigious National Sports Awards 2024.

On Friday, the National Sports Awards 2025 took



President Murmu confers Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award, 2024 on Gukesh Dommaraju for his achievements. ANI

place at the Rashtrapati Bhawan where the President of India awarded all the recipients of the Khel Ratna, Arjuna Award, and Dronacharya Award. Manu Bhaker opened India's medal tally in the Olympics after she secured third place in the women's individual 10m air pistol event, becoming the first-ever woman shooter to win an Olympic medal for India. Following that, Sarabjot Singh and Bhaker won the bronze medal in the 10m air pistol (mixed team) event, which was India's first-ever

shooting team medal. Meanwhile, Gukesh's success story was one of the major highlights of Indian sports in 2024. He made history in December by defeating China's Ding Liren in the decisive 14th game of the FIDE World Championship match in Singapore. The championship, tied at 6.5-6.5 heading into the final game, saw a stellar performance from Gukesh, who secured a 7.5-6.5 victory, becoming the youngest world champion ever at 18. He also became In- P3

## AAP promises free bus service for male students

Writes to PM Modi proposing 50% concession on metro fares for students

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) National Convener Arvind Kejriwal has announced free bus travel for all school and college students in Delhi. Additionally, he proposed a 50 per cent concession on metro fares for students and urged the central government to collaborate with the Delhi government to share the cost of this initiative.

Highlighting the importance of reducing financial



### NCP releases list of 30 names for Delhi polls

NEW DELHI: Nationalist Congress Party, which is an ally of BJP in the National Democratic Alliance, on Friday released a list of 30 candidates for the Delhi assembly elections. The party, led by Maharashtra Deputy CMAJit Pawar, has fielded Vishvanath Agarwal from New Delhi against Arvind Kejriwal. BJP's Parvesh Verma and Congress' Sandeep Dikshit are other candidates for the seat.



barriers to education, Kejriwal explained that these measures aim to alleviate the economic burden on students, ensuring uninterrupted access to education. "Education is the foundation of the nation's progress," he stated, P3

## No detentions in Saif Ali Khan case: Cops

Maha Minister denies gang involvement, hospital says Saif safe, shifted from ICU

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

The Mumbai Police on Friday clarified that no person related to the case of actor Saif Ali Khan had been detained so far. Earlier it was reported that one person had been brought to the Bandra Police station for questioning, however the Police have now ruled out that possibility saying that the person is not related to the Saif Ali Khan assault case.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra Junior Minister for



Actor Saif Ali Khan's mother veteran actor Sharmila Tagore arrives at Lilavati Hospital, in Mumbai on Friday. Saif Ali Khan is admitted here following an attack on him. (ANI Photo)

Home (Urban) Yogesh Kadam on Friday said that there was no involvement

of any gang in the incident. "It was an attempt of theft only and there is no

gang involved in this incident...police are further probing the case," the minister said, adding, "Saif Ali Khan never asked for any Security. This attack was not part of any gang. The accused had entered the house with the motive of theft only. A scuffle broke out between Saif Ali Khan and the suspect in which the actor got injured." Earlier, amid concerns regarding Bollywood Actor Saif Ali Khan's well-being, Dr Nitin Dange from Lilavati Hospital on Friday con- P3

## Kangana's 'Emergency' faces protest in Punjab

TDG NETWORK  
CHANDIGARH

The controversial political drama "Emergency" directed by and starring BJP MP Kangana Ranaut faced severe backlash and protests in Punjab following its release on Friday. The film, which depicts the 1975-77 Emergency under former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, has drawn criticism for allegedly misrepresenting the Sikh community.

A day before its release, Shiromani Gurdwara P3

## For auto industry growth, demand, aspiration vibrant in India: PM

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said both demand and aspiration are important for the growth of the auto industry and fortunately both are vibrant in India.

Speaking at the Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025, PM Modi said, "For the growth of the auto industry, both need and aspiration are very important, and fortunately, both are vibrant in India today. For the coming decades, India will remain the world's youngest



country. This youth will be your largest customer. You can well estimate the enormous demand this large youth segment will create. Another customer

is India's middle class. Over the past 10 years, 250 million Indians have moved out of poverty. This neo-middle class is purchasing their first vehicle. As progress continues, they will also upgrade their vehicles, and the auto sector is sure to benefit from this."

He also said that the country's journey towards becoming a developed nation will be marked by unparalleled transformation and exponential growth in the auto sector. "The journey of a developed India will also be one of unprecedented transformation and exponential growth P3

## Great day for India-US ties: EAM hails US Consulate opening in Bengaluru

TDG NETWORK  
BANGALORE

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar joined US Ambassador to India, Eric Garcetti for the opening of the US Consulate in Bangalore. Hailing the step as an important moment in the India-US ties, Jaishankar announced that India will soon be opening its consul-



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar exchanges greetings with US Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti as Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar looks on during the inauguration ceremony of the US Consulate, in Bengaluru on Friday. P3

ate in Los Angeles. "Bengaluru is such an important place, it was for me an imperative that there is a permanent resident presence of American diplomats this time...It has been something long in waiting...I told him (US Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti) you get Bengaluru done and I'll get you Los Angeles done, P3



President Droupadi Murmu hosts a banquet for Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam and his delegations, at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on Thursday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also seen. ANI



# FARMERS URGE PM MODI TO HONOUR ASSURANCES; WORRIED OF DALLEWAL'S HEALTH

NEERAJ MOHAN  
CHANDIGARH

Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) has written a fervent appeal to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging immediate action on the demands of farmers and drawing attention to the alarming health condition of Sri Jagjeet Singh Dallewal, who has been on an indefinite hunger strike for 53 days. The letter, addressed through Members of Parliament (MPs) and Chief Ministers, emphasizes the government's failure to honor its 2021 written assurances and raises serious concerns about the recently proposed National Policy Framework for Agricultural Markets (NPFAM).

Highlighting the critical health condition of Dallewal, the letter expresses deep anguish over the government's inaction. "It will be a huge tragedy for the country if a valuable life is lost only because the Government of India chose not to respond," the SKM stated, calling for immediate talks to resolve the issues and save his life.

The SKM strongly criticized

## FARM CRISIS

- SKM urged PM Modi to act on farmers' demands and highlighted Sri Jagjeet Singh Dallewal's critical health after 53 days of hunger strike.
- The letter criticized the government's failure to fulfill 2021 assurances and raised objections to the proposed National Policy Framework for Agricultural Markets (NPFAM).
- SKM alleged NPFAM revives repealed farm laws, promoting corporatization and undermining farmers' independence and state authority.
- Farmers demanded legal MSP guarantees, debt waivers, and free electricity, while opposing higher tariffs and smart meters in the New Electricity Act.
- SKM called on MPs and Chief Ministers to reject the NPFAM and pressure the Centre for immediate resolutions.



Punjab farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, aged 86, on the seventeenth day of his fast-unto-death near the Khanauri Border, in Sangrur district, Punjab, Thursday, Dec. 12, 2024. File Photo

the NPFAM, describing it as a revival of the controversial farm laws repealed after the 13-month-long farmers' movement. They allege the policy paves the way for corporatization of agriculture, undermining the independence of farmers and state

governments' role in agricultural development. Key objections include -Unified National Market, Contract Farming via FPOs and MSP. The SKM has urged state legislatures to reject the draft policy outright and communicate their disapproval to the central gov-

ernment. The SKM pointed out that the government has not moved to meet these assurances, despite farmers demanding legal MSP guarantees, debt waivers, and free electricity for agricultural use. Instead, provisions in the New Electricity Act, such as

## Farmer leaders gear up for joint meeting

After a successful first meeting the farmer leaders of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha will hold another meeting with the protesting farmer leaders associated with the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM) on Saturday.

As per the information the farmer leaders were likely to chalk-out a strategy of a united front to lead the agitation strongly to pressurize the government for the pending demands of the farmers including guaranteed Minimum Support Price.

higher tariffs and smart meters, have further burdened farmers. Farmer leaders also appealed to MPs and Chief Ministers to raise these issues in their respective assemblies and push the central government for immediate resolution.

# Haryana govt's massive crackdown against corruption, hundreds of officials charged

NEERAJ MOHAN  
CHANDIGARH

Taking a strict step to root out corruption from the revenue department, the Haryana government has identified 370 patwaris (revenue officials) and 170 middlemen accused of indulging in bribery and misconduct.

As per a notice issued by the the Additional Chief Secretary (Revenue) Anurag Rastogi has instructed all deputy commissioners to take strict action against the identified individuals and submit a report to the government within 15 days.

The government's confidential report, compiled with inputs from intelligence agencies accessed by TDG, outlines the modus operandi of the accused patwaris and their associates. The report also details bribe amounts demanded for various routine tasks such as land mutation, demarcation, record rectification, and issuing land maps.

The highest number of tainted patwaris were reported in Kaithal (46), followed by Sonapat (41) and Mahendragarh (36). While, Gurgaon district led in terms of middlemen, with



Representational Image

26 identified, while Mahendragarh reported 20, and Palwal, Rewari, and Sonapat accounted for 15 each.

As per the orders the Patwaris and their assistants harass the public by repeatedly raising objections to delay routine work unless bribes were paid. For instance, a patwari posted at Ambala Cantt allegedly harassed citizens for land mutation and other tasks, with bribes being collected by a local middleman. As per the letter the bribe rates varied across districts, with Gurgaon emerging as the costliest, where identified patwaris charged Rs 3,000 to Rs 5,000 for land mutation and related tasks. In contrast, patwaris in Faridabad charged Rs 500 to Rs 700 to locate old revenue files. The report suggests

that most tainted officials are posted in rural areas, where land dealings are more frequent. However, high-value corruption cases were also reported in urbanized regions. Some patwaris allegedly tampered with land records, while others left critical tasks pending for months in the absence of bribes.

The revenue department currently has 1,378 patwaris, with 1,313 positions vacant. However, the shortage is expected to be addressed once 2,600 newly recruited patwaris complete their training. Sources reveal that the state CID conducted extensive fieldwork to prepare the list of corrupt officials. Apart from naming the patwaris and middlemen, the report includes their caste, tenure, mobile numbers, and even native villages, offering granular details to aid the crackdown.

"The common man often suffers due to the corrupt practices of patwaris, which tarnishes the government's image. This decisive action aims to rebuild public trust," reads the letter written by Rastogi to the deputy commissioners.

# Haryana appoints women sarpanches as ambassadors to boost girl child campaign

NEERAJ MOHAN  
CHANDIGARH

Concerned about the declining sex ratio in Haryana, Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini has taken a major step to address the issue by appointing all women sarpanches (village heads) as ambassadors for their villages under the Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao campaign. This campaign, launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi from Panipat of Haryana in 2015, aims to protect and empower the girl child. Announcing the decision during a review meeting of the Women and Child Development Department, Saini emphasized the importance of involving women leaders to bring about change. "Our efforts to improve the sex ratio are being recognized nationwide," he said.

Saini expressed concern about the misuse of hand-



Women in Haryana. File Photo

## State government strengthens efforts under Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao as sex ratio dips to 910 girls per 1,000 boys

held machines for illegal sex determination and directed officials to create a strategy to track and penalize offenders. Haryana has taken strict action against female foeticide under the PCPNDT Act, registering 1,220 FIRs between 2015 and 2024. In addition, 386 FIRs were filed during inter-state raids, leading to 4,000 arrests of doctors,

quacks, and touts. To raise awareness, the Chief Minister called for organizing street plays (nukkad natak) and other programs in villages. These events will highlight the importance of saving the girl child, with speeches by elder women from the community.

Despite efforts, Haryana's sex ratio at birth (SRB) has

dropped to 910 girls per 1,000 boys in 2024, the lowest since 2016. Five districts reported a sex ratio below 900, with Charkhi Dadri at 869, the worst in the state. Faridabad and Gurugram both recorded an SRB of 899, followed by Rewari (873) and Rohtak (888).

Some districts, however, showed improvement. Yamunanagar reported the highest SRB at 939, followed by Sirsa (936) and Fatehabad (925). Yamunanagar and Karnal saw an 18-point increase, while Sirsa and Bhiwani improved by 11 and 12 points, respectively. The Chief Minister revealed plans to upgrade 10,000 Anganwadi Centres into Saksham Anganwadi Centres within five years. The state has already received Rs 563 lakh from the central government to upgrade 563 centres, with proposals submitted to improve another 2,307.

## MP Dilip Saikia takes charge as new Assam BJP Prez

TDG NETWORK  
GUWAHATI

Lok Sabha member from Darrang Udalguri, Dilip Saikia has been elected as the new president of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's Assam unit.

Saikia is currently the national general secretary of the BJP. He had previously held positions in the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the student body affiliated with the RSS. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday congratulated the new state BJP chief and posted on X, "Grounded in humility, dedicated to Maa Bharti, a committed sadasya of the party! Dilip Saikia, President, BJP Assam. Wishing him a successful Presidency." The Assam Chief Minister had earlier on Thursday also posted after Dilip Saikia filed his nomination for the post of BJP State chief.

# ED, Raipur Zone, arrests MLA Lakhma in liquor scam case

TDG NETWORK  
RAIPUR

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Raipur Zonal Office arrested Kawasi Lakhma (MLA) on Wednesday under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 in the Liquor scam case in Chhattisgarh. He was produced before the Special Court (PMLA), Raipur and the Court granted ED custody of Kawasi Lakhma for six days i.e. till 21.01.2025. Kawasi Lakhma was the Excise Minister in the state of Chhattisgarh during the material period of the liquor scam, said a press release on Friday.

ED initiated an investigation based on an FIR registered by ACB/EOW Chhattisgarh under various sections of IPC, 1860 and Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 in the said Liquor scam in the State of Chhattisgarh, added the

statement.

ED investigation revealed that Kawasi Lakhma was allegedly aware of the complete affairs of the Excise Department including liquor scam, yet he did nothing to stop the illegal and unauthorized operations. He played an important role in policy change which led to the introduction of the FL-10A license in the state of Chhattisgarh. He was an integral part of the syndicate and actively assisted the syndicate by manoeuvring processes and procedures as per their direction. Investigation conducted has revealed that Kawasi Lakhma was receiving not less than Rs 2 Crore per month out of Proceeds of Crime (POC) being generated out of the liquor scam. An investigation conducted by ED has been able to collect evidence linking the use of POC obtained by Kawasi Lakhma in the construction of immovable properties, the release said.

ED investigation has revealed that the corruption in the liquor scam (which took place between 2019 to 2022) was resorted to in multiple ways: PART-A Commission: Bribe was collected from the "various distillers" on the basis of "each Case of liquor procured from them by the CSMCL (State body for purchase and sale of liquor)". PART-B Kacha liquor sale: Sale of unaccounted kacha off-the-books Country Liquor. In this case, not even a single rupee reached the State Exchequer, and all the sale proceeds were pocketed by the Syndicate.

The illegal liquor was sold from State-run shops only. PART-C commission: Bribes taken from distillers to allow them to make a cartel and have a fixed market share. Commission from FL-10A License Holders who were introduced to earn in the foreign liquor segment also, added the release.

# Land-for-job case: Delhi court issues warrant to produce Amit Katyal

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Rouse Avenue court on Friday issued a warrant to produce accused Amit Katyal in the land for a job money laundering case on the next date of hearing.

Katyal is lodged in Bhondsi Jail of Haryana. He is in judicial custody in a case lodged by the Gurugram Police. He is in judicial custody in Bhondsi Jail Haryana in a case lodged by the Gurugram Police. He has been charge-sheeted in the matter related to former Railway Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav. The court



listed the matter on January 31.

Meanwhile, hearing the matter, Special Judge Vishal Gogne orally asked a question to the investigation officer as to what's the status of the Prosecution sanction against public servants. SPP Manish Jain on instructions from the IO submitted that it is in the process.

The Enforcement Directorate on Friday submitted some documents as per the court direction on the plea of accused persons seeking supply of documents. This matter is at the stage of scrutiny of documents. The court asked the counsel for accused persons that expedite the scrutiny of documents so that we can start arguments on framing of charges by starting of February.

The court on September 18, 2024, issued a summons to Lalu Prasad Yadav, his sons Tejaswi Yadav and other charge-sheeted accused in the Land for Job

Money Laundering case. The court additionally issued a summons to Tej Pratap Yadav also.

The Court had summoned Akhileshwar Singh as well as his wife Kiran Devi. They are on bail granted by the court. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) had filed a supplementary charge sheet against 11 accused on August 6. Four of them died. Tej Pratap Yadav was not charge sheeted by the ED but the court found sufficient material against him to issue summons. Tej Pratap Yadav was summoned for the first time in the land for job case.

# Sambhal: Demolition notice served to 123 houses in dilapidated state

TDG NETWORK  
SAMBHAL

A notice has been issued to demolish 123 houses and shops in Sambhal under Uttar Pradesh Municipalities Act 1916, after they were found in dilapidated state in a survey conducted by the Sambhal Municipality.

According to the Sambhal Municipal Council Executive Officer, Manibhushan Tiwari under the Municipality Act 1916, Sambhal Municipality had surveyed the dilapidated buildings of the area in which 123 structures were found in

*Notably, since after the Sambhal violence, the district administration has been taking action against illegal encroachment on government lands.*

dilapidated condition which collapse any time risking loss of life and property.

Subsequently, the municipality has issued a notice to the owners of all houses and shops and asked to demolish the structures, otherwise the municipality itself will demolish.

Meanwhile, a demolition drive was also carried in

Pathakpur village under Chandausi Tehsil of the district and few house were demolished. Detailing about the demolition drive Dharendra Kumar Singh, Tehsildar Chandausi said, "In Pathakpur village, there is a land of act 132 next to the highway which was illegally encroached by some people by constructing house over

it. Taking action, the owners were served with notice and asked remove the encroachment but they failed after which action was taken and house were demolished."

Notably, since after the Sambhal violence, the district administration has been taking action against illegal encroachment on government lands. On December 25, to restore wells and pilgrimage sites in Sambhal and reconnect the local community with their religious traditions, a team from the ASI and local administration visited several historic locations.

# 1.78 million pilgrims and 1 million Kalpavasis visit Maha Kumbh Mela

TDG NETWORK  
PRAYAGRAJ

Over 1.78 million pilgrims and 1 million Kalpavasis visited the Mahakumbh Mela on Friday till 4 pm, as per official data released.

According to the data released, over 2.78 million people took a dip in the Triveni Sangam at the grand

celebration on the fifth day till 4 pm.

More than 70 million people have taken a holy dip in the Triveni Sangam till January 16.

Today at 2 pm, over 1 million Kalpavasis and 1 million pilgrims had visited the Mahakumbh, as per the data released.

Meanwhile, to prevent any

possible disruptions of law and order in the district, a prohibitory order till February 28 has been passed by the competent authority.

In an official communication today, the Additional Commissioner of Police, Prayagraj announced prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Indian Civil Security Code, 2023 (also

called Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023).

The announcement specified: "In the coming days, festivals of various religions/sects like Mahakumbh 2025/Amrit Snaan, Jananayak Karpuri Thakur Birth Day, Republic Day, Mauni Amavasya, Basant Panchami, Sant Ravidas Jayanti, Maghi Purnima,

Valentine's Day, Shab-e-Barat, Mahashivratri, other festivals and various competitive examinations will be held."

Going on to explain the upcoming events, the ACP intimated: "In view of the communal sensitivity of the district, on the basis of information received from reliable sources.

# Unnao rape case: Delhi HC judge recuses from hearing Sengar's plea

TDG NETWORK  
RAIPUR

The Delhi High Court judge Justice Dharmesh Sharma on Friday recused himself from hearing former BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar's plea seeking suspension of sentence in Unnao Minor

rape case. He is serving a life sentence in this case. Justice Dharmesh Sharma had Convicted and sentenced Sengar when he was a session judge at Tis Hazari. Sengar has already challenged the trial court order before the High Court in 2018.

A division bench headed by

Justice Prathiba M Singh listed the matter before another bench subject to the order of the bench of chief justice on January 27. Meanwhile, the High Court on Friday refused to extend the interim bail of former BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar and asked him to surrender on January 20.



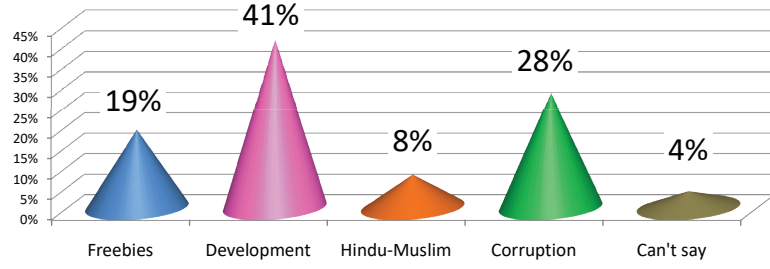
## THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON DELHI ELECTION 2025

**83% believe that promises of freebies are made to win votes in elections.**

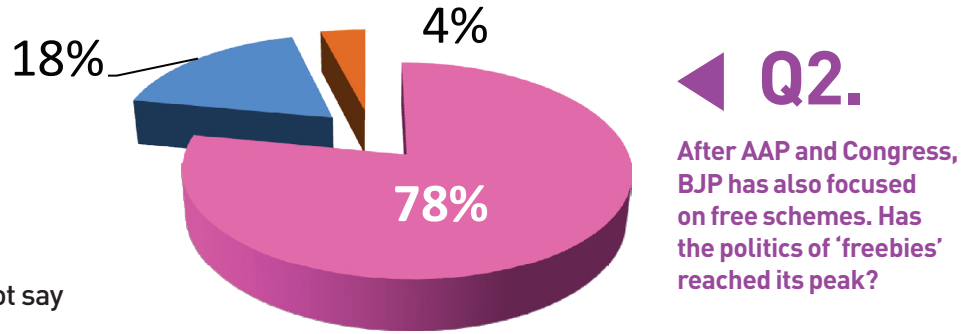
A recent India News Survey on the Delhi Election 2025 reveals that 41% of voters consider development the biggest issue, followed by corruption (28%).

A staggering 83% believe freebies are promised solely to win votes, while 79% feel such promises remain unfulfilled. Additionally, 62% think women-centric schemes will influence their voting decisions.

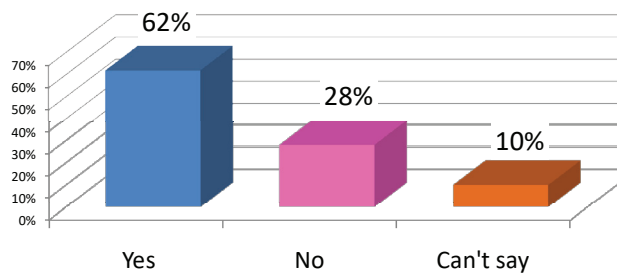
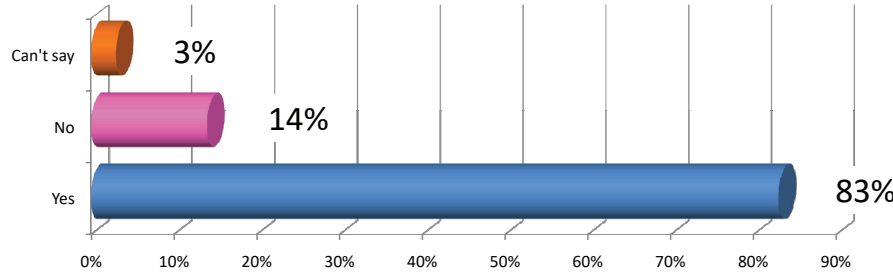
**Q1.**  
What is the biggest issue in the Delhi elections?



**Q2.**  
After AAP and Congress, BJP has also focused on free schemes. Has the politics of 'freebies' reached its peak?



**Q3.**  
Are promises of freebies made to win votes in elections?



**Q4.**  
AAP, Congress, and BJP have included women-centric schemes in their poll promises, offering allowances of Rs 2500 per month and various incentives. Will this influence women's voting decisions?

## THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON BANGLADESH'S IDENTITY CRISIS

**68% believe extremist ideology has gained ground in Bangladesh**

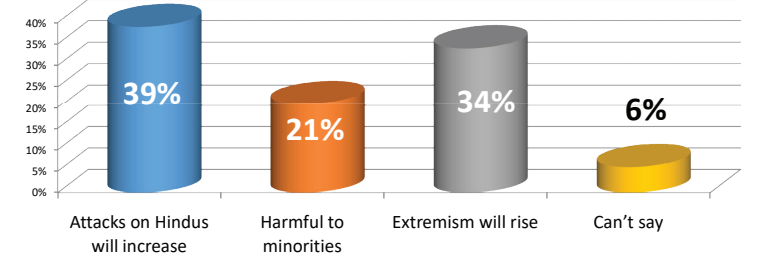
Bangladesh's interim government, under Muhammad Yunus, is considering constitutional reforms that may replace secularism with new

principles. The Bangladeshi newspaper Prothom Alo reported the reform commission's proposal to replace the 1972 constitution's four pillars—na-

tionalism, socialism, democracy, and secularism—with democracy, equality, human dignity, social justice, and pluralism.

**Q1.**

If "Secularism" is removed from Bangladesh's Constitution, what will be its effect according to you?



Can't say

No

Yes

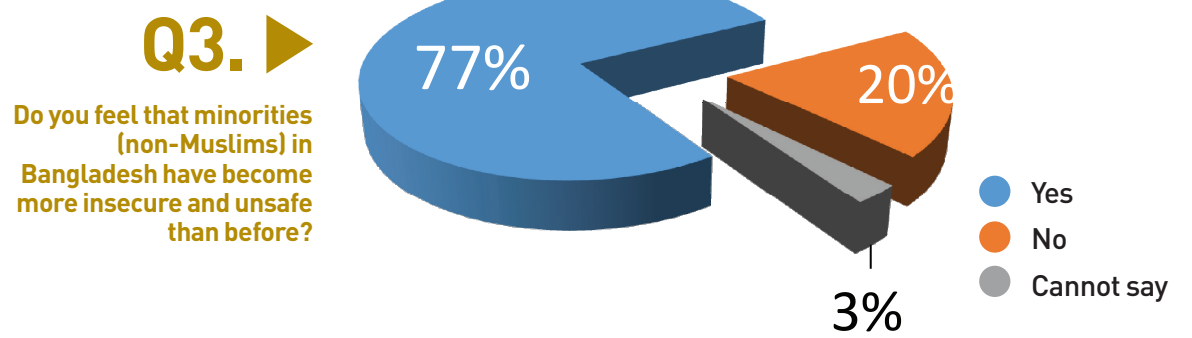
10%

24%

66%

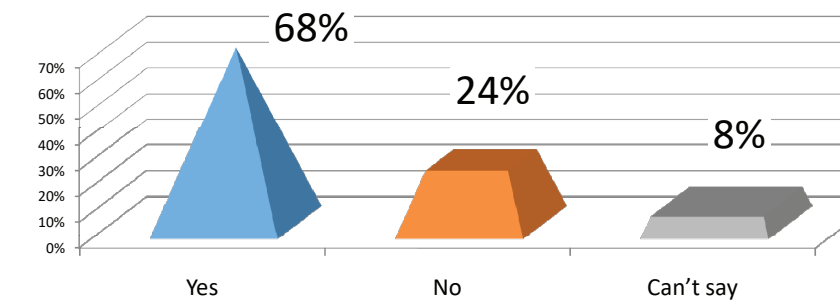
**Q2.**

Has Mohammad Yunus and Jamaat's agenda to make Bangladesh an Islamic state become apparent?



**Q3.**

Do you feel that minorities (non-Muslims) in Bangladesh have become more insecure and unsafe than before?



**Q4.**

Has terrorism and extremist ideology now gained ground in Bangladesh?

## BJP unveils manifesto...

CONTINUED FROM P1

particularly in its Mohalla clinics. "Their Mohalla Clinics are hubs of corruption, designed to mislead people. Fraudulent lab tests worth Rs 300 crore have been conducted. Our government will thoroughly investigate these scams," he asserted.

Nadga also criticized AAP's unfulfilled promises, pointing to its track record of unkept commitments. "They promised Rs 2,100 per month in 2021, but failed to deliver in both Delhi and Punjab.

In 2024, they promised Rs 1,000 per month but, as expected, failed again. Even subsidies on LPG were not provided. This is the real track record of what I call 'AAPda,'" he added.

The BJP promised to introduce several initiatives, including free OPD and diagnostic services for all individuals aged 70 and above. Additionally, the party will provide Rs 10 lakh health cover and increase the Senior Citizen's Pension from Rs 2,000 to Rs 2,500 for those aged 60-70.

Senior citizens, widows, specially-abled, and destitute aged over 70 years will see a pension increase from Rs 2,500 to Rs 3,000. In a step towards improving the quality of life in underserved areas, the BJP proposed the launch of Atal Canteens in JJ clusters to provide nutritious meals for just Rs 5.

The BJP also reassured that once in power, the party would continue existing welfare schemes while making them more efficient and transparent, eliminating corruption from the process.

## Gukesh, Bhaker, Harmanpreet, Praveen get Khel Ratna award

CONTINUED FROM P1

dia's second world chess champion after Viswanathan Anand.

Para Athlete, Praveen Kumar won a Gold in the Men's High Jump T64 at the Paralympics 2024. Harmanpreet Singh had been part of the Tokyo Olympics where India had won the Hockey bronze. He has also been nominated for FIH Player of the Year. Under his leadership, the India team won a bronze medal in the Paris Olympics

Indian men's hockey players Jarmanpreet Singh, Sanjay, Abhishek, Sukhjeet Singh and women's hockey team captain Salima Tete have been awarded Arjuna Awards for outstanding performance in

Sports and Games 2024.

Indian chess grandmaster Vantika Agrawal and athlete Jyothi Yarraji have also been conferred with Arjuna Awards.

Para athletes Preeti Pal, Jeevanji Deepthi, Ajeet Singh, Sachin Sarjerao Khilari, Dharambir, Pranav Soorma, Hokato Sema, Simran, and Navdeep will also receive Arjuna Awards. Olympic medalists Swapnil Suresh Kusale and Sarabjot Singh and Para-Olympic shooters Mona Agarwal and Rubina Francis have also been awarded with Arjuna Awards. Former Dempo FC and East Bengal head coach Armando Agnelo Colaco was also awarded with Dronacharya Award in the lifetime category.

## No detentions in Saif Ali Khan case: Cops

CONTINUED FROM P1

firmed that the actor was doing "extremely well" and was safe. He said that Saif Ali Khan has been shifted out from the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). However, his movements remain restricted. While speaking in a press conference, the doctors who operated on the actor said that he was out of danger and there was no issue of paralysis.

Dr Niraj Uttamani said that he was the doctor who met Saif Ali Khan within the first hour of his injury.

"He had blood all over. But he walked in like a lion with his young child. He is a real hero. He is doing well currently.

His parameters have improved. He is being shifted from the ICU to a special room. We will keep visitors in check. We want him to rest," he added.

Meanwhile, Dange said that they have advised the actor to take rest given the wounds on the back that can cause infection. Saif Ali Khan is fine and safe from any symptoms, he added.

Earlier today, Mumbai

Police said that they have taken possession of a portion of the blade extracted from Saif's back, while efforts to recover the remaining part are still underway.

Mumbai Police also said that the alleged accused involved in the attack on Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan was last seen near Bandra railway station and that the search is on to nab him.

Police suspect that after the incident, the suspect caught the first local train in the morning and headed towards Vasai Virar.

## Delhi polls: AAP promises free...

CONTINUED FROM P1

emphasizing that many underprivileged students face difficulties in continuing their education due to financial constraints.

Addressing the media, Kejriwal reaffirmed AAP's commitment to prioritizing education. "Currently, women in Delhi enjoy free bus travel, which benefits

female students, but male students do not have this facility. Once our government is formed, bus travel will be made free for all students," he announced. He also acknowledged the financial strain of metro travel on students, particularly male students who rely heavily on it for their daily commute.

## For auto industry growth, demand, aspiration...

CONTINUED FROM P1

in the mobility sector. Several factors are driving the future of mobility in India, such as the country's largest youth population, the expanding middle class, rapid urbanization, the modern infrastructure being built in India, and affordable vehicles from the 'Make in India' initiative. All these factors will push and empower the growth of the auto sector in India," he said.

PM Modi said that today the country is full of aspirations and youth energy, and these aspirations are visible in India's automotive industry.

"Today's India is full of aspirations and youth energy, and these aspirations

are clearly visible in India's automotive industry. Over the past few years, India's auto industry has grown by about 12 per cent. Following the mantra of 'Make in India, Make for the World,' exports are also increasing. There are countries whose total population is less than the number of vehicles seen in India each year. With around 25 million vehicles sold annually, it shows how demand is steadily increasing in India. This is why when it comes to the future of mobility, India is seen with such high hopes," PM Modi said.

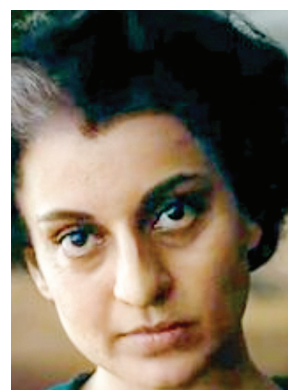
The theme for Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025 is "Beyond Boundaries: Co-creating Future Automotive Value Chain."

## Kangana's 'Emergency' faces...

CONTINUED FROM P1

Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) chief Harjinder Singh Dhani demanded Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann ban the film, calling it "politically motivated with an aim to defame the Sikh community." On Friday, protests erupted across the state, with Sikh organizations staging demonstrations outside cinemas in cities such as Amritsar, Jalandhar, Mohali, and Bathinda.

In Amritsar, members of Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar) led protests against the film. Police were de-



ployed outside the PVR Suraj Chanda Tara Cinema, where large numbers of protesters gathered. In Jalandhar, Sikh activists disrupted advance bookings and pressured cinema

managers to halt screenings. Commissioner of Police Swapan Sharma confirmed heightened security around multiplexes, adding that authorities were advised against screening the movie to prevent law and order issues.

In Mohali, protests outside malls and multiplexes led the district administration to direct mall owners not to screen the film. Similar demonstrations were reported in Bathinda, where the city's only multiplex cancelled screenings and refunded tickets after mounting pressure from protesters.

## PM security lapse case: Arrest warrants issued

CONTINUED FROM P1

PM Modi was scheduled to address a rally in Ferozpur and pay homage at the Hussainiwalla Memorial. Due to inclement weather, his helicopter journey was canceled, and he traveled by road. However, farmers blocked the route, causing the PM's convoy to halt on Pyareyana Flyover for

nearly 20 minutes before returning to Delhi. Upon reaching Bathinda airport, Modi reportedly remarked, "Thank your Chief Minister that I could reach Bathinda alive."

According to police sources, the farmers had repeatedly failed to appear in court, prompting the issuance of arrest warrants. The court has

directed police to arrest the accused and present them by January 22. SP (Detective) Randhir Kumar confirmed that investigations are ongoing. Initially filed as a bailable offense, the FIR now includes graver charges like attempted murder (Section 307), assault on a public servant (Section 353), wrongful restraint (Section

341), obstruction of duty (Section 186), unlawful assembly (Section 149), and provisions under the National Highways Act. The FIR names 26 individuals, including BKU (Revolutionary) General Secretary Baldev Singh Jeera. One accused, Major Singh, has passed away, while action has intensified against the remaining 25.

## Great day for India-US ties: EAM hails US...

CONTINUED FROM P1

which is his hometown. So we will be opening our consulate in Los Angeles also. A consulate serves many purposes. A big part of it is to facilitate travel," the EAM said.

While addressing the gathering, Jaishankar highlighted several aspects of the India-US ties and said that

the opening of the consulate was long due.

"Today it is within our grasp, within the realm of possibility, that we realise the potential of India-US relations. It is important that Bengaluru too, realise its potential in the relationship. As a country, today we are encouraging the opening of more embassies in the capital. It's part of our deeper

engagement with the world. But along with that, we are also encouraging more embassies to open consulates. I hope that there will be more occasions where more countries will open more consulates in Bengaluru. It would serve India's interests, Karnataka's interests and Bengaluru's interests better," Jaishankar said. Speaking about the ex-

pansion of the India-US ties, Jaishankar remarked, "Today, when we look at all the possibilities before us in an era of AI, EVs, space and drones, our relationships will be heavily based on technology, even more so than before. It will have a much bigger space component because the space domain is just beginning to open up.



# 'INDIA'S ECONOMIC PROSPERITY IS LINKED TO MARITIME SECURITY', SAYS RAJNATH SINGH

Rajnath Singh emphasized the need to protect sea routes, ensuring freedom of navigation for India's prosperity.

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

India's economic prosperity is linked to its maritime security, said Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday.

He was addressing senior Navy officers and other civilian staff of the Indian Navy during the celebration of the 'Year of Naval Civilians' event at Dr DS Kothari Auditorium, DRDO Bhawan. The ceremony showcased the remarkable achievements and contributions of Naval Civilians.

"It is necessary to protect our territorial waters, ensure freedom of navigation, and keep our sea routes, which are our maritime highways, safe," he said.

He added that in recent years American and other European naval powers had reduced their presence in the IOR region while the Indian Navy had increased it, but despite this, there is a possibility

## MARITIME SECURITY

- With Western naval powers reducing their role, India is strengthening its position to counter security challenges.
- Singh warned of increasing risks in the Gulf of Aden, Red Sea, and East Africa, pushing for greater naval vigilance.
- He highlighted growing cyber threats and called for awareness campaigns to enhance security in the armed forces.
- Singh noted India's strategic position in the Indian Ocean, stressing the importance of strengthening naval capabilities.



of increased threats in the Gulf of Aden, Red Sea and the sea areas adjacent to East African countries. In view of this, the Indian Navy is working towards increasing its presence further.

"Cyber Security has now also become a very important part of Maritime Security. Given the speed at which

cyber attacks are increasing, ignoring them can prove fatal. I believe that there is a need to run a special awareness campaign about cyber security in the armed forces," he added.

Most people know India as a subcontinent due to its vast land boundaries, but if it looks carefully, India is no

less important as an island nation, he added.

"We have to increase our Critical Capability, and in the coming times, we will have to focus on strengthening both our offensive and defensive responses and to achieve this planning is very important. And there should also be a consultative approach in this

planning process, in which we consult all the stakeholders including Naval civilians have a very important role," he added.

In view of India's strategic situation and its geopolitical location in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), the Defence Minister reiterated the resolve of the Government, to strengthen the Navy, terming it as a necessity in today's times.

"India's economic prosperity is linked to maritime security. It is, therefore, necessary to protect our territorial waters, ensure freedom of navigation, and keep sea routes, which are our maritime highways, safe. In recent years, major naval powers have reduced their presence in IOR, while the Indian Navy has increased it. There is a possibility of increase in threats in the Gulf of Aden, Red Sea and the sea areas adjacent to East African countries.

# 'Karnataka betrayed': CM Siddaramaiah slams NDA govt over allocation of funds

TDG NETWORK  
BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday, slammed the NDA government, accusing them of betraying Karnataka.

He pointed out that out of Rs1,73,030 crore allocated to states, said Karnataka received only Rs6,310 crore, a significant drop from previous allocations, as he stated in his official release.

Siddaramaiah termed this as a shocking injustice that mocks the hard work of people in Karnataka.

"The NDA government's betrayal of Karnataka continues in full swing. Of the Rs1,73,030 crore allocated to states, Karnataka has been given a mere Rs6,310 crore - a shocking drop from previous instalments. This injustice mocks every hardworking Kannadiga," he said.

He highlighted Karnataka's share of the Union Budget has stagnated. According to his release, in 2018-19, the state received Rs46,288 crores, but in



Rs46,288 crore, but in 2024-25, it has been allocated only Rs44,485 crore, with an additional Rs15,299 crore in grants. Karnataka, contributing so much, should receive at least Rs1 lakh crore annually but continues to be denied its rightful share," he said.

He further questioned that despite contributing Rs4.5 lakh crore annually, the state received only Rs45,000 crore in tax share and Rs15,000 crore in grants.

"Why should Karnataka, contributing Rs4.5 lakh crore annually to the national exchequer, receive only Rs45,000 crore in tax share and Rs15,000 crore in grants - a mere 13 paise for every rupee we contribute?," he said.

"The 15th Finance Commission reduced Karnataka's tax share from 4.713% to 3.647%, costing us Rs79,770 crore over five years. Even the recommended special grant of Rs5,495 crore to compensate for these losses was denied by the Modi government," he added.

# Two jawans injured in IED blast in Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur

TDG NETWORK  
NARAYANPUR

Two Border Security Force (BSF) jawans sustained injuries after Naxals set off an improvised explosive device (IED) in Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur district on Friday, police said.

The incident happened when in the morning when a BSF road-opening party was being deployed up between Camp Garpa and Garpa village, added the police official. The incident has been confirmed by Narayanpur SP Prabhakar Kumar and detailed information will be shared by the officials later in the day.

On Thursday, two CRPF jawans were injured in a pressure IED blast planted by Naxalites near Putkel village under the Basaguda police station in Bijapur district on Thursday morning. The injured jawans were evacuated and are now in a condition is stable, the police added. The blast comes

## 'TWO JAWANS INJURED IN BIJAPUR NAXAL ATTACK OUT OF DANGER'

Raipur: Chhattisgarh Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma on Friday said that the two jawans injured in the Bijapur Naxal attack are out of danger and in a healthy condition.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that the jawans are from Assam and Ladakh and are expected to recover soon. He mentioned that one of them sustained a leg injury, while the other suffered an eye injury and had surgery the previous day.

Speaking to ANI, Vijay Sharma said, "Both the jawans are now healthy and out of danger. One

is from Assam and the other is from Ladakh and they will recover soon. One jawan has suffered a leg injury and doctors have said he will recover soon. The other has suffered an eye injury and underwent surgery yesterday. It was a difficult area and a major operation was carried out by the jawans."

The Deputy CM further said that the jawans have had communication with their families and that he has also spoken to them.

Earlier on Thursday, he termed the Bijapur Naxal attack as a cowardly act.

amid the security forces intensifying anti-Naxal operations in Bijapur.

On January 12, five Naxalites including two women were killed in an encounter with security forces in Bija-

pur. Several automatic and other weapons and explosives were recovered from the forests under the National Park area of the Bijapur district. The recovered weapons included one SLR

rifle, one 12-bore rifle, two single-shot rifles, one BGL launcher, and one locally made Bharmar gun, along with explosives, Maoist literature, and other Naxal materials.

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai saluted the courage of the security forces after the encounter.

Speaking to ANI, Sai said, "We salute the courage of our security forces. Our security forces have been fighting strongly against Naxalism for the last year and have also been succeeding which has been praised by everyone. Our Prime Minister is working on ending Naxalism by 2026 and his mission will definitely be achieved."

Earlier on January 11, a CRPF jawan was injured as an IED laid down by the Naxalites exploded in Bijapur. This happened after a team of CRPF from 196 Battalion Mahadev Ghat left for the forest to carry out area domination in the morning.

# AP CM Chandrababu Naidu to attend WEF Davos to boost Andhra investments

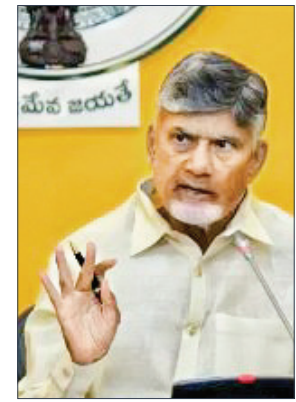
AJIT MAINDOLA  
AMARAVATI

An eight-member delegation led by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu will attend the World Economic Forum in Davos to attract more investments to the state, sources said.

Chandrababu Naidu and State Minister Nara Lokesh had launched a major initiative to attract more investments after their success in getting over 2 lakh crore investment in Andhra Pradesh by the centre.

The Andhra Pradesh government is aiming to attract more investments through an Economic Investment Board. Nara Lokesh is personally monitoring the recruitment process for the Economic Investment Board.

Andhra Pradesh government under Naidu is actively working on making Amaravati a complete city.



Situated in a well-connected region along India's east coast, Amaravati will be part of a broader metropolitan region that includes two cities, Vijayawada and Guntur. The World Bank and ADB recently approved loan for the development of ambitious Amaravati city.

The annual WEF meeting 2025 in Davos takes place from 20 - 24 January. The meeting brings together government, business and civil society leaders to set the year's agenda for how leaders can make the world a better place for all.

*Chandrababu Naidu and State Minister Nara Lokesh had launched a major initiative to attract more investments after their success in getting over 2 lakh crore investment in Andhra Pradesh by the centre.*

Davos 2025 convenes under the theme, 'Collaboration for the Intelligent Age'. The 2025 meeting is being organized under five areas: reimagining growth, industries in the intelligent age, investing in people, safeguarding the planet, and rebuilding trust. More than 350 governmental leaders are expected to participate this year, including 60 heads of state and government.

Earlier on January 12, the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister had shared his vision and ideas on the zero poverty initiative, emphasising the P4 (Public-Private-People Partnership) model to

reduce economic inequalities and improve the standard of living for all.

CM Naidu said, "We have introduced the "Golden Andhra 2047 Vision," a ten-point agenda aimed at making the Telugu community the best in the world. Among these points, the foremost priority is achieving Zero Poverty. The P4 model (Public-Private-People Partnership) has been envisioned to realize this goal."

Naidu reflected on the success of the P3 (Public-Private Partnership) model and said that it played a "pivotal role" in creating employment and wealth.

# Kerala LoP urges LDF to revoke liquor unit approval in Palakkad

TDG NETWORK  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala's Leader of the Opposition VD Satheesan on Friday asked the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government in the state to withdraw its decision to allow a global liquor major to establish manufacturing units in Palakkad district, terming it a violation of the existing policy.

"The day before yesterday, the Kerala government's Cabinet made a decision to provide a license for the India-made foreign liquor bottling plant and to produce the brewery brandy, wine and other India-made foreign liquors. This is a violation of the policy which has been in existence for the last 25 years," Satheesan told ANI.

He warned of agitation if the government does not revoke the decision.

"Without consulting anybody, the government deviated from the policy which has been taken for the last 25 years...So, we demand that the government withdraw this decision. Otherwise, we



will start agitation," he said. The Opposition United Democratic Front (UDF) is expected to raise the issue in the Budget session of the State Assembly which began on Friday with a policy address by Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar.

Finance Minister KN Balagopal will present the State Budget on February 7. The Assembly will meet for 27 days of sittings in its 13th session. The discussion on the thanksgiving motion on the Governor's address will be held from January 20 to January 22. The State Budget will be presented on February 7, followed by a general discussion on it from February 11 to February 13.

# ED attaches assets worth Rs 300 cr in MUDA-linked PMLA case

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate on Friday said it has attached more than 140 units of immovable assets worth about Rs 300 crore in a MUDA-linked money laundering case involving Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and others.

The attachment is part of



a money laundering probe into alleged irregularities in land allotment by Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA).

The attached properties are registered in the name of various individuals who are working as real-estate businessmen and agents, the federal agency said in a statement.

"It is alleged that Siddaramaiah used his political influence to get compensation for 14 sites in the name of his wife Smt. BM Parvathi in lieu of 3 acres 16 guntas of

land acquired by MUDA "The land was originally acquired by MUDA for Rs 3,24,700. The compensation in the form of 14 sites at posh locality is worth Rs 56 crore," it alleged.

The role of ex-MUDA commissioner D B Natesh has emerged as "instrumental" in the illegal allotment of compensation sites to Parvathi, it said.

# Maha has surpassed Bengaluru, is now leading state in startups: Fadnavis

TDG NETWORK  
NAGPUR

Maharashtra has surpassed Bengaluru in Karnataka and has become the startup capital of the country both in terms of numbers as well as value in the last one year, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said on Friday.

Addressing a gathering at tech exhibition COMP-EX 2025 here, he also emphasised the need to adapt to Artificial Intelligence (AI) and asserted that his government was promoting startups



in this field. "Maharashtra has surpassed Bengaluru and has become the startup capital of the country both in terms of numbers as well as value in the last one year. The state has the maximum number

of startups. Maharashtra is a leader in technology and most unicorns come to the state," the CM said.

In order to make Maharashtra the number one state in the innovation space, the government is setting up an 'Innovation City', Fadnavis said. Maharashtra is also the fintech capital of the country, the chief minister said.

meanwhile, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Thursday directed officials to develop an online system to make maximum government ser-

vices available to citizens through mobile devices.

Speaking at a state cabinet meeting held here, the CM said citizens should be able to access 99 per cent of government services through their mobile phones, which will eliminate the need for repeated visits to government offices.

He pointed out that 969 services across various state departments have been notified, of which 536 are available on the Aaple Sarkar portal, and 90 are accessible on departmental portals.

# Kerala struggling financially due to lost GST compensation: Guv Arlekar

TDG NETWORK  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The 13th session of the 15th Kerala Legislative Assembly session began on Friday with Governor Rajendra Arlekar's maiden policy address. The governor highlighted that the state government is facing financial difficulties due to the absence of GST compensation and reduced grants.

"Kerala's share in the central divisible pool has steadily declined from 3.875% during the 10th Finance Commission to 1.925% under the 15th Finance Commission. The cessation of GST compensation and revenue deficit grants coupled with restrictive conditions on Centrally Sponsored Schemes and new borrowing constraints have posed significant fiscal challenges for my state government," he said.

The Governor said that the government is committed to building 'Nava Keralam' with high-quality infrastructure, a knowledge-based economy, quality education and health-



care. He also highlighted the series of devastating disasters faced by Kerala in the last decade.

"Despite the challenges posed by unprecedented floods of 2018 and 2019, Cyclone Ockhi and the recent Meppadi landslide, Kerala's disaster management model, rooted in community resilience, technological integration and proactive governance, has garnered global recognition as a beacon of effective crisis response. My government is committed to rehabilitating all those affected by the Meppadi landslide by ensuring the completion of the township within one year," he said.



# 'PM SHOULD ADMIT FREEBIES BENEFIT THE COUNTRY'

Kejriwal accused the BJP of copying AAP's welfare schemes in its Delhi poll manifesto.

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The BJP has "copied" the AAP and announced several 'revris' in its Delhi poll manifesto but Prime Minister Narendra Modi won't approve of the "freebies" promised by his party, former Delhi chief minister and AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal said on Friday. Addressing a press conference after BJP chief JP Nadda released his party's manifesto for the February 5 polls, Kejriwal said PM Modi should now accept he was "wrong" in criticising him for providing free handouts. "The BJP has repeatedly said that Kejriwal gives away free handouts, but today the BJP's national president announced that they too will provide free handouts to the people of Delhi," Kejriwal said, launching a scathing attack on the opposition party.

## BJP COPIED AAP'S 'FREEBIES'



Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) National Convener Arvind Kejriwal addresses a press conference, at party headquarters in New Delhi on Friday. ANI

- Kejriwal argued that the BJP is merely offering what AAP already provides. The AAP chief slammed the BJP for not addressing crime and policing issues in their manifesto, calling it a "bundle of lies."
- Kejriwal claimed that the BJP has rehashed old promises that they have not fulfilled in previous elections.
- Kejriwal alleged that the BJP plans to close Delhi's mohalla clinics.

"I want to tell them that they should acknowledge that Prime Minister Modi was wrong when he said the things that he did about us. They should also ac-

cept free handouts are not wrong -- they are a gift from God and good for the country."

sents to these (BJP) promises. He should tell I was right in providing free handouts," Kejriwal said. He also said the BJP manifesto only promises what

Kejriwal also claimed the BJP manifesto says that mohalla clinics will be closed.

the AAP is already offering. "Then why people should vote for them?" He criticised the BJP for failing to include any promise in their manifesto regarding improvements in law and order, calling their poll document a "bundle of lies". Kejriwal alleged that the BJP has only promised the same old schemes, which they have failed to deliver on. Kejriwal also claimed the BJP manifesto says that mohalla clinics will be closed. The AAP will go across Delhi to ask people if they want these clinics or not, the former chief minister said.

# SC stays order asking Delhi govt to sign MoU over Centre's health scheme

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday stayed an order asking the Delhi government to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Central health ministry by January 5 to implement the PM-Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM). A bench of Justices B R Gavai and Augustine George Masih issued notices to the Centre and others seeking their responses on a plea filed by the Delhi government against the December 24, 2024 direction of the Delhi High Court. Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for the Delhi government, said the court should issue notice on the plea as the AAP government was forced to sign the MoU with the Central government. "How can the high court force me (Delhi government) on a policy matter



## Kejriwal hails SC stay

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal Friday called the Ayushman Bharat health scheme the "biggest scam" in the country after the Supreme Court stayed a high court order that had asked the Delhi government to sign an agreement with the Centre to implement it in the capital. At a press conference where he announced AAP's promise of free bus rides for students, including male students, and 50 per cent concession in metro rides, Kejriwal launched a scathing attack on the Centre over the scheme. "I am happy that the Supreme Court has confirmed that it is a fake scheme. Ayushman Bharat is the biggest scam in the country.

to sign an MoU with the Central government?" he asked. The Delhi government's plea was filed through advocate Talha Abdul Rahman. The plea said the way PM-ABHIM was designed and envisioned, it catered to the country's interiors and was suitable for rural spaces where, for example, health and wellness centres manned by a community worker were sufficient. It said in Delhi, however, under the Aam Aadmi Mohalla Clinics, 529 local centres manned by qualified registered medical practitioners were already running.

# AAP to comfortably form govt in Delhi: Sisodia

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) will "comfortably" form the next government in Delhi, senior party leader Manish Sisodia said on Friday, while asserting that the atmosphere is in favour of bringing Arvind Kejriwal back as chief minister. Sisodia, who is contesting the February 5 Delhi Assembly polls from Jangpura, told PTI in an interview that the people of his constituency are saying that he is going to become the deputy chief minister again. "The AAP will comfortably form the government in Delhi. It is difficult to estimate the number of seats but based on the good vibes, it can be safely said that the AAP is coming back to power comfortably. There is an atmosphere in Delhi to make Arvind Kejriwal the chief minister again," he said. Sisodia said people have



faith in Kejriwal as he made their lives easier by providing free facilities like water, electricity, bus rides for women, education and healthcare. Sisodia, who was the deputy chief minister in the AAP government before his arrest in connection with an excise policy case in March 2023, said the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is spreading a "lie" that Kejriwal, another accused in the case, cannot become the chief minister of Delhi. "The interesting thing is that the BJP is admitting that Kejriwal is going to be the next chief minister of Delhi. In this propaganda of the BJP lies their disappointment

that they are losing (the polls). "The Supreme Court has nowhere in its order said that Kejriwal cannot become the chief minister. There are minor, temporary conditions that will be lifted just like in my case, but the BJP is lying that Kejriwal cannot become the chief minister," he said. Saying that his poll campaign is going on smoothly, the senior AAP leader claimed that the people of Jangpura identify him as a leader who has performed on the ground and transformed schools in Delhi. "The people of Jangpura are saying that if Sisodia becomes an MLA, he is going to be the deputy chief minister. Whether I will have some post or not is a thing of the future, but I have promised to the people that I will improve the conditions of every street in Jangpura in five years, just like I changed the picture of the schools, if they

elect me as their MLA," he said. Sisodia also asserted that if the AAP retains power in Delhi, it will not let the BJP-led Centre and the lieutenant governor have their say in every matter. "They are there since 2015. They are the same and we are also the same. If they have their say, CCTV cameras will not be installed, new buses will not be procured, schools and hospitals will not be built, electricity will not be free. We will not let them exercise their will, we will do the work for people," he said. The polls to the 70-member Delhi Assembly are scheduled to be held on February 5 and the results will be declared on February 8. The contest is being seen as a straight fight between the AAP, in power in the capital since 2015, and the BJP, with the Congress trying hard to regain its lost ground in the city, which it ruled for 15 uninterrupted years till 2013.

# 2 AAP councillors join BJP

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

In a setback to the AAP ahead of the Delhi Assembly polls, two of its councillors, Ravinder Solanki and Narender Girda, joined the BJP on Friday. Solanki, an MCD councillor from Baprola ward and Girda from Manglapuri, joined the BJP in the presence of the party's state unit president Virendra Sachdeva and West Delhi MP Kamaljeet Sehrawat. The two wards come under Sehrawat's constituency. Sehrawat said the two councillors were among the founding members of the Aam Aadmi Party and were disillusioned with party national convener Arvind Kejriwal's politics and policies. "Solanki and Girda have not changed sides, Kejriwal has changed which forced them to leave the party," she said.

# BJP, AAP only indulge in vote-bank politics: Vinesh Phogat

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Congress leader and Haryana MLA Vinesh Phogat accused the BJP and AAP on Friday of indulging in "vote-bank" politics, and said only the country's oldest political party fulfils its promises made to people. Addressing a press conference here, Phogat said former Delhi chief minister Sheila Dikshit was the first to implement the Jat OBC reservation in the capital. "The Congress has always stood with every section of the society. When the BJP brought three central farm laws, (AAP supremo and former Delhi chief minister) Arvind Kejriwal was the first to give his nod to those. They are against farmers, Jats and Dalits. They only indulge in vote-bank politics," the wrestler-turned politician said.



Congress MLA Vinesh Phogat addresses a press conference ahead of the Delhi Assembly elections, at the DPCC office in New Delhi on Friday.

In Haryana, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had promised to give Rs 2,100 per month to women, but it has been three months since the Assembly polls were held and the amount is yet to be paid, Phogat said. Similarly, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) had promised to give Rs 1,000 per month to every woman in Punjab, but the promise has not been honoured even after three years of the party

coming to power in the state, she added. The Congress, on the other hand, has fulfilled all its promises made in any state, Phogat said, adding that if Delhiites want development, they should once again repose their faith in the grand old party, which will honour its promises. Polling for the 70-member Delhi Assembly is scheduled to be held on February 5 and the votes will be counted on February 8.

# Punjab CM Mann holds roadshow in Patel Nagar

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Friday held a roadshow in Delhi's Patel Nagar in support of AAP candidate Vishesh Ravi and said that the people of the national capital are educated and the assembly poll results on February 8 will be shocking for the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). "...The people of Delhi are educated. The results on February 8 will be shocking for the BJP; the Congress already knows what they will get," said CM Mann. Reacting to the BJP's Sank-



Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann along with Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) candidate from Patel Nagar seat Vishesh Ravi greet people during a roadshow for the Delhi Assembly Elections, in New Delhi. ANI

alp Patra, he said, "First they called it 'revdi,' now are they distributing papad?" Earlier in the day, AAP national convener Arvind

Kejriwal announced that male students studying in schools and colleges will be offered free bus facilities and a 50 per cent concession in metro fare if the

AAP government returns to power in Delhi. "The Aam Aadmi Party government gives maximum importance to education. The poor miss out on education because they do not have money. If our government is formed again, students will be provided with free bus facilities. It is free for female students now and we will make it free for boys too, said Arvind Kejriwal," said Kejriwal. This comes ahead of the Delhi assembly elections, which are scheduled to be held on February 5. The counting of votes will take place on February 8. The

ruling AAP has already announced its candidates for all 70 assembly seats. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has announced its candidates for 59 seats. The last date for filing nominations is January 17. The date for scrutiny of nominations is January 18. The last date for withdrawal of candidature is January 20. A three-way contest is on the cards in Delhi between the ruling AAP, BJP and Congress. Congress, which was in power for 15 consecutive years in Delhi, has suffered setbacks in the last two assembly elections and has failed to win any seat.



Lok Sabha LoP Rahul Gandhi visits All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) to meet the patients waiting for treatment, in New Delhi.

# BJP's Bhuvan Tanwar files nomination, vows to oust AAP's 'silent-deaf' govt

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate from Delhi Cantt constituency Bhuvan Tanwar filed his nomination papers for Delhi assembly elections and attacked the AAP government on Friday. He expressed confidence in the BJP winning the polls and said party workers were committed to oust the "gung-i-behri" government in the national capital. "I want to thank the BJP high command, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP president JP Nadda and top

The party has promised to give Rs 2,500 to every eligible woman in Delhi every month under Mahila Samridhi Yojana.

leadership for showing faith in me. I also want to extend special gratitude to Bansuri Swaraj, who is like my elder sister, for her blessings and faith in me," Tanwar said. He alleged that "behri-gung-i" AAP government had not worked for the Delhi Cantt constituency. "We will win this constituency and also Delhi and bring a government that

works for good governance under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi," said Tanwar. BJP leader Bansuri Swaraj told ANI that she has come to support her "brother" Bhuvan Tanwar. "I congratulate Bhuvan Tanwar (BJP candidate from Delhi Cantt) for filing his nomination. He will take forward sankalp of Viksit

Bharat forward." "February 5 is the day of Delhi's freedom. Freedom from polluted water, air, broken roads and fake promises. It is the day of freedom from AAPda," she said. Former Union Minister Anurag Thakur also attacked the AAP government and said "roads, the air, water, and Yamunaji in Delhi are not clean". "This time everything would be cleared and AAP will be wiped out," he said. BJP president JP Nadda launched the party's Delhi Assembly election manifesto on Friday.

# BJP terms Kejriwal 'politically frustrated' for his 'revri' jibe

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The BJP slammed AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal over his 'revri' jibe in its poll manifesto for Delhi polls announced on Friday, terming the former chief minister "politically frustrated". After the BJP released the first part of its manifesto, promising Rs 2,500 monthly aid for women, Rs 21,000 for every pregnant woman, LPG cylinders at Rs 500 and also Rs 2,500 pension for senior citizens, Kejriwal termed the pledges 'revris' and said the prime minister should now admit that he was wrong in assert-



ing 'free ki revri' was not good for the country. Hitting back, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva charged that Kejriwal was a "master in the art of lying" and was "politically frustrated". "He is trying to mislead Delhiites. But this time, he is frustrated as wherever he goes he is greeted by the chants 'Modi-Modi,' the Delhi BJP chief claimed. BJP national president JP

Nadda, while announcing the party manifesto, said all the welfare schemes will continue and so will Mohalla Clinics but Kejriwal "lied" that Mohalla clinics will be closed down by the BJP, Sachdeva said. He said the BJP would make Mohalla Clinics full-time local dispensaries as against "their use by the AAP for minting money through fake tests". Kejriwal has claimed that the Mohalla Clinics would be closed and added that the AAP would reach out to the people over the issue.

# 244 cases filed for MCC violations

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police registered 244 cases of violation of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) between January 7 and January 16 here, an official said on Wednesday. A total of 9,558 people were arrested during the period under various provisions, including the Excise Act, according to a statement. Police have intensified vigilance at border checkpoints and crackdowns on illegal activities, including the smuggling of arms, liquor and drugs, the statement added.



# 'BLATANT IN DELHI': SC RAPS MCD OVER UNTREATED SOLID WASTE DAILY

The court criticized Delhi's 3,000-tonne daily waste crisis as unacceptable.

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

This is blatant in the national capital, the Supreme Court on Friday said as it came down heavily on the MCD over 3,000 tonne of solid waste remaining untreated everyday. A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan referred to a Municipal Corporation of Delhi's (MCD) affidavit which said the untreated solid waste in the national capital would be cleared by December, 2027.

"What is happening in the national capital? We are shocked to read this affidavit which says that it will take time till December 2027 to clear it," the bench said.

The top court went on, "This heap of garbage will remain till 2027. What is this? The MCD says by December 2027 it will be cleared. The Union of India cannot shut



SC SLAMS MCD

its eyes.... This is blatant in the national capital."

The top court warned of passing some drastic orders such as a direction to stop construction activities in the national capital to mitigate the issue.

While hearing a matter relating to the implementation of Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016 in Delhi, the bench observed 3,000 tonne

of solid waste remained untreated in the national capital daily.

"Where this untreated solid waste goes?" it asked. The MCD's counsel said the waste was taken to landfill sites at Bhalswa and Ghazipur.

"You have made a tall promise that it will be cleared by December 2027... You must file an affidavit stating where

- SC was shocked by MCD's plan to clear waste only by December 2027.
- SC warned of halting construction if waste management doesn't improve.
- MCD admitted sending untreated waste to Bhalswa and Ghazipur sites.
- SC noted Delhi gov't and Centre's poor cooperation worsens the issue.

are you dumping these 3,000 tonne of untreated solid waste everyday," the bench said, "and just see the brazen manner in which this affidavit has been filed."

Expressing dissatisfaction, the bench said today, it was 3,000 tonne of solid waste everyday, and after an year it might become 5,000 tonne per day.

"This cannot continue in

Delhi," the bench said.

Senior advocate Aparajita Singh, assisting the top court as an amicus curiae, said the problem was that the Delhi government and the Centre were not coordinating to deal with the issue.

"We will make them sit together," the bench said, asking the Centre to look into this issue.

The court said further, "Don't compel us to pass some harsh directions. Such issues will have to be dealt with in a drastic manner."

It said the MCD's affidavit would be considered on January 27 when the bench would deal with the issue of solid waste management.

While hearing the matter in November last year, the apex court flagged the "complete failure" of agencies in implementing the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016 in the national capital.

# SC asks UP, Haryana to impose ban on firecrackers

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Friday said the measures that are needed to deal with it should also be "drastic" and asked the Uttar Pradesh and Haryana governments to impose a complete ban on firecrackers in their areas falling under the National Capital Region.

A bench of Justices A S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan took note of the fact that like in Delhi, the Rajasthan government has also imposed a perpetual and complete ban on the sale and bursting of firecrackers in the NCR areas of the state and asked Uttar Pradesh and Haryana to follow suit.

The bench said till the time these two states pass the orders, its earlier direction banning firecrackers would be extended till the next date of hearing in the matter, which is March 24.

"The environmental problems are drastic ones and so drastic measures are needed," the bench said, adding that the court has to act and pass harsher orders as the other arms of the government are not bothered.

The bench said it will also hear the pleas against the ban of firms involved in the manufacture and sale of firecrackers on the next date.

When a lawyer requested

# GRAP 3 CURBS REVOKED IN DELHI-NCR AMID DIP IN POLLUTION

New Delhi: The Centre's panel on Delhi-NCR's air quality on Friday revoked curbs under stage 3 of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) amid a dip in pollution due to favourable meteorological conditions, according to an official order. Calm winds, low temperatures and foggy conditions had allowed accumulation of pollutants in the region earlier this week, promoting the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) to implement strictest curbs under stage 3 and 4 of GRAP.

The panel decided to revoke stage 4 curbs on Thursday amid a dip in pollution levels following a spell of rain in the region.

On Friday, air pollution level declined further amid strong winds, leading to revocation of stage 3 curbs.

GRAP Stage 3 entails a ban on non-essential construction work.

Classes up to grade 5 are required to shift to hybrid mode under Stage 3. Parents and students have the option to choose online education wherever available.

the court to lift the complete ban as it also pertains to the manufacturers' fundamental rights, the bench said the environmental problems come ahead of their issues.

The lawyer then requested the court to at least allow green crackers.

"We have to examine how green are green crackers," the bench said.

It also asked the Centre to respond to the pleas of the firecracker-manufacturing firms.

Earlier also, the court had directed the Uttar Pradesh and Haryana governments

to impose a complete ban on firecrackers until further orders. The bench had noted that the Delhi government had enforced a complete ban on the manufacture, storage and sale, including delivery, of firecrackers through online marketing round the year with immediate effect.

"We are of the view that this ban will be effective only when other states forming part of the NCR impose similar measures. Even the state of Rajasthan has imposed a similar ban in that part of the state of Rajasthan which falls in the NCR.

# Delhi a football in 'fixed fight' between AAP, BJP, alleges Cong's Pawan Khera

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Congress Friday claimed the national capital has become a football in the "noora kushthi" (fixed fight) between AAP and the BJP in the run-up to the February 5 assembly elections in Delhi. Pawan Khera, the party's chairman of media and publicity, claimed Delhi has seen a spate of frauds ever since the change in governments in 2013-2014.

"Whatever started happening with Delhi in 2013-14, I would call it an act of double fraud. The first fraud was started by the Delhi government and the second fraud happened to Delhi when a new government came in at the Centre," he alleged at a press conference here.

He said once the Congress came to power after



fulfilled its guarantees in Karnataka, Telangana, Himachal Pradesh and Jharkhand where the party is in power, he claimed that people trust the Congress to deliver on its promises.

The five guarantees of the Congress for the Delhi polls include providing LPG cylinders at Rs 500 as well as free ration kits and free electricity up to 300 units, a monthly grant of Rs 2,500 for women under 'Pyari Didi Yojana,' free health insurance of up to Rs 25 lakh under 'Jeevan Raksha Yojana' and Rs 8,500 every month to educated unemployed youths for one year.

Khera further said the Congress has launched a QR Code using which people can register their names to avail the benefits of the guarantees if the Congress wins the polls.

the polls, it would fulfil its promises in its first Cabinet meeting.

"Delhi has become a football in the 'noora kushthi' (fixed fight) of these two (AAP and BJP). But the city won't tolerate it now. It has written the fate of the entire country and has given direction to the entire nation. Delhi did experiment and now it is again looking at the Congress," Khera claimed. Asserting the party had

# 'I was dropped without explanation,' says AAP's Hari Nagar MLA over ticket denial



TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Rajkumari Dhillon, the outgoing AAP MLA from Hari Nagar constituency, on Friday expressed her disappointment on being denied a party ticket for the upcoming Delhi election. She was announced as the party candidate from the same constituency on December 15.

On January 15, she was replaced with Surinder Setia. "I was given the ticket on December 15, immedi-

ately afterwards I began campaigning for the party. However, I later received a call informing me that I was being replaced by Surinder Setia for the Hari Nagar constituency," Dhillon said at a press conference.

She said she worked hard for the party but was replaced without any explanation.

"I haven't made any decisions yet. I need some time to clear my mind. But I will follow whatever path the public suggests," she said.

# RWAs seek more powers to tackle civic woes

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Ahead of the Delhi assembly polls, several Resident Welfare Associations have demanded that their voice be heard to collectively find a solution to civic challenges facing the city like waterlogging, overflowing garbage and encroachment. The RWAs have demanded that they be empowered as consultative and execution bodies for local governance.

"RWAs should have a more defined role, including responsibilities like monitoring and submitting local development proposals to authorities," Atul Goyal, president of the United Residents Joint Action (URJA), an umbrella body that oversees 2,500 RWAs across Delhi, said.

Listing some suggestions to deal with the issues facing the city, he said, "We need local area plans tailored to the needs of each constituency to address the failures of state master planning." Authorities like 'Pedestrian and



Walkway Authority,' 'Drainage and Sewerage Authority,' and 'Public Transport Review Authority' must be created for better integration and resource management, he said.

"The residents of Delhi are struggling to breathe clean air and are dealing with endless traffic jams. Even a little rain causes waterlogging, worsening the situation. Markets spill over due to encroachments, and overcrowded roads make commuting unbearable. When will these problems finally be resolved," BS Vohra, president of the North Delhi RWA Federation, asked.

Vohra said, "The towering garbage mountains not only

harm the ecosystem but have become a glaring symbol of Delhi's failure in managing waste." "Encroachments on nearly every footpath have robbed people of their right to walk freely. At the same time, traffic jams at every corner make daily commuting an ordeal," he said.

Rajiv Kakria, a member of the Greater Kailash RWA and convener of the Save Our City campaign, sought a solution to the worsening traffic conditions.

"Despite parking problems escalating, there is still no regulation on the rising number of vehicles per family. Unauthorised street vendors block roads in every market, adding to the chaos," he said.

# 10 women rescued from trafficking racket

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has rescued 10 woman from a trafficking racket and arrested three people, including a hotel owner from Mahipalpur area of southwest Delhi, an officer said on Friday.

A joint team of the Vasant Kunj North Police Station and the Anti-Snatching Cell

*The rescued women were all aged between 21 and 30 and hailed from various parts of the country. They were taken to a safe location and are being given counselling and rehabilitation support.*

busted the gang operating from a hotel, he said. The arrests were made

on the basis of a tip-off the teams received on January 15.

"A team was formed ... To confirm the information, staff members were deployed as decoy customers. Once the illegal activity was verified, a raid was conducted at the hotel in Mahipalpur," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southwest) Surendra Choudhary said.

The raid led to the rescue of 10 women and the arrest of two brokers, Abdul

Rashid (50) from West Bengal and Aakash Kumar (23) from Bihar, along with the hotel owner, Nigam Kumar (30).

The rescued women were all aged between 21 and 30 and hailed from various parts of the country. They were taken to a safe location and are being given counselling and rehabilitation support.

# Severe cold persists in north India, many parts record drop in temp

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Temperatures dipped in many parts of north India, with parts of Himachal Pradesh witnessing cold wave conditions as a layer of dense fog was seen in most states early morning. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), higher reaches of Himachal Pradesh experienced another spell of light to moderate snowfall and some parts also saw light rain.

The mercury hovered between 1-5 degrees Celsius in many parts of Himachal, while many parts of north-west India recorded temperatures between 6-10 degrees Celsius.

The weather office said under the influence of Western Disturbance, some parts of northwest



Children on their way to school on a foggy and cold winter morning, in Gurugram on Friday. ANI

India could see some rainfall and snowfall in the coming week.

No significant change in minimum temperatures is likely over northwest India during the next 48 hours and it will gradually rise

by 2-3 degrees thereafter, the Met department predicted in its bulletin.

In Rajasthan, some places such as Bikaner, Jaipur, Kota and Bharatpur divisions recorded dense fog and reeled from cold day conditions on Friday morning, the department said.

Mount Abu, the state's only hill station, was the coldest with a temperature of 0.8 degrees Celsius. In the plains, Sirohi recorded

3.8 degrees Celsius.

In the plains, the lowest minimum temperature in the state was recorded at 3.8 degrees Celsius in Sirohi, followed by 4 degrees Celsius in Sikar, 6.1 degrees Celsius in Nagaur, 6.4 degrees Celsius in Pilani, 6.9 degrees Celsius in Ajmer, 7 degrees Celsius in Jaisalmer, 7.2 degrees Celsius in Fatehpur, 7.4 degrees Celsius in Phalodi, and Sriganganagar.

Almost all major cities recorded minimum temperatures below 10 degrees Celsius. The state capital, Jaipur, recorded a temperature of 7.8 degrees Celsius on Friday morning.

The minimum temperatures at most places in Kashmir have fallen after snowfall as the meteorological department forecast mainly dry weather over the next couple of days.

GALLANT STRIDE



RPf personnel take part in the Republic Day Parade 2025 rehearsal, at Kartavya Path, in New Delhi on Friday. ANI



# EXPERTS WARN 8TH PAY COMMISSION'S ADVERSE IMPACT ON FISCAL DEFICIT

India Ratings' DK Pant noted the Eighth Pay Commission's impact hinges on salary revisions and may influence inflation, wage costs.

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The suggestions of the eighth Central Pay Commission, which will be effective from January 2026, are unlikely to weigh on the government's finances in the next fiscal year but they would potentially impact inflation and support private consumption once the government starts releasing enhanced wages, economists said on Thursday.

This would require the central government to stick to the fiscal consolidation course beyond 2025-26, they said. The government aims to reduce its fiscal deficit to less than 4.5% of

gross domestic product by 2025-26, against the budget estimate of 4.9% for the current fiscal. The government on Thursday approved the setting up of the panel, which will submit its report on the pay revision for central government employees and pensioners.

The government may start releasing the revised wages from July 2026 with arrears. ICRA chief economist Aditi Nayar said: "While the award related to the 8th Pay Commission is unlikely to affect fiscal metrics in FY26, the potential impact of the same should be built into the new medium-term fiscal consolidation path as well as the Finance Com-

## KEY POINTS

- The 8th Central Pay Commission, effective January 2026, is expected to impact inflation and private consumption but not FY26 finances.
- The government plans to reduce the fiscal deficit to below 4.5% of GDP by 2025-26, from 4.9% in FY25.
- The panel's report on pay revision for central government employees and pensioners may lead to revised wages starting July 2026 with arrears.
- Economists stress fiscal discipline and highlight potential impacts on inflation, government wage costs, private consumption, and broader economic structures.



mission's recommendations."

"Any pay revision will put pressure on the central government's fiscal deficit. Therefore, it's all the more important for it to bring down the deficit towards 3% of GDP. If the deficit is kept low, it would be easier for the government to absorb the higher expenses," said Madan Sabnavis, chief economist at Bank of Baroda.

India Ratings chief economist DK Pant said the precise impact of the eighth pay commission award would depend on the magnitude of the salary and pension revisions finally approved by the government, but it could

affect inflation and the government's wage costs.

At the same time, higher salaries and pensions of central government employees could partly sup-

Pant said the central pay revision also influences the wage structures of employees of state governments, public-sector undertakings and municipal bodies, in-

*Madan Sabnavis emphasized reducing the fiscal deficit to 3% of GDP to manage pay revision pressures effectively.*

port private consumption, while boosting savings as well. The weakness in private consumption, especially in urban areas, was blamed for the economic growth deceleration in the September quarter to 5.4%

dicating broader economic impact. It also drives up the pension bill. The 16th Finance Commission may also make its suggestions, anticipating the pay panel awards. 3-5 words news headline for the above.

## Devendra Fadnavis set for Davos

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis will participate in the annual World Economic Forum in Davos. The Maharashtra chief minister will leave Mumbai early morning on Sunday.

His visit is going to be very important in bringing more investment to Maharashtra, which attracts the most foreign investment and is full of aspirations.

Earlier, Devendra Fadnavis participated in the World Economic Forum in Davos three times during his first tenure as the chief minister.

Maharashtra has moved from the fifth position to the first position in terms of industrial development during that period.

Magnetic Maharashtra was organized twice in the state during that period.

Even now, in this tour, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis will have a lot of programs in his Davos tour. He will also meet many world leaders. Industries Minister Uday Samant, as well as a delegation of MIDC, MMRDA, CIDCO officials will accompany him on this tour.

A large number of MoUs

are expected to be signed during the tour in areas such as data centers, automobiles, semiconductors, EVs, electronics, steel, food processing, textiles, pharmaceuticals and infrastructure.

The tour will be an attempt to bring massive investment to the state to make Maharashtra a USD 1 trillion economy.



The annual WEF meeting 2025 in Davos takes place from 20 - 24 January. The meeting brings together government, business and civil society leaders to set the year's agenda for how leaders can make the world a better place for all.

Davos 2025 convenes under the theme, 'Collaboration for the Intelligent Age'. The 2025 meeting is being organized under five areas: reimagining growth, industries in the intelligent age, investing in people, safeguarding the planet, and rebuilding trust. More than 350 governmental leaders are expected to participate this year, including 60 heads of state and government.

## CSR spending shows regional disparity: CRISIL

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

A decade after government regulations mandated corporate social responsibility (CSR) spending and reporting, there is an urgent need for more inclusive and impactful actions. An analysis of 1,871 eligible listed companies, which spent Rs 14,714 crore on over 3,200 projects in fiscal 2023, underscores this necessity.

The Crisil CSR Yearbook 2024 highlights the concentration of CSR efforts in a few states while others, often in greater need, receive minimal attention. Companies were categorized based on their headquarters, CSR spending, and project locations, with a particular focus on the top 100 companies by CSR spending in aspirational districts, as identified by Niti Aayog.

The analysis reveals that Maharashtra and New Delhi dominate CSR spending, accounting for 61% of the total expenditure and nearly half of the company headquarters. However, these regions implemented just under a third of the projects. Another cluster of five states contributed over a quarter

of the total CSR spend and a third of the projects, while the remaining states received barely a tenth of the funding, underscoring the skewed distribution.

Of the top 100 companies, only 47 executed projects in aspirational districts, contributing Rs 473 crore, or just 3% of their total CSR spend. This highlights a significant gap in CSR investment in underdeveloped regions.

Additionally, the National CSR Portal reported a total CSR spend of Rs 29,987 crore in fiscal 2023, with 22,500 unlisted companies contributing around Rs 15,000 crore. This suggests fragmented CSR spending, with many small contributions that may not have a lasting impact. More equitable resource allocation is crucial for sustainable socio-economic growth across India.

A promising development is the Social Stock Exchange (SSE), which connects corporates, social enterprises, and non-profits to foster transparency and ensure efficient deployment of CSR funds. The SSE provides a platform for unlisted companies and smaller organizations to channel their contributions effectively.

## Maruti unveils its first electric vehicle, e-Vitara

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Maruti Suzuki unveiled its very first electric vehicle (EV) all new e-Vitara on the first day of Bharat Mobility Global expo at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi on Friday.

Toshihiro Suzuki, representative director and president, Maruti Suzuki Motor Corporation said, "India Japan and Europe, we aim to make the EV attractive through our 3 step strategy. First making BEVs attractive to customers, two develop a dedicated BEV platform, three right product based on customer requirement."

The e Vitara is Suzuki Motor Corporation's first BEV. The new electric SUV will be manufactured in India at Maruti's Gujarat plant. Its production is expected to start at March-end or early April.

"Production of e-vitara to begin in coming months in Gujarat plant," said Toshihiro Suzuki.

The Made-in-India e Vitara will not only be sold in the domestic market but will also be exported to Europe and Japan. Almost 50 per cent of the total units produced will be shipped abroad.

"Will be exporting to 100 countries including Europe and Japan," said Toshihiro Suzuki.

He added, "E-Vitara is part of Suzuki's technology strategy for the next 10 years."

The electric models currently account for around 3



Maruti Suzuki India MD and CEO Hisashi Takeuchi and Suzuki Motor CEO Toshihiro Suzuki during the launch of 'e VITARA' at Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025, in New Delhi on Friday. ANI

*Hisashi Takeuchi, MD and CEO, Maruti Suzuki, said, "E Vitara is an important step toward sustainability. We invested Rs 2100 cr for manufacturing of e vitara in India." The e Vitara, has two lithium-iron phosphate (LFP) battery pack options -- 49kWh and 61kWh.*

per cent of the total cars sold in India.

The e-Vitara features a bold and modern design. At the front, it sports sharp LED headlights with three-piece DRLs, a striking blacked-out bumper, fog lamps, and rugged silver skid plates that add to its aggressive look.

Hisashi Takeuchi, MD and

CEO, Maruti Suzuki, said, "E Vitara is an important step toward sustainability. We invested Rs 2100 cr for manufacturing of e vitara in India."

The e Vitara, has two lithium-iron phosphate (LFP) battery pack options -- 49kWh and 61kWh. The SUV will also have options for front-wheel drive (FWD)

and all-wheel drive (AWD).

The SUV has features like LED lamps (head and tail) and LED DRLs, 18/19-inch wheels, digital instrument panel, touchscreen infotainment, powered driver seat, wireless charger, JBL premium audio system, 360-degree camera and sunroof. Also available will be ADAS.

Hisashi Takeuchi added, "Our ultimate goal is to create ecosystem-friendly solutions for the customer, we call it 'e for Me'."

The entry of BEVs, including the Maruti Suzuki e-Vitara is likely to boost the sales of electric vehicles in India. The segment has also got a shot in the arm with the arrival of models like the Mahindra BE6 and the Mahindra XEV 9e.

## CM Fadnavis inks MoU with SIDBI to create Rs 100 crore for state fund

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Thursday inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the SIDBI (Small Industries Development Bank of India) to establish a Rs 100 crore fund. "We have signed an MoU with SIDBI. Earlier, funds which were managed at Mumbai. Now, a 30 crore fund will be available at every divisional centre," he said.

He was speaking at the National Startup Day programme under the Department of Skill, Employment, Entrepreneurship & Innovation organised by Maharashtra State Innovation Society in Mumbai. The event was themed 'Empowering Innovation, Elevating Maharashtra'. The event saw participation from 1,000 start-ups in technology, agriculture, service industries, pharmaceuticals, and tourism from across the nation.

He further said that more than 300 Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises

STARTUP CORNER



(MSME) and startups, who have successfully created their space in the defence manufacturing sector, were created by the Maharashtra government. "In Maharashtra, we were the first amongst all other states to have our startup policy. We have also created a fund of funds, especially for the defence sectors. I am happy to tell you - that there are more than 300 MSMEs and startups who have successfully created their space in the defence manufacturing sector which are funded by the fund of funds created by the govt of Maharashtra..." CM Fadnavis said while



Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis addresses the 'National Startup Day 2025' programme, at Jio World Centre in Mumbai on Thursday. ANI

addressing the event. Fadnavis also emphasised the potential of small cities to become major hubs for innovation, stating, "This start-up revolution has to go to tier 2 and tier 3 cities, and we have seen that in many of the start-ups, people come from these cities and they have been very successful." Meanwhile, speaking on the incident of attack on Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan, Devendra Fadnavis stated that the law and order of Mumbai cannot be judged based on a few incidents and asserted that the city is the safest place.

"Police have given you all the details regarding this. What kind of attack is this? What is actually behind this, and what was the intention behind the attack? is all before you," the Maharashtra CM told mediapersons. "Mumbai is the safest place, and there is no doubt about it. Just based on one or two incidents, it won't be right to say that Mumbai is unsafe. At the same time, it is also correct that if any such kind of incident happens, we should take it seriously and act accordingly and keep Mumbai safe," Fadnavis added.

## Stock indices close in red, IT stocks top losers

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Indian stock indices closed the week on a low, hinting that the volatility was far from over. On Friday, Sensex closed at 76,619.33 points, down 423.49 points or 0.55 per cent, while Nifty closed at 23,203.20 points, down 108.60 points or 0.47 per cent. Nifty IT slumped the most at 2.68 per cent.

Experts noted that FPI selling is continuously creating pressure on the indices. Additionally, the upcoming oath of Donald Trump is expected to make markets more volatile, as his first executive orders will be closely watched to assess follow-up actions on tariffs and taxes.

"The markets remained volatile for yet another session, slipping nearly half a per cent after three consecutive days of gains. Early



*Resilience in key players like Reliance, ITC, and LT helped limit the decline.*

weakness, driven by IT and banking heavyweights reacting to earnings, pulled the benchmark indices lower. However, resilience in key players like Reliance, ITC, and LT helped limit the decline," said Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking.

He said persistent FII selling and a mixed start to

the earnings season are restricting upward momentum. "Until clear signs of reversal emerge, we advise maintaining a 'sell on rise' strategy for the index while focusing on stock-specific opportunities during the earnings season," Mishra noted.

The Nifty-50 Index and Sensex each lost 1 per cent in the past week. Even the mid-cap index and small-cap index lost around 1 per cent in the past week.

"Decent 3QFY25 earnings of large cap stocks were unable to improve the market

sentiment amid rising crude oil prices (+5 per cent) and continued depreciation of INR (-0.6 per cent) in the past week," said Shrikant Chouhan, Head Equity Research, Kotak Securities.

Besides, weak domestic economic growth also reflected on the stock markets.

In 2024, Sensex and Nifty accumulated a growth of about 9-10 per cent each. In 2023, Sensex and Nifty gained 16-17 per cent, on a cumulative basis. In 2022, they gained a mere 3 per cent each. Weak GDP growth, foreign fund outflows, rising food prices, and slow consumption were some of the hurdles, keeping many investors at bay in 2024.

Sensex now remains around 10,000 points lower than its all-time high of 85,978 points. Sensex has so far slumped 2.5 per cent this New Year.



# SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: THE SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION OF NETAJI'S MISSION

## OPINION

DR. NIKHIL YADAV



January marks the birth of two of India's greatest sons, whose contributions ignited the flame of patriotism in the hearts and minds of the Indian people. Swami Vivekananda, born on January 12, 1863, is one of the most towering personalities in modern Indian history. Just a few days after Swami Vivekananda's return from his first visit to the West, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was born on January 23, 1897. Netaji was a leader who brought the colonial government to its knees with his unwavering determination and leadership.

Today, millions of Indians are familiar with the name of the great Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. However, few truly understand the pivotal role he played in India's freedom movement, despite being one of its most key figures. Even fewer are aware of the influence that Swami Vivekananda had on his life. The story of how the patriotic saint, Swami Vivekananda, became the inspiration behind the

revolutionary Netaji Bose is a remarkable tale of spiritual foundations leading to a powerful surge of patriotism. It was through Swami Vivekananda's teachings that Bose found the deep-rooted spiritual strength that fuelled his commitment to India's liberation. This connection between spiritual awakening and patriotic fervour highlights the impact of Swami Vivekananda's ideals on the freedom struggle, shaping Netaji Bose's revolutionary vision.

The common thread between these two great souls is that both lived and died for their motherland, India. Every moment of their lives was dedicated to freeing India from British rule. It could be said that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's life stands as one of the finest examples of how Swami Vivekananda's teachings and life could impact an individual. The extent to which Vivekananda's message inspired and shaped Bose's actions is remarkable. It is a testament to the power of Swami Vivekananda's philosophy—how it could fuel a person's passion, drive, and commitment to work tirelessly for India and its people.

To understand the relationship, impact, and association between Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and Swami Vivekananda, one can turn to Netaji's autobiography, *An Indian Pilgrim: An Unfinished Autobiography and Collected Letters*



(1897-1921), and Netaji's *Life and Writings - Part Two: The Indian Struggle 1920-34*. These works provide a clear view into how Swami Vivekananda influenced Netaji's life, with Netaji considering him nothing less than a guru.

According to Netaji Bose, he was just fifteen when he was introduced to Swami Vivekananda through his literature, particularly the book *Colombo to Almora*, which is a compilation of Swami Vivekananda's lectures delivered in India after his first visit to the West. Netaji mentions that while studying Swami Vivekananda's works, he found ideals to which he could dedicate his entire being.<sup>1</sup>

Netaji writes, "For days, weeks, and months, I pored over his works. His letters, as well as his speeches from Colombo to Almora, replete with practical advice for his countrymen, inspired me deeply. From this study, I emerged with a vivid understanding of the essence of his teachings: 'Atmano Mokshartham Jagaddhityaya'—for your own salvation and for the service of humanity—that was to be life's goal."<sup>2</sup>

Netaji also believed that it was Swami Vivekananda's teachings that made him realize that a spiritual life could not be

led through personal yoga practice alone; it required engaging in social work as well. He began working for society after drawing inspiration from Swami Vivekananda, who emphasized the concept that serving humanity is serving God. From Swami Vivekananda's teachings, Netaji felt that "for spiritual development, social service was necessary."<sup>3</sup> Netaji Bose was so deeply aligned with the mission of Swami Vivekananda that in school he found inspiration only in those teachers who were followers of Swami Vivekananda and his Guru, Sri Ramakrishna.<sup>4</sup> By the time he finished school, Netaji had resolved to follow the examples of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda in his own life, choosing not to pursue a conventional career.<sup>5</sup> Netaji writes, "The philosophy which I found in Vivekananda and in Ramakrishna came nearest to meeting my requirements and offered a basis on which to reconstruct my moral and practical life. It equipped me with certain principles with which to determine my conduct or line of action whenever any problem or crisis arose before my eyes."<sup>6</sup>

In another instance, Netaji mentions that since child-



hood, he has always held deep respect for Swami Vivekananda and Jagadish Chandra Bose, drawn to them through their pictures and the stories shared by others. He writes, "I do not know why, but since my childhood, I have always had the deepest respect for two persons—Jagadish Chandra and Vivekananda. I was attracted to them through the pictures I saw and what I learned about them from others."<sup>7</sup>

Swami Vivekananda served as a central figure of inspiration for Netaji throughout his life, whether during his school and college years, after he cleared the ICS exam yet chose to decline the position, or later when he actively participated and led the struggle against British colonial rule in India. The spiritual force of Swami Vivekananda provided a foundational strength and guidance that influenced Netaji's decisions and actions.

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's admiration for Swami Vivekananda is reflected in his powerful words, which capture the influence Swami Vivekananda had on the Indian consciousness. Netaji writes about Swami Vivekananda that, "He tried to infuse into

the new generation a sense of pride in India's past, of faith in India's future, and a spirit of self-confidence and self-respect. Though the Swami never gave any political message, everyone who came into contact with him or his writings developed a spirit of patriotism and a political mentality. So far, at least as Bengal is concerned, Swami Vivekananda may be regarded as the spiritual father of the modern nationalist movement. He died very young in 1902, but since his death, his influence has been even greater."<sup>8</sup>

The impact of Swami Vivekananda's message, according to Netaji, was not confined to the spiritual realm alone but had a tangible effect on India's freedom struggle against the British. Swami Vivekananda provided the moral and intellectual foundation that inspired many freedom fighters, including Netaji himself, to continue the struggle for independence with renewed vigor and determination.

*The author is the Deputy Head of Vivekananda Kendra, North Zone, holds a Ph.D. from JNU, New Delhi and is the writer of the book "Influence of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement on Gandhi" (2024).*

## PERSPECTIVE

### INDIRA BHAWAN, A TRIBUTE TO THE FORMER PRIME MINISTER

The new Congress headquarters, Indira Bhawan, was inaugurated on the Kotla Road in the capital, amidst an unnecessary controversy precipitated by the Bharatiya Janata Party, on why it was not named after Dr Manmohan Singh, who passed away recently. It was also the failure of the communication department of the Congress not to adequately project the shifting of the office in the media, given that it was perhaps for the first time in its 140 years history, the party was shifting to the premises which were owned by it. There was no preview or highlighting of the various facilities offered at the Indira Bhawan, something which was unexplainable. In addition, the current leadership which thrives because it has inherited the legacy of Indira Gandhi, the greatest mass leader of the last century, also did not delve on the historic significance of the new address and structure. For most people who cover politics, the Congress Headquarters is synonymous with 24, Akbar Road, the place where it shifted after the second split of 1978. Between the first split and the second one, the Congress office of the Indira Gandhi faction was located on 5, Rajendra Prasad Road. In fact, it was at the meeting of the Working Committee of the party then headed by K. Brahma Reddy, an appointee of Indira Gandhi, who later joined hands with her detractors like YB Chavan and others, that the former Prime Minister was expelled following high drama. I as a student of Delhi University, was present in the lawns of 5, Rajendra Prasad road, when the drama unfolded. Mohammad Shamim, of the *Times of India*, who later became my mentor so far as political reporting was concerned, was covering the event and was also seated in the lawn outside soaking the winter sun. Much before the arrival of Indira Gandhi, a hostile atmosphere was sought to be created and a small crowd which had been brought in was already chanting slogans, "Indira Gandhi Murdabad".

FM Khan, Rajya Sabha MP from Karnataka dressed in a red-coloured shirt was standing near the porch with a handful of her supporters, awaiting her arrival. As Indira Gandhi's Ambassador drove towards the main entrance of the building after entering the gate, the sloganeering against her gathered momentum. The former Prime Minister while alighting from the vehicle, gave a stern look at the protestors, who suddenly froze and folded their hands as if to welcome her. Her charisma had taken over and she was escorted inside by Khan though it was abundantly clear that she was going to be thrown out of the party that evening. Rest is history, and some days later, she formed the Congress (I) at a function which amongst others was attended by Kamalapati Tripathi who stood by her at that juncture. Buta Singh was made the sole general secretary and the new chapter in the party's history had been ushered in with Sanjay Gandhi and his team, on the threshold of taking over the party. The Indira faction later shifted to 24, Akbar Road. However, it is important to point out that during the emergency, Indira Gandhi had laid the foundation stone of the new Headquarters at 3, Raisina Road. In fact, the stone marking this was there for a long time.

This was the place that subsequently was allotted to Jawahar Bhawan which has its entrance now on Rajendra Prasad Marg, opposite the Shastri Bhawan. It needs to be recalled that during the Janata Party period, multiple attempts were made to take over the 3, Raisina Road office but did not succeed and the premises were occupied by a faction of the party which was later opposed to Indira Gandhi, but never allowed others to take over. Supporters of Babu Jagjivan Ram made an unsuccessful attempt to wrest control and the first working committee meeting of the group led by Sharad Pawar subsequently was also held there. While the party was in control of Suresh Kalmadi, Pawar's key lieutenant then, largely because of the efforts of Prem Swarup Nayyar and others, a deal was struck by him and Arun Nehru, who wanted the area for the proposed Jawahar Bhawan. In what is in public domain but could never be substantiated through official sources, the premises were handed over to the Congress (Indira) and in return, Kalmadi was given the Maruti agency for Bombay and some other cities in Maharashtra. This enabled the construction of the Jawahar Bhawan. The Congress is now to be located at Kotla Road, close to the fleet street, New Delhi's Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg which was where most newspaper offices were located at one time. It is also near the Headquarters of the BJP and the AAP on the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Marg. Some Congress supporters are trying to give a spin that to avoid the Marg named after the former Bhartiya Jana Sangh president and Ideologue, the party has its main entrance towards Kotla Marg. Wonder how does the road matter since both these boulevards are in the area once known as the Rouse Avenue. The Congress has to understand that a change of address does not necessarily signify a change of fortune. It should use the opportunity to focus on making the organization stronger and reconstitute the AICC with lesser number of office bearers than it has now. The party should be effective and not unwieldy and bulky. It needs to be clarified that the Bhawan is named after Indira Gandhi and not Dr Manmohan Singh, who was an icon but had little to do with the party. It is fine if the Library gets his name.

PANKAJ VOHRA

## The interconnectedness of climate change: A call for comprehensive solutions

## OPINION

DR. AMRISHA PANDEY



The urgency of addressing climate change has never been more pronounced, as the world grapples with the profound implications of human activity on the planet's ecosystems. The past two centuries, particularly following the advent of industrialization, have witnessed an unprecedented acceleration in climatic changes. This rapid transformation is largely attributed to human interference, marking the Anthropocene epoch—a term that encapsulates the significant impact of human actions on Earth's geological and eco-

logical systems. The consequences of this interference are stark: rising greenhouse gas concentrations lead to global warming, ocean acidification, and a staggering loss of biodiversity due to habitat destruction. To effectively combat climate change, it is imperative to adopt a holistic approach that transcends traditional linear models focused solely on reducing emissions. Earth System Science (ESS) emerges as a vital framework for understanding the complex interconnections between Earth's physical, chemical, and biological processes. Earth System Science (ESS) is an emerging transdisciplinary endeavour to understand the Earth's structure and functioning as a complex, adaptive system. The term "Earth system" refers to Earth's interacting physical, chemical, and biological processes that operate across, and link, the atmo-

sphere, cryosphere (ice), land, ocean and lithosphere. It includes the planet's natural cycles—the carbon, water, nitrogen, phosphorus, sulphur, and other cycles—and deep Earth processes. These interact with each other through interconnected processes and cycles that store, transfer, or transform matter and energy throughout the Earth's system over time. This transdisciplinary approach recognizes that the planet operates as an integrated system, where natural cycles—such as carbon, water, nitrogen, and phosphorus—interact dynamically. The recent quantification of nine planetary boundaries by a group of renowned scientists emphasizes the necessity of operating within these limits to ensure a sustainable future for humanity. Among these boundaries, climate change is paramount. It stems from an imbalance in the energy exchange between incoming solar radiation and outgoing heat. Human activities exacerbate this imbalance by increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases and aerosols in the atmosphere, leading to more trapped heat and altered climate patterns. Additionally, the introduction of novel entities—substances created or

released into the environment through human intervention—poses significant risks. These include microplastics, persistent organic pollutants like PFOA and PFAS, and even genetically modified organisms. Another critical boundary is stratospheric ozone depletion. The thinning of the ozone layer, primarily due to chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), garnered global attention in the early 1980s. The successful international response through the Montreal Protocol serves as a testament to what can be achieved when nations unite against environmental threats. This treaty effectively banned substances responsible for ozone depletion and has since led to a gradual recovery of the ozone layer. However, not all planetary boundaries have been respected. Atmospheric aerosol loading has increased due to both natural processes and human activities, significantly impacting climate by altering precipitation patterns and temperatures. Ocean acidification—a direct consequence of increased atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> absorption—threatens marine ecosystems and global food security by disrupting marine life cycles. Moreover,

human interference has disrupted biogeochemical flows essential for maintaining ecological balance. The industrial fixation of nitrogen and excessive phosphorus runoff into oceans have led to nutrient cycle disruptions that affect soil health and aquatic environments alike. Freshwater systems have also suffered due to alterations in both blue water (rivers and lakes) and green water (soil moisture) cycles, impacting biodiversity and precipitation patterns. Land system changes driven by deforestation, urbanization, and agricultural expansion further exacerbate these issues by disrupting natural processes such as carbon sequestration and moisture recycling. The loss of biodiversity—termed biosphere integrity—compounds these challenges by destabilizing energy flows and chemical cycles essential for life on Earth. Alarming, six out of nine planetary boundaries have already been transgressed. These boundaries are interconnected; transgressing one can trigger cascading effects across others, potentially leading to irreversible changes on a global scale. This interconnectedness underscores the need for a paradigm shift in how we perceive climate change

and sustainability. Decision-making must consider all planetary boundary concerns simultaneously rather than in isolation. From local governance to global initiatives, it is crucial that we operate within these planetary limits if we wish to sustain human civilization for future generations. This requires collaborative efforts across nations, sectors, and communities to implement policies that prioritize environmental health alongside economic growth. In conclusion, addressing climate change is not merely an environmental challenge; it is an existential imperative that demands immediate action. By embracing an Earth System perspective, we can better understand our place within this intricate web of life and take meaningful steps toward ensuring a sustainable future for all inhabitants of our planet. As we move forward, let us commit to fostering resilience through informed decision-making that respects the delicate balance of Earth's systems. Only then can we hope to navigate the complexities of climate change while safeguarding our shared home for generations yet unborn.

*The author is international environmental law scholar.*



# INDIA-RUSSIA MILITARY LEGACY FACES TEST

*126 Indians joined Russia's military in Ukraine; 12 dead, 16 missing. India seeks repatriation of remaining soldiers.*



The Fifth-Generation Fighter Aircraft (FGFA) program was a joint venture between India and Russia to develop a stealth fighter jet. (Wikimedia Commons)

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The military relationship between Russia and India is one of the most significant and enduring strategic partnerships in the modern world. This bilateral relationship, characterized by a complex blend of military cooperation, arms sales, joint exercises, and shared strategic interests, has evolved over decades, driven by both geopolitical calculations and historical ties. To understand the depth and scope of this relationship, one must delve into the historical context, the turning points, and the strategic imperatives that have guided both nations.

## EARLY FOUNDATIONS

The roots of the Russia-India military relationship can be traced back to the Cold War era when India, newly independent from British colonial rule, sought to carve out a foreign policy that was not aligned yet pragmatic. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, was keen to expand its influence in Asia, particularly in countries like India, which were seen as vital to its broader strategy of containing Western powers, especially the United States.

In the 1950s and 1960s, India, under the leadership of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, pursued a policy of nonalignment, positioning itself as a champion of newly independent nations and avoiding military alliances with either of the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. However, India's security concerns, particularly in relation to its contentious border with China, began to push the country closer to the Soviet Union.

The Sino-Indian War of 1962 played a pivotal role in shaping India's strategic orientation. After the war, India recognized the need to modernize its military and diversify its sources of defense equipment. The Soviet Union, already looking to expand its influence in Asia, was eager to provide India with the necessary



The Indra military exercises are a series of joint military drills between India and Russia. (Wikimedia Commons)



Leonid Brezhnev (right) and Indira Gandhi in Moscow during her 1976 visit to the Soviet Union. (The Internet Archive)

to advanced aircraft and tanks. The Soviet Union's support during the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971, which led to the creation of Bangladesh, solidified the partnership. The Soviet Union not only supplied India with military equipment but also ensured that it had the diplomatic backing it needed at the United Nations and other international forums.

## THE 1980S STRATEGIC ALLIANCE

By the 1980s, India and the Soviet Union had become full-fledged defense part-

ners, also helped India build its domestic defense industry, which laid the groundwork for India's future military self-sufficiency.

One of the most significant developments in the 1980s was the signing of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation in 1971, which formalized the military and strategic partnership between the two nations. This treaty ensured that India would receive military and economic support from the Soviet Union in the event of an external threat. The Indo-Soviet relationship also extended to joint military exercises, training programs, and strategic consultations.

During this time, India's military modernization was largely Soviet-dependent, and the relationship between the two countries was characterized by a high



Group Captain Trilok Nath Ghadiok, the Station Commander of Air Force Station Chandigarh, raised the No. 44 Squadron in April 1961, equipped with Soviet-origin AN-12 transport aircraft. He led the squadron during the Sino-India conflict of 1962. Meanwhile, the MiG-21 F-13 aircraft were inducted into No. 28 Squadron, with seven officers, including Wing Commander Dilbagh Singh, Squadron Leaders MSD Wollen and S K Mehra, and Flight Lieutenants A K Mukherjee, H S Gill, A K Sen, Denzil Keelor, and B D Jayal, selected for training on the MiG-21 in Russia. (Wikimedia Commons)

degree of mutual trust and strategic alignment. However, this relationship was not without its challenges. The Soviet Union's global standing began to weaken by the end of the 1980s, as internal economic problems and the disastrous military intervention in Afghanistan (1979-1989) drained its resources and attention.

## 1990S NEW ERA

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked a significant turning point in the Russia-India military relationship. With the disintegration of the Soviet state, Russia emerged as its successor, inheriting the Soviet Union's vast nuclear arsenal, military technologies, and defense industry. However, Russia's economic crisis and the political instability of the 1990s presented challenges to the continuity of the military relationship with India.

Despite these challenges, Russia and India remained

committed to their defense ties. In the early 1990s, Russia continued to supply India with arms, though the volume of supplies decreased due to Russia's economic difficulties. Nevertheless, both countries recognized the importance of their strategic partnership, particularly in the context of a changing global order.

The 1990s also saw the beginning of a diversification in India's defense procurement. While India continued to rely on Russia for advanced weaponry, it also began to look to other countries, including the United States, Israel, and France, for defense supplies. This period marked a shift from the Soviet-era monopolistic relationship to a more diversified approach in which Russia was one of several key partners.

One of the most notable military agreements during this period was the 1994 agreement to jointly develop the BrahMos

cruise missile, a project that would become one of the most successful examples of Indo-Russian military cooperation. The BrahMos missile, which is capable of being launched from air, land, and sea platforms, was a testament to the growing technological collaboration between the two countries.

## RISE OF MULTILATERALISM IN 2000S

In the new millennium, the Russia-India military relationship entered a phase of renewed cooperation, largely driven by shared concerns about global security and regional stability. The turn of the 21st century saw India's increasing economic power and military modernization. At the same time, Russia was seeking to reassert itself on the global stage after the tumultuous 1990s.

The 2000s marked the formalization of the Russia-India strategic partnership, with both countries recog-

nizing the importance of deepening their military and defense ties. This period saw the continuation of joint military exercises, such as the "Indra" series, which brought together Russian and Indian forces in a variety of training scenarios. These exercises have become an important mechanism for building interoperability between the two nations' armed forces.

During this period, Russia remained one of India's largest defense suppliers, providing a range of advanced systems, including Sukhoi Su-30MKI fighter jets, T-90 tanks, and the Admiral Gorchkov aircraft carrier (renamed INS Vikramaditya). The delivery of these platforms was accompanied by extensive training and technology transfer agreements, which helped India enhance its indigenous defense capabilities.

The 2000s also witnessed the increasing complexity of the Russia-India military relationship. While Russia continued to be a key defense partner, India's defense policy had evolved to incorporate multilateral engagements and a greater reliance on domestic defense production. Nevertheless, Russia remained a critical pillar of India's military modernization, and the two countries continued to work together on joint defense projects, such as the development of the Fifth-Generation Fighter Aircraft (FGFA).

## RESILIENT PARTNERSHIP FROM 2010S TO PRESENT

The Russia-India military relationship has remained strong in the 2010s and into the present, despite shifting geopolitical dynamics.

India's increasing engagement with Western powers, particularly the United States, has led to concerns about the future of its defense ties with Russia. However, both countries have managed to navigate these challenges by focusing on shared strategic interests, such as countering terrorism, ensuring regional stability, and maintaining a multipolar world order.

In recent years, Russia has continued to supply India with critical defense technologies, including the S-400 air defense system, a deal that underscores the ongoing trust between the two countries. While India's growing defense relationship with the United States and its participation in multilateral forums like the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) have introduced new complexities into its foreign policy, the Russia-India military partnership remains resilient.

Russia, for its part, continues to view India as a key partner in its broader strategy of influencing the Asia-Pacific region. Despite differences over specific issues, both nations share common concerns about the rise of China and the evolving global security landscape. The Indo-Russian military relationship continues to evolve, with increasing cooperation in areas such as cyber defense, space technology, and counterterrorism operations.

## ENDURING LEGACY

The military relationship between Russia and India is a testament to the enduring nature of strategic partnerships that transcend ideological shifts and geopolitical realignments. From the Soviet era to the present day, the partnership has been shaped by mutual trust, shared security concerns, and a commitment to maintaining a balance of power in Eurasia. As both nations face new challenges in a rapidly changing global order, their military relationship will undoubtedly continue to evolve, guided by the lessons of history and the imperatives of strategic necessity.

This long-standing military cooperation serves as a reminder that alliances, especially those forged in the crucible of shared history and strategic interests, can weather the storms of global change. As India rises as a global power and Russia reasserts itself on the world stage, their military partnership will remain a critical pillar of their bilateral relationship, one that will shape the course of Eurasian geopolitics for decades to come.



The T-72 and T-90 are tanks that were part of India's defence modernization with Soviet/Russian assistance. The T-72 is a Soviet main battle tank that was designed in 1973. The T-90 is an advanced version of the T-72 that was introduced in 1992. (Wikimedia Commons)



# SUPREME COURT DIRECTS JHARKHAND GOVT TO BRING OUT PRISON MANUAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH 2016 MODEL PRISON MANUAL

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case *The State Of Jharkhand And Ors Versus Vikash Tiwary @ Bikash Tiwary @ Bikash Nath* observed and has allowed an appeal by the State of Jharkhand for the transfer of a prisoner from one jail in Jharkhand to another on grounds that the prisoner was involved in a gang war and there was apprehensive about the right to life. The court also directed that the Jharkhand Government to bring a Jail Manual incorporating the provisions of the Model Prison

Manual 2016. The bench comprising of Justice J.B. Pardiwala and Justice R. Mahadevan was hearing the present matter. The bench in the case observed and has set aside the Jharkhand High Court order dated August 21, 2023, wherein the High Court had set aside the order passed by the I.G. Prison, Jharkhand, for the transfer of the Respondent from Lok Narayan Jai Prakash Narayan Central Jail, Hazaribagh to Central Jail Dumka. The judgement authored by Justice Mahadevan also states that, 'Authorities shall ensure that the Re-



spondent's fundamental rights available in ensured in accordance with law are ought to be protected. The State of Jharkhand formulate or expedite the formulation of Jail Manual incorporating the applicable provisions of the 2016

Model Prison Manual for effective prison administration and ensure its strict compliance by the prison authorities. The court allowed the appeal. An order passed for his transfer to Dumka jail was challenged by the Respon-

*The High Court in its final order dated August 21 found that, unlike the argument of gang war made by the State, the letters submitted by the Superintendent of Hazaribagh jail disclosed that the character of the petitioner was satisfactory and that he had been languishing in jail for more than 7.5 years.*

dent before the High Court and the court quashed the same. It has been argued by the State before the court that there was apprehensive of a gang war between the petitioner and other groups and that is why, in the administrative side, the State has decided to transfer the

petitioner to Dumka Jail. The High Court in 2023 through its order granted the status quo. The High Court in its final order dated August 21 found that, unlike the argument of gang war made by the State, the letters submitted by the Superintendent of Hazaribagh jail dis-

closed that the character of the petitioner was satisfactory and that he had been languishing in jail for more than 7.5 years. The court in the case held that the said provisions allow removal of any prisoner only at the instance of State Government in cases where the prisoner is un-

der death sentence, or under, or in lieu of, a sentence of imprisonment or transportation, or in default of payment of a fine, or in default of giving security for keeping the peace or for maintaining good behaviour, to any other prison in the State. The court in the case observed that an earlier order for transfer was quashed and that the affidavit issued by the Superintendent of Hazaribagh jail says otherwise on the conduct of the petitioner, the High Court quashed the transfer order. Accordingly, the court allowed the appeal.

## Supreme Court stays High Court order requiring Delhi govt to sign MoU with Centre on implementation of PM-ABHIM scheme

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case *Government Of NCT Of Delhi Versus Union Of India And Ors* observed and has stayed the order of Delhi high Court, wherein the court directed the Delhi government to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Centre by January 5 for implementation of PM-Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission, PM-ABHIM scheme in the national capital. The bench comprising of Justice BR Gvai and Justice AG Masih was hearing the present matter. The bench in the case passed the order seeking response of Centre's on the petition of Delhi government challenging the order



*The bench after hearing the submissions made by parties issued notice on the petition.*

of High Court. The counsel, Senior Advocate Dr Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for Delhi government, submitted before the court that the powers of the Centre are limited to matters under Entries 1, 2 and 18 in the State List (ie public order, police and land). However, the High Court, vide the impugned order, redefined powers of the governments with regard to the health sector.

He in the case also questioned that the High Court forcing the Delhi government's hand to sign the MoU - a policy decision - highlighting that if so signed, the Government of India will bear 60% of the capital expenditure (and Delhi government 40%) but 0% running expenditure. Further, the senior counsel appearing also claimed that the reach and coverage of Delhi government's own

scheme is much larger. The bench after hearing the submissions made by parties issued notice on the petition. The bench directed a stay of the impugned High Court order. The Delhi High Court passed the impugned order wherein the court was hearing the suo motu Public Interest Litigation, PIL initiated in 2017 which relates to the issue of the availability of ICU beds and ventilator facilities in government hospitals. It was said that non-implementation of the PM-ABHIM Scheme in Delhi, when 33 States or UTs have already implemented the same, would not be justified. The High Court in the case noted that the scheme would have to be implemented in its entirety in

order to ensure that the residents of Delhi are not deprived of the funds and facilities under it. Further, it was stated before the court that the MoU shall be signed irrespective of a Model code of conduct, if any, as the same is for the benefit of residents of Delhi. The High Court in the case had expressed concern over the lack of medical infrastructure to treat critical care patients and asked the Delhi Government why the infrastructure was not keeping pace with the demand. The court also stated that the Delhi government ought not delay implementation of PM-ABHIM scheme on pilot basis and subsequently scale it up to all hospitals.

## Resigned director not liable for cheque issued by company after his resignation under Section 141 of NI Act: SC

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case *Adhiraj Singh Versus Yograj Singh And Others* observed that the cheque issued after the retirement of the director of the company would not trigger his liability under Section 141 of the Negotiable Instrument Act, 1882, NI Act. The court in the case stated that once the facts are plain and clear that when the cheques were issued by the Company, the appellant i.e., the director had already resigned and was not a director in the Company and was not connected with the company, he cannot be held responsible for the affairs of the Company in view of the provisions as contained in Section 141 of the Negotiable Instrument Act, 1882, NI Act. The bench comprising of Justice JK Maheshwari and Justice Rajesh Bindal was hearing the present matter. The bench in the case was hearing an appeal filed against the Himachal



Pradesh High Court's refusal to quash the cheque dishonor case against the Appellant, who had resigned from the company's directorship before the issuance of cheque by the company towards a legally existing debt. On July 12, 2019, the Company i.e., the Respondent no. 2 had issued three post-dated cheques dated July 17, 2019, September 17, 2019 and September 23, 2019. On June 21, 2019, the Appellant had resigned from the company's directorship, whose resignation was deemed effective from the date of resignation. The Appellant claimed before the court that on the date of issuance of the cheques, he was not the director of the Company and had not signed the cheques. Thus, he in the case cannot

be held responsible for the affairs of the Company and if in case any debt existed and the Company, had issued any cheque, the appellant cannot be held liable for offence under Section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, NI Act and saddling him to face trial would amount to misuse of process of law. The Respondent while opposing the contention of Appellant's supported the decision of High Court, wherein the court contended that because on the date of debt, the appellant was a director in the Company and thus, the factual aspect of submission of the resignation before the issuance of cheque and dishonoring is required to be examined during trial, as held in the case *Malva Cotton and Spinning Mills Limited Vs. Virsa Singh Sidhu and Others*. The court observed that the Appellant cannot be held liable for the company's affairs because he resigned before the issuance of the cheque by the company.

## Supreme Court rejects ex-PFI head Abubacker's plea for bail on medical grounds, declines request to allow house arrest

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case *Abubacker E Versus National Investigation Agency* observed and has rejected the petition filed by E. Abubacker, the former Chairman of the banned outfit Popular Front of India, PFI for bail on medical grounds. E. Abubacker, the former Chairman of the banned outfit Popular Front of India, PFI, is presently in judicial custody, he was arrested under Section 120B and Section 153A of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 and Section 17, Section 18, Section 18B, Section 20, Section 22B, Section 38 and Section 39 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. In September 2022, E. Abubacker was arrested by the agency during a massive crackdown on the banned organisation in 2022 wherein the Central Gov-

*The bench comprising of Justice MM Sundresh and Justice Aravind Kumar on November 12 directed the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, AIIMS to constitute a medical team to thoroughly examine Abubacker to ascertain if he deserved bail on medical grounds.*

ernment banned PFI and associated entities for a period of five years under relevant provisions of UAPA. The bench comprising of Justice MM Sundresh and Justice Aravind Kumar on November 12 directed the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, AIIMS to constitute a medical team to thoroughly examine Abubacker to ascertain if he deserved bail on medical grounds. The counsel, bubakar, Senior Advocate Gopal Sankaranarayan appearing before the court stated that the medical report is in his favour. Senior Advocate Gopal Sanka-

ranarayan referred to a few judgments where similar allegations related to terrorism arose and the Court had granted bail on medical grounds. On the other hand, the counsel, Additional Solicitor General S.V. Raju appearing for the National Investigation Agency argued before the court that all the medical conditions raised by him have been optimised through various treatments and thus, he cannot be granted bail. The bench comprising of Justice Sundresh and Justice Rajesh Bindal in the case stated that they are not inclined to grant bail

on medical grounds at this stage and granted the liberty to the petitioner to approach the Trial Court and when Sankaranarayan tried making an alternative prayer that the petitioner may be kept under house arrest, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta objected to it and stated that requesting for house arrest has now become a 'new concept'.

### BACKGROUND OF THE CASE

In September 2024, the Court issued notice on his SLP challenging the order of Delhi High Court, wherein the court denied him bail. It has been contended by Abubacker that he was suffering from multiple ailments including a rare type of oesophagus cancer, and Parkinson's disease, along with hypertension, diabetes and loss of vision, his appeal before the Court states. The Supreme Court in the case issued notice and has

clarified that it would not entertain the petition filed for bail on merits and will only consider the medical grounds. On May 28, 2024, the division bench comprising Justice Suresh Kumar Kait and Justice Manoj Jain of the High Court in the case observed and has dismissed Abubacker's appeal, which sought bail on the merits and medical grounds.

The High Court observed that the material collected by the investigating agency showed that there is a prima facie commission of offences falling under Chapter IV and Chapter VI of UAPA and such material cannot be disregarded at the preliminary stage. Adding to it, the High Court stated that though PFI has been declared to be an unlawful association and not a terrorist organisation the activities of such unlawful association need to be cautiously fathomed and weighed up.

## Supreme Court adjourns bail matter after UP counsel appears 'clueless', makes submissions from wrong brief

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case *Rinku @ Ravindra Kumar Versus State of U.P.* observed and has adjourned hearing in a bail matter after a counsel appearing for the Uttar Pradesh government appeared "clueless" and made submissions from a wrong brief. The bench comprising of Jus-

tice Hrishikesh Roy and Justice SVN Bhatti was hearing the present matter. The bench in the case passed the order wherein the counsel appearing expressed an apology. The court in its order stated that, "To enable the counsel appearing for the State of Uttar Pradesh to prepare himself, the matter be listed on January 29, 2025." The bench comprising of

Justice Abhay S Oka and Justice Ujjal Bhuyan in the case pulled up the Enforcement Directorate, ED over its submission that the proviso to Section 45 of Prevention of Money Laundering Act, PMLA Act would not apply to a woman. The court stated that it would not tolerate submissions on behalf of the Union which are contrary to law, thus, the court rejected the

plea that the submission was the result of a miscommunication. The bench headed by Justice Oka stated that, "This being a clear intention on part of Union of India that by hook or by crook bail is to be denied. Therefore, such submissions are made. If people who appear for the Union of India do not know basic provisions of law why should they appear in the matter?" In January 2023,

the bench of Justice Roy was part, took serious exception to young lawyers coming to Court without sufficiently preparing for cases. The bench stated that, 'Do not come to the Court if you are not prepared with the matter. You are supposed to be fully prepared.' Accordingly, the court listed the matter for further consideration on January 29, 2025.

## Actor Kartik Aaryan attends Supreme Court proceedings

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

The Bollywood star Kartik Aaryan came to watch the Supreme Court proceedings. After Aamir Khan, Kiran Rao, Randeep Hooda, Vidhu Vinod Chopra and film critic Anupama Chopra, Kartik Aaryan and director Kabir Khan reached the



Supreme Court on January 17, 2025.

The court of Justice Biwi Nagarathna, he watched the proceedings of the Supreme Court. Kartik Aaryan after attending Supreme Court proceedings said: "We just wanted to watch the Supreme Court proceedings, it is amazing to watch Supreme Court proceedings, it is a learning experience."



TOP OF THE DAY

**XI SENDS CHINA VP TO TRUMP'S INAUGURATION**

BEIJING: The Chinese president, Xi Jinping, will not attend Donald Trump's inauguration, but he is sending his vice-president, Han Zheng, as his special representative. The decision, announced on Friday in China by the foreign ministry, came more than a month after Trump extended the unusual invitation to Xi, a break from tradition since no heads of state have previously made an official visit to the US for the inauguration. "We stand ready to work with the new US government to enhance dialogue and communication, properly manage differences, expand mutually beneficial cooperation, jointly pursue a stable.

**ARRESTED PREZ YOON STAYS SILENT**

SEOUL: South Korea's arrested president, Yoon Suk Yeol, will not attend a new round of questioning by investigators on Friday, his lawyer said, as authorities face an imminent deadline to obtain a warrant to extend his detention or release the embattled leader. In order to hold Yoon in custody for longer, investigators are expected on Friday to ask a court to approve a detention warrant for up to 20 days, legal experts said. On Wednesday, Yoon became the first sitting South Korean president to be arrested, over a probe into whether he committed insurrection when he briefly imposed martial law in early December.

**UAE PARTICIPATES IN GLOBAL MINING MEET**

RIYADH: Saif Ghobash, Assistant Under-Secretary for the Petroleum, Gas and Mineral Resources Sector at the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, participated on behalf of Suhail bin Mohammed Al Mazrouei, Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, in the International Mining Conference held in Riyadh from 14th to 16th January 2025. During the conference, Ghobash took part in the roundtable meeting for ministers responsible for mining affairs. He discussed with his counterparts from various countries ways to enhance international cooperation in the mining sector and exchanged expertise and modern technologies for mineral exploration and development.

**AUSTRALIA: HUGE DOWNLOAD OF CHINESE APP**

SYDNEY: As the TikTok ban looms in the United States, users have flocked to RedNote, also known as Xiaohongshu, a China-based app that looks similar to Instagram. But in Australia, where there is no imminent TikTok ban, the app is also rocketing up the app download charts. And it doesn't just tell us about TikTok – it also exposes problems with Australia's forthcoming social media age ban. RedNote has 300 million users, mostly based in China, but has added about 700,000 new users in a matter of days as TikTok users look for an alternative.

**ISRAELI SECURITY CABINET APPROVES CEASEFIRE DEAL WITH HAMAS**

The full cabinet is expected to approve it by a large majority, following a meeting that extended into Shabbat.

AGENCIES  
TEL AVIV

The Israeli security cabinet approved the hostage release-ceasefire deal with Hamas and recommended the government to adopt it, the Israeli Prime Minister's Office said on Friday.

The full cabinet convened minutes before the start of Shabbat for a discussion and vote, with the meeting extending into the Jewish day of rest, Times of Israel reported.

The full cabinet is expected to approve it by a large majority, following a meeting that extended into Shabbat. The full cabinet is expected to vote by a large majority to approve the deal, which was signed overnight in Qatar and is set to take effect on Sunday.

The recommendation by the forum of top ministers was made "after examining all diplomatic, security and humanitarian" aspects of the agreement, with the understanding that the deal "supports the achievement of the war's goals," the PMO said.

The deal is set to take effect on Sunday at 12:15 pm, with the first three female hos-

**THE DEAL**

- First three female hostages are expected to be released by 4 pm Sunday.
- Finance Minister Smotrich and National Security Minister Ben Gvir opposed the deal but were in the minority.
- PM Netanyahu assured U.S. backing for resuming fighting if Hamas fails in phase two negotiations.
- Shin Bet and Mossad chiefs urged swift approval, warning delays could endanger hostages.
- The deal involves freeing 33 hostages initially, with plans to address the remaining 65 hostages later.
- Netanyahu's Likud party affirmed the deal secures Israel's future security and control in Gaza.



Israel President Benjamin Netanyahu

■ Far-right leader Ben Gvir threatened to leave the coalition if the deal is implemented.

tages expected to be freed by 4 pm that day.

Israel Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir voted against the deal at the security cabinet but were in the minority.

"Following an evaluation of all diplomatic, security and humanitarian aspects, and while understanding that the proposed deal supports the achievement of the objectives of the war, the Security Cabinet has recommended that the Govern-

ment approve the proposed

framework," the Israel PM Office stated in a post on X.

Before the cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu participated in a security assessment to discuss the deal's implementation with the negotiating team. The full cabinet meeting was scheduled for 3:30 pm on Friday, moved up due to Shabbat considerations, with ministers stressing the urgency of a life-saving matter.

The Israel government's hostages and missing persons coordination unit on

Friday notified the families of the 33 Israeli hostages expected to be set free in the first phase of the Gaza ceasefire deal.

Israel has not been told how many of the 33 are alive, though it expects the majority are. Israel will receive a full status report on all those on the list seven days into the ceasefire. The order of release is not yet known. The identities of those set to return are expected to be provided 24 hours before each release, as reported by Times of Israel.

**Israel's national security minister calls ceasefire deal 'reckless'**

AGENCIES  
TEL AVIV

Israel's Minister of National Security and far-right minister Itamar Ben-Gvir strongly criticised the ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas, calling it "reckless."

He said that the deal would undermine the achievements of the war and emphasised that if the deal is approved, his party, Otzma Yehudit, will quit the government.

In a rough translation of a post on X, he wrote, "The deal that is taking shape is a reckless deal. It includes the release of hundreds of murderous terrorists, the return of thousands of terrorists to the northern Gaza Strip, a withdrawal from the Philadelphia axis, and a cessation of fighting, and thus the deal will effectively erase the achievements of the war."

He added, "Not only that, it does not lead to the release of all the hostages, it leaves



Israeli National Security Minister and head of Jewish Power Party Itamar Ben-Gvir is flanked by members of his party as he speaks to the media on January 16, 2025. Agency

the fate of the remaining

hostages who are not included in the deal uncertain, and it will lead to an end to the war when Hamas has not yet been defeated, with a significant ability to rebuild itself. Therefore, if this reckless deal is approved and implemented, the Otzma Yehudit party will not be part of the government and will withdraw from it. If the war on Hamas is renewed with force in order to decide and realize the war's unachieved goals, we will return to the govern-

ment." He further said, "I also call on members of the Religious Zionist Party, as well as the ideological Knesset members in the Likud, to act similarly, and together with us to prevent the implementation of the reckless surrender deal."

Earlier on Wednesday, Qatar, Egypt, and the US, in a joint statement, confirmed that Israel and Hamas have reached a ceasefire and hostage release deal that is likely to take effect on January 19.

ment." He further said, "I also call on members of the Religious Zionist Party, as well as the ideological Knesset members in the Likud, to act similarly, and together with us to prevent the implementation of the reckless surrender deal."

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**Wasserlauf to resign from Israel govt**

AGENCIES  
TEL AVIV

Yitzhak Wasserlauf, who serves as the Minister for the Development of the Periphery, the Negev, and the Galilee, said he will resign from the government after it passes the ceasefire agreement.

The other day I went to the house of one of the parents of the kidnapped women who will be released in this deal. I knocked on the door, and my heartbeat was also beating fast. He opened it, and I just hugged him. We sat together and cried. I told him I was going to oppose the deal that would bring his daughter back. I explained to him how unbearable the decision was. I also explained to him how much I wanted his daughter home. Don't envy us," the Otzma Yehudit lawmaker said.

**Weapons, tunnel shaft found near UN base in Southern Lebanon: Israel**



Israeli soldiers in southern Lebanon discovered weapons depots in several civilian buildings near a United Nations base, Agency

AGENCIES  
TEL AVIV

Israeli soldiers in southern Lebanon discovered weapons depots in several civilian buildings near a United Nations base, the Israel Defense Forces said on Thursday.

Troops from the 11th Brigade Combat Team found numerous weapons along with a tunnel shaft during an operation to clear an area in western Lebanon of Hezbollah terror infrastructure.

The IDF said all of the equipment was destroyed without harming the UN base.

Under the terms of a two-month ceasefire that went into effect on November 27, Hezbollah is supposed to withdraw its armed presence from areas of southern Lebanon south of the Litani River. Israeli forces will also

*The IDF said all of the equipment was destroyed without harming the UN base.*

withdraw from southern Lebanon in stages.

On numerous occasions, Hezbollah launched missiles at Israeli forces and communities from near UNIFIL positions. In October, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called on UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to withdraw the UNIFIL contingent, which is made up of 10,500 soldiers from 50 countries.

UNIFIL was established in 1978 to confirm Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon. The "Blue Line" demarcating the 120 km-long Israeli-Lebanese border

was created in 2000 by UN cartographers to verify Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon, which the UN Security Council later certified as complete. The border runs from Rosh HaNikra on the Mediterranean coast to Mount Dov, where the Israeli-Lebanese border converges with Syria.

Israeli officials have been critical of the peacekeepers for failing to stop Hezbollah.

After the Hamas attacks of October 7, 2023, Hezbollah began launching rockets and launching drones at northern Israel communities daily. According to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701, which ended the 2006 Second Lebanon War, Hezbollah is forbidden from operating in southern Lebanon south of the Litani River.

**Egypt urges immediate implementation of Gaza ceasefire**

AGENCIES  
CAIRO

Egypt emphasised the urgent need to implement the Gaza ceasefire and prisoner exchange agreement without delay, underscoring the importance of all parties adhering to its terms and meeting the specified timelines.

In an official statement

carried by Ahran Online, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs highlighted that the agreement should lead to a significant influx in humanitarian aid across Gaza.

Egypt called on the international community to support humanitarian efforts, assist Gaza, and initiate early recovery projects as a prelude to reconstruction.

The ministry also announced Egypt's readiness to host an international conference to facilitate this process.

The statement stressed that the agreement aims to save innocent Palestinian lives, which have endured over 15 months of genocidal war and a catastrophic humanitarian crisis.

**UAE key partner in combating global terrorism**

AGENCIES  
ABU DHABI

The United Arab Emirates' unwavering stance against terrorism reflects its conviction that the fight against terrorist groups and their supporters is a collective battle for the survival of human civilisation.

The UAE has consistently stressed the necessity of rallying all international efforts to counter this grave threat to the security of nations and com-

munities worldwide.

The UAE was among the first nations to warn of the growing threat of terrorism many years ago, urging regional and global cooperation to confront and eliminate it. It has actively contributed to regional and international efforts to combat terrorism, demonstrating its commitment to promoting global peace and security. The UAE's role in the Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen

and its active participation in Operation Decisive Storm, launched in March 2015, are notable examples.

UAE Armed Forces played a pivotal role in thwarting the plans of the Houthi terrorist militias to dominate Yemen and use it as a platform to threaten neighbouring countries and international maritime navigation through the control of the Gulf of Aden and the Bab Al Mandeb Strait.

**Imran, his wife sentenced to 14 and 7 years in prison in graft case**

AGENCIES  
ISLAMABAD

A Pakistani court on Friday sentenced the country's already-imprisoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife to 14 and seven years in jail after finding them guilty of corruption, officials and his lawyer said.

It's yet another blow for the former premier who has been behind the bars since 2023.

The couple are accused of accepting a gift of land from a real estate tycoon in exchange for laundered money when Khan was in power.

Prosecutors say the businessman, Malik Riaz, was then allowed by Khan to pay fines that were imposed on



Former Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife. File Photo

him in another case from the same laundered money of 190 million British pounds (\$240 million) that was returned to Pakistan by British authorities in 2022 to deposit to the national exchequer.

Khan has denied wrongdoing and insisted since his

arrest in 2023 that all the charges against him are a plot by rivals to keep him from returning to office.

Bibi was taken into custody by prison officials after the announcement of the verdict, according to officials. She had earlier served a prison sentence in another

graft case until she was freed on bail by a court in October. She recently led a rally to demand her husband's release.

Faisal Chaudhry, a defense lawyer, said the court verdict could be challenged in the superior courts.

Shortly after the announcement of the verdict, lawmakers from Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, or PTI, party rallied outside the parliament in the capital, Islamabad, saying the former premier had been wrongly punished.

"This is a bogus case, and we will approach an appeals court against this decision," said Omar Ayub Khan, a senior party leader who is not related to the former premier.

**Ex-Sri Lanka President Rajapaksa quizzed by police**

AGENCIES  
COLOMBO

Former Sri Lanka president Gotabaya Rajapaksa was on Friday morning quizzed by the police's CID over a property in the island nation's southern Kataragama town.

The 75-year-old, younger brother of former president and prime minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, was questioned by police for nearly two hours and his statement was recorded by the CID after being served a notice over the property located in the pilgrimage town. He becomes the most high-profile Rajapaksa to be questioned by police since the formation of the new government led by Anura Kumara Disanayake in November last year.

**China's economy hits 5% growth target**

AGENCIES  
BEIJING

China's economy grew by 5% in 2024, in line with government targets but at the slowest rate since 1990 outside the Covid pandemic, according to official data.

Growth accelerated through the year, with an expansion of 5.4% in the final quarter, up from 4.6% in the third quarter, according to Beijing's National Bureau of Statistics.

The bureau reported "steady progress amid stability" but pointed to a "complicated and severe environment with increasing external pressures and internal difficulties".

The statistics bureau said the economy had "recovered remarkably" in the latter part of 2024, after the government announced a series of stimulus measures. These included

interest rate cuts, as well as a trade-in scheme for consumer goods, and tax incentives for property purchases.

Across 2024 as a whole, industrial output was up by 5.8%, helped by a strong performance in manufacturing, but retail sales increased by only 3.5%, despite policies aimed at stimulating domestic demand.

Beijing has been attempting to rebalance growth away from a heavy dependence on exports, towards domestic consumption. However, a property downturn, and the after-effects of the Covid pandemic, appear to have continued to weigh on sentiment.

Lynn Song, a China economist at ING, said: "The key question is if we can see consumer confidence bottom out and begin a meaningful recovery.



NICOLÁS MADURO 3.0



Government supporters take a selfie with marching guards after the swearing-in ceremony of President Nicolás Maduro for a third term. Source: Cristian Hernandez

## Only Greenland should decide on its future, Denmark PM

AGENCIES  
COPENHAGEN

Amid repeated assertions from US President-elect Donald Trump over the territory of Greenland, Denmark Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen told him that "only Greenland" should decide on its future, Politico reported.

The two leaders held a phone call on Wednesday, during which Frederiksen reiterated to Trump, Greenlandic Prime Minister Mute Egede's assertion that "Greenland is not for sale," a press release from Denmark PM's office stated.

Frederiksen told Danish media that their conversa-



Denmark Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen

tion "confirmed" that "there is great American interest in Greenland." The call did not appear to bring the issue to a conclusion, with both leaders agreeing to continued dialogue.

Trump recently expressed a desire to buy the mineral-rich island, and even said he would not rule out military action in the region, as per Politico.

Trump did not speak about the call but posted the results of a 2019 poll on social media that found that 68 per cent of Greenlanders supported independence from Denmark.

During their 45-minute conversation, Frederiksen also "emphasized the importance of strengthening security in the Arctic" and reminded Trump of the strong trade relationship between the two countries and between the US and EU more broadly, Politico reported.

As per Politico, the two leaders also spoke about the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East, as well as relations with China.

## US: New rule to improve H-1B and H-2 visa norms comes into force

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON

The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will implement a new rule to modernise and improve the requirements for the H-1B nonimmigrant and H-2 nonimmigrant visa programs three days before the swearing-in ceremony.

The Department of Homeland Security's H-1B final rule and H-2 final rule take effect on Friday, January 17. The H-1B final rule modernizes the H-1B program by streamlining the approval process, increasing its flexibility to better allow employers to retain talent workers and improving the integrity and oversight of the program. These provisions mainly amend the regulations governing H-1B specialty occupation workers, although some of the provisions narrowly impact other nonimmigrant classifications, including: H-2, H-3, F-1, L-1, O, P, Q-1, R-1, E-3, and TN.

The H-2 final rule strengthens worker protections among other things and imposing new consequences on firms that charge prohibited fees or violate labour laws and provides greater flexibility for H-2A and H-2B workers.

and more. How many answers? ZERO."

Tesla CEO Elon Musk too echoed Lowe and backed him when he said he didn't want such 'degenerates' in Britain.

"If I'm a far-right racist for wanting to deport every single foreign rapist, without question, then so be it. I don't want these degenerates in our country, and I'm certain that every single decent Brit agrees with me," Lowe posted on X.

To this, Musk said, "It's a no-brainer".

## UK MP critiques Labour Party's allocation of 10 million Euros to probe rape gangs

AGENCIES  
LONDON

Rupert Lowe, a Member of Parliament called Labour Party's allotment of 10 million Euros to investigate the rape gangs as 'pathetic'.

Lowe called for 'full, free and fair' national inquiry on the operation of these gangs. As per Lowe, 10 million Euros for this cause was not enough.

"Let's be clear on what happened yesterday - Labour announced a £10 million package to investigate the

rape gangs. £10 million. It's pathetic, it's insulting. Why have they done this? Politics. Labour know their position couldn't work, so they've had to give just enough to look like they're doing something. It means nothing and nothing has changed. Don't fall for it," he posted on X.

"There needs to be a FULL, FREE, and FAIR national inquiry. And we need DATA. I asked in Parliament yesterday, again. On court transcripts, deportations, nationality breakdown, reoffences, releases

# UK-UKRAINE SIGN 100-YEAR PARTNERSHIP PACT

The pact gave a call for Ukraine's recovery and committed towards trade and technology.

AGENCIES  
KYIV

In a significant development, Ukraine and the United Kingdom have signed a 100-year partnership agreement, details of which were shared on Thursday.

As per the statement released by the UK PM's office, the statement highlighted "Ukraine's European and Euro-Atlantic aspirations, with NATO membership being the best guarantee of its security and the UK being dedicated to supporting Ukraine's irreversible path to NATO membership".

The agreement gave a call for Ukraine's recovery and committed towards fostering technological innovation and promoting trade and collaboration across key sectors to ensure that a century from now, "the UK and Ukraine will have flourishing ties across all sectors".

The agreement gave a call to strengthen conditions for investment and trade in both of their nations, and cooperate across a range of sectors, including but not limited to transport, infrastructure, and energy to make both of their economies more modern, resilient, and prosperous.

The details were also

### STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP



UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer (Left) and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

The agreement promotes trade, technological innovation, and economic collaboration across sectors like transport, infrastructure, and energy.

UK PM Keir Starmer visited Kyiv to sign the agreement, which aims to foster

resilient and modern economies for both nations.

Ukrainian President Zelenskyy shared updates, highlighting a "new format of relations" between Ukraine and the UK.

shared in a series of posts on X by the Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelenskyy.

"Today was a busy and productive day filled with important international meetings. I welcomed UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer to Kyiv. Together, we signed a One Hundred Year Partnership Agreement, marking a new format of relations between

Ukraine and the United Kingdom. I also met with Italy's Minister of Defense, Guido Crosetto, to discuss strengthening air defense, joint production, and creating new opportunities for jobs and technological development in Europe. Later, I held a meeting with the Netherlands' Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kasper Veldkamp. The Netherlands remains one of

Ukraine's most principled partners, supporting our NATO and EU aspirations and pursuing accountability for Russia's aggression. Finally, I met with the UN representatives, focusing on support for internally displaced Ukrainians, rebuilding destroyed homes, and financial assistance. Thank you to everyone who supports Ukraine."

## Musk's Starship rocket 'lost' after 8.5 minutes into flight

AGENCIES  
TEXAS

SpaceX's Starship launch system lifted off on its seventh uncrewed test flight on Thursday, with an upgraded version of the megarocket embarking on the program's most ambitious flight to date, CNN reported.

SpaceX was able to duplicate its prior feat of catching a booster that returned to Earth. But 8.5 minutes into flight, the Starship spacecraft itself was lost, as per CNN.

"Starship experienced a rapid unscheduled disassembly during its ascent burn. Teams will continue to review data from today's flight test to better understand root cause. With a

SpaceX's Starship launch system lifted off on its seventh uncrewed test flight on Thursday, with an upgraded version of the megarocket embarking on the program's most ambitious flight to date, CNN reported.

test like this, success comes from what we learn, and today's flight will help us improve Starship's reliability," SpaceX said in a post on X.

A "rapid unscheduled disassembly," or "RUD," is a phrase SpaceX typically uses to refer to an explosion. Starship had already climbed 90 miles (146 kilometers) in altitude and was traveling at 13,200 miles per hour (21,317 kilometers per

hour), CNN quoted the last telemetry data shared by SpaceX.

The Federal Aviation Administration said flights departing Miami International Airport and Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport were being delayed for an average of one hour due to a "rocket launch anomaly." A separate FAA alert said flights were delayed due to "debris."

"The FAA briefly slowed and diverted aircraft around the area where space vehicle debris was falling. Normal operations have resumed," CNN quoted a statement from the agency.

SpaceX founder Elon Musk shared an image of debris in a post and said, "entertainment is guaranteed!"

While the Super Heavy ached its landing attempt, the Starship spacecraft, or upper stage, was expected to continue propelling itself through space, reaching speeds almost fast enough to enter orbit around Earth.

But the Starship spacecraft stopped delivering telemetry, suggesting that the spacecraft may have been lost.

# RUBIO OUTLINES FOREIGN POLICY ENVISIONED FOR TRUMP 2.0 ADMINISTRATION

This week presented a complex landscape in global affairs and international relations. Amid the ongoing violence between Israel and Hamas, as well as the persistent conflict between Russia and Ukraine, Marco Rubio, the Republican senator from Florida, outlined the foreign policy strategy envisioned for a potential second Trump administration during his confirmation hearing for the Secretary of State position. Meanwhile, Bangladesh is poised to remove the core tenets of secularism, socialism, and nationalism from its constitution, marking a critical shift in its political framework.

This week, Marco Rubio, the Republican senator representing Florida, articulated the foreign policy framework for the second Trump administration during his confirmation hearing for the position of Secretary of State. In a dialogue facili-

tated by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Rubio highlighted an 'America First' strategy that emphasizes prioritizing US interests, minimizing reliance on foreign countries, and tightening fiscal allocations for international assistance. As Rubio approaches confirmation as Secretary of State, his agenda reflects the Trump administration's emphasis on domestic issues and a reassessment of international obligations.

He highlighted the importance of ensuring that American taxpayer funds are directed exclusively towards promoting US interests. He also recognized the existence of global humanitarian challenges but advocated for a more rigorous examination of foreign aid. This indicates a shift towards a more domestically-oriented foreign policy, as expected from Trump. During his address, Rubio also characterized China as the foremost challenge



confronting the US, highlighting its supremacy in global supply chains, advancements in technology, and military strength. He cautioned that the US needs to address this 'near-peer adversary' by revitalizing its domestic industrial base and decreasing dependence on foreign countries for essential supply chains.

In addressing the situation in Ukraine, he advocated for a more practical approach. He characterized the current conflict as a 'war of attrition' and emphasized that the primary objective of Trump administration would be to secure a ceasefire. While he reiterated the US' commitment to NATO, he also explained the significance of European partners tak-

ing on a greater share of the financial burden. However, his remarks indicated a potential change in US policy, suggesting a role as a friend rather than being the main security guarantor for Europe. It was also clear from his address that Trump administration would uphold robust relations with Israel while taking a firmer approach towards Iran. He highlighted the possibility of significant advancements in the West Asia, particularly mentioning the ongoing initiatives aimed at normalizing relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel.

*The significant concern is not the only challenge for India at present; there are other pressing issues as well such as illegal migration and infiltration across its borders, as well as the ongoing situation with refugees.*

development, a Constitution Reform Commission presented its findings to interim government leader Muhammad Yunus this week. Based on the same, the country seems to be set to eliminate the foundational principles of secularism, socialism, and nationalism from its constitution. The three principles are part of the four recognized as 'fundamental principles of state policy' within the nation's constitution. According to the latest proposal, only one principle - 'democracy' will remain

intact in the constitution. Additionally, the commission has also recommended the establishment of a bicameral legislature and proposed a cap on the prime minister's tenure, limiting it to two terms.

Commission chairman Ali Riaz stated in a video message that they are advocating for five state principles: equality, human dignity, social justice, pluralism, and democracy, which aim to embody the aspirations of the people during the anticipated mass upsurge in 2024. However, there are

concerns regarding the appropriateness and legality of a temporary administration's power to implement such extensive modifications, which would change the social fabric and nature of Bangladesh.

The significant concern is not the only challenge for India at present; there are other pressing issues as well such as illegal migration and infiltration across its borders, as well as the ongoing situation with refugees. India is already surrounded by politically fragile countries like Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Nepal. Afghanistan is already under the control of a terrorist organisation. Entire Europe is under one or the other kind of crisis situation. Russia-Ukraine war does not seem to be ending any sooner. Israel-Hamas conflict is intensifying every week. The potential demise of democracy in Bangladesh at the hands of extremists would have far-reaching consequences, not only undermining global peace and security but also casting significant doubt on the effectiveness of major international organizations.

In today's multipolar world, various entities, driven by their unique priorities and intricate interdependencies, establish distinct centres of power. This diversity of power dynamics transforms global politics into a complex labyrinth. As individual actors attempt to navigate this landscape independently, they increase their risk of failure. Rather than focusing on solitary pursuits, nations should prioritize engagement and collaboration, following the example set by India. Embracing this approach is essential for achieving success in the realm of global politics. The author is Professor, School of International Studies, JNU



REVIEW: EMERGENCY \*\*\*\*

## EMERGENCY



PRAVEEN NAGDA

'Indira is Kangana, and Kangana is Indira,' is something that would be a more apt line for this well-made biography of the late prime minister of India, which often mentions 'Indira is India and India is Indira.'

Directed and Co-Produced by Actor Kangana Ranaut, Emergency is a film depicting the life and times of Indira Gandhi from a political perspective but narrated in almost an apolitical manner barely highlights the times of emergency deployed by the ex-prime minister in 1975. The film's name could have been 'Indira' instead of 'Emergency,' which seems to be a pretty misnomer since the content around emergency only appears before intermission and carries forward post intermission just a little bit.

Emergency is a film with an impressive cast with Kangana Ranaut (as Indira Gandhi), Anupam Kher (as Jayaprakash Narayan), Shreyas Talpade (as Atal Bihari Vajpayee), Milind Soman (as Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw), Late Satish Kaushik (as Jagjivan Ram), Ashok Chhabra (as Morarji Desai), Vishak Nair (as Sanjay Gandhi), and Mahima Chaudhry (as Puppul Jayakar) among others.

Kangana gave a stellar performance and imbibed the character of India Gandhi beyond excellence. Her look and feel certainly complement her acting nuances, emotions, presentation, dialogue delivery, style, courage, and boldness, which make her come across strongly similar to the protagonist of the film. Though sometimes deliberate facial twitches and voice delivery of Kangana may sound a bit artificial, overall, she has played the character very well.

As a Director, Kangana shines too by making the co-actors perform and adapt to their roles perfectly. Milind Soman delivers a strong performance and plays his character with absolute

perfection. Shreyas Talpade and Anupam Kher are as natural as they can be seeping fully into their characters, while Vishak Nair attempts more to portray eccentricities rather than the normal sides of the character.

While the film is based on two novels, most of the script seems to rely upon publicly available information, knowledge, and gossip too sometimes. While it was expected to be a completely one-sided narrative focusing only on the emergency times, it is not. It tries to balance out the ideologies of right, left, and centre and creates a narrative of patriotism and nationalism of the Iron Lady, Mrs. Gandhi.

However, in the name of creative freedom, showing the cursed lady in the mirror as a reflection of Mrs. Gandhi's remorse for the emergency might have been uncalled for as it doesn't reflect anything.

Kangana makes an impact in many scenes like her meeting with the philosopher J. Krishnamurthi (played by Avijit Ghosh), her interaction with US President Nixon and telling him "You have weaponry, we have courage," her visit to Belchi village in Bihar riding an Elephant, and reacting to the merciless murder of Bangladesh founder, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, known as Bangabandhu on India's Independence Day.

Starting at a rapid pace the film moves very fast packing several events, incidents, and characters in the political history of India. The lyrics by Manoj Muntashir Sharma are inspiring especially Ae Meri Jaan Tu Jaan Se Praya He Tu, Ae Mere Desh Meri Aankh Ka Pyara He Tu, while another track Singhasan Khali Karo, is apt with the central theme of the film and makes more impact.

Watch it from an artistic perspective and not the political lens.

Praveen Nagda is Festival Director of KidzCINEMA and CultureCinema Film Festivals

## SAIF ALI KHAN STABBED: KAREENA, SHARMILA TAGORE ARRIVE AT LILAVATI HOSPITAL



TDG NETWORK MUMBAI

Bollywood actress Kareena Kapoor Khan has arrived at Lilavati Hospital to check on her husband Saif Ali Khan who got injured in an attack by an intruder at his Bandra residence in the early hours of Thursday. Saif's mother and veteran actress Sharmila Tagore has also reached the hospital to check on her son's health condition post-surgery.

As per the visuals recorded outside the Lilavati hospital, Kareena was seen en-

tering the hospital premises. She donned a plain white T-shirt and black sunglasses. She was surrounded by the security personnel who escorted her from the car to inside the hospital.

Veteran actress Sharmila Tagore also entered the hospital amid low security.

Earlier today, Soha Ali Khan was also seen entering the Lilavati hospital to check on her brother's condition post surgery. Soha's husband Kunal Kemmu has also reached the hospital. He is the brother-in-law of Saif Ali Khan.

PICTURE PERFECT

Kiara Advani wishes her husband Sidharth Malhotra a happy birthday. (Instagram)



## KAJOL REUNITES WITH HER ON-SCREEN 'KABHI KHUSHI KABHIE GHAM' SON

TDG NETWORK MUMBAI

Actor Kajol bumped into her on-screen son Jibraan Khan at the screening of 'Azaad' film.

On Thursday night, Jibraan came to the special screening of Rasha Thadani and Aaman Devgan's film 'Azaad' in Mumbai.

While he was posing for shutterbugs on the red carpet, he saw Kajol arriving in a car from the side of his eye.

An excited Jibraan rushed to her and hugged her warmly as Kajol smiled. The two interacted with each other for a bit before they went their separate ways.

Jibraan essayed the role of Kajol and Shah Rukh Khan's son Krish in Karan Johar's directorial 'Kabhi



Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham'.

Last year, Jibraan in an interview with ANI, walked down memory lane and shared one memory of him with King Khan that he always cherishes.

"Memories created with SRK Sir are still alive in my

heart. Post 'K3G' I did an advertisement with him...I still remember how humbly he greeted my mother with adab on the set...During the shoot I also played with his children in his vanity...that time I felt like his own child...he did not

behave differently at all," he recalled.

In 2024, Jibraan made his debut as a lead star in 'Ishq Vishk Rebound'. Directed by Nipun Dharmadhikari, the rom-com also stars Rohit Saraf, Pashmina Roshan and Naila Grewal.

## John Abraham's 'The Diplomat' to arrive in theatres on March 7

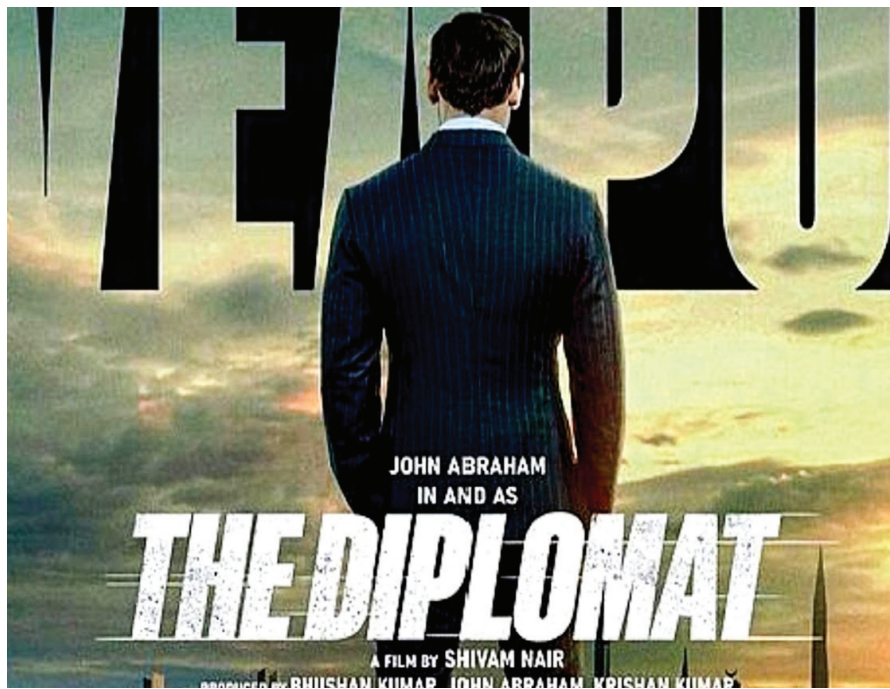
TDG NETWORK MUMBAI

John Abraham is all set to come up with his film 'The Diplomat' soon. The movie will be released in theatres on March 7, 2025. Sharing the release date, John on Friday took to X and wrote, "Honored to bring this story of courage and diplomacy to life. See you in theatres on March 7th!"

He also dropped the film's new poster. In the poster, he can be seen donning a suave suit and sporting a moustache.

Directed by Shivam Nair and written by Ritesh Shah, the film is inspired by a true story that shook the nation, promising a "gripping tale of power, patriotism".

The film is produced by T-Series, Bhushan Kumar and Krishan Kumar; John Abraham of JA Entertainment; Vipul D Shah, Ash-



win Varde, Rajesh Bahl of Wakaoo Films, Sameer Dixit and Jatish Varma of Fortune Pictures, Rakesh Dang of Seeta Films.

John was last seen in 'Ve-

daa', which also starred Sharvari and Tamannaah Bhatia. It faced a box office clash with Akshay Kumar's 'Khel Khel Mein' and 'Street 2' last year.

The film, which is directed by Nikkhil Advani, follows the journey of a young woman, Vedaa (Sharvari), who dares to challenge the status quo.

## GONE INTO DARKER LANES OF HUMAN BEHAVIOUR IN 'PAATAL LOK 2': DIRECTOR

TDG NETWORK NEW DELHI

Avinash Arun Dhaware, who has returned to direct the second season of the Sudip Sharma-created 'Paatal Lok', says the follow-up is denser than the original show and takes viewers to the "darker lanes of human behaviour".

Dhaware, known for his films such as "Killa", "Three of Us" and series "School of Lies", said the success of the original show, which premiered in the middle of the pandemic in May 2020, came as a surprise to everyone involved.

The director said Sharma had a plot idea when they



were done with the first season and it was to be set in Nagaland.

"That's what I was extremely excited about because it's a completely unexplored territory,

culture and politics. It's quite rooted in its culture and current consciousness of that state," Dhaware told PTI in an interview.

"We have gone into darker

lanes of human behaviour. People will be surprised and shocked to see certain aspects. I'm very sure that the kind of psychological impact the show will have," he said.

BRAIN PICKING



Success is the best revenge. I always feel women should answer back either with their sarcasm or success.



- KANGANA RANAUT  
(Indian Actress)

## 'BLUE VELVET', 'THE ELEPHANT MAN' DIRECTOR DAVID LYNCH PASSES AWAY AT 78



AGENCIES WASHINGTON

David Lynch, an American writer-director known for his surrealistic vision in films like 'Blue Velvet' and 'Mulholland Drive' passed away at the age of 78. The filmmaker's family announced the passing of the director through a Facebook post on Thursday, reported Variety.

Lynch revealed in 2024 that he was diagnosed with emphysema after a lifetime of smoking and would likely not be able to leave his house to direct any longer.

His family announced his death in a Facebook post, writing,

"It is with deep regret that we, his family, announce the passing of the man and the artist, David Lynch. We would appreciate some privacy at this time. There's a big hole in the world now that he's no longer with us. But, as he would say, 'Keep

your eye on the doughnut and not on the hole.' It's a beautiful day with golden sunshine and blue skies all the way," as quoted by Variety.

David Lynch was born on January 20, 1946, in Missoula, Montana. His father was a research scientist for the Department of Agriculture, and his peripatetic family lived in the plains states, the Pacific Northwest and the Southeast before settling in Alexandria, Virginia, where Lynch attended high school, reported Variety.

Lynch is a four-time Oscar nominee and received an honorary Oscar for lifetime achievement in 2020.

This American filmmaker was known to produce a perfect blend of horror, film noir and classical European surrealism in his critical-acclaimed films like 'Blue Velvet', 'Lost Highway', 'Mulholland Drive' and 'Twin Peaks' TV show.

## COLDPLAY'S AHMEDABAD SHOW TO BE LIVE STREAMED, BAND MEMBERS EXPRESS EXCITEMENT



TDG NETWORK MUMBAI

Don't be sad if you're not able to get Coldplay tickets for the band's concert in India. You all can enjoy the live performance of Coldplay in the comfort of your home. Yes, you read it right.

British rock band Coldplay's Ahmedabad concert, which is scheduled to take place on January 26 at the Narendra Modi Stadium, will be streamed live on Disney+ Hotstar.

In the announcement shared by the platform, the lead singer of the band, Chris Martin, expressed, "Namaste to all our friends in India. We're thrilled to share that on the 26th of January, our show

from Ahmedabad will be streaming live on Disney+ Hotstar, so you can watch it from anywhere in India. We hope you'll join us - we're so excited to visit your beautiful country. Sending lots of love!"

Speaking on the collaboration, Sanjog Gupta, CEO, JioStar Sports, said, "At Disney+ Hotstar, we have revolutionised India's entertainment and sports consumption by captivating viewers with unparalleled immersive experiences and consistently delivering value to our partners, advertisers and audiences. Our partnership with Coldplay reflects our commitment to bringing iconic cultural experiences to audiences nationwide."



# 10 THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE STARTING A FAMILY: A GUIDE TO REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

DR. P.P SINGH

Embarking on the journey of starting a family constitutes a significant life decision that necessitates thorough contemplation, strategic planning, and diligent preparation. In order to ascertain comprehensive readiness, it is imperative to evaluate factors that extend beyond the mere emotional or physical dimensions of parenthood. This manual concerning “reproductive wealth” incorporates the emotional, financial, physical, and social elements that will influence your capacity to raise a child and cultivate a satisfying family environment.

## 1. EMOTIONAL READINESS

The journey of parenthood requires huge emotional maturity and resilience. Are you ready to face the challenges that come with continuous care and the emotional elements involved in bringing up a child? It is vital to have the patience, adaptability, and emotional endurance to handle the peaks and valleys that accompany parenting.

## 2. PHYSICAL HEALTH & FERTILITY

Before trying to conceive, it is important to assess the physical well-being of both parties. Proper diet, regular exercise, and good health practices dramatically increase the chances of a successful pregnancy and the birth of a healthy baby. If there are pre-existing medical conditions, the couple should



see doctors. Women should receive proper prenatal care and ensure that they take enough folic acid, and men should consider sperm health before planning a pregnancy.

## 3. FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY

Raising a child comes with significant financial demands. Consider the long-term costs, including healthcare, daycare, education, and general living expenses. It's wise to have a solid financial plan in place, including an emergency fund. Review your insurance policies, savings, and debt to ensure you can comfortably support your growing family.

## 4. WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Professional life will need to shift as well with having chil-

dren. Think about how your career, work schedule, and income will change with having children. Do you or your partner need to take time off or have to alter the work arrangements? Ensure that the job can accommodate flexibility; otherwise, it may mean that you have to budget for more childcare or less hours.

## 5. RELATIONSHIP STRENGTH

A good relationship is required to establish a family household. Child rearing is a shared responsibility and there is a need for accountability towards each other. Communicate your expectations about the responsibilities of childcare, emotional support, and sharing of workloads. Parenting styles will clash at times, so one should

agree on some basic aspects of parenting such as disciplining, methods of education, and values.

## 6. SUPPORT NETWORK

The availability of a reliable support system can greatly impact one's capacity to cope with the difficulties inherent in parenting. Are there relatives or close friends living nearby who can offer emotional, physical, or childcare support? Availability of a protective community is a stress and feelings of isolation that may sometimes occur during the transition into parenthood.

## 7. RESIDENTIAL CONTEXT

The location of your residence will significantly affect the life-



style of your family. Reflect on your existing living conditions and assess their suitability for child-rearing. Do you need extra space? Does your neighborhood offer a friendly environment for families, close to quality educational institutions, recreational areas, and health-care services? The physical surroundings are very important in shaping your child's growth and improving your family's general well-being.

## 8. PARENTING PHILOSOPHY

You want to align on what kind of parents you want to be. Discuss your values around discipline, education, and emotional support. Do you want to prioritize a specific type of education or worldview? Having a shared vision for parenting will help

mitigate conflict and ensure a more unified approach to raising your child.

## 9. PERSONAL IDENTITY

Becoming a parent will redefine your identity. Are you ready for the move from individualism to parent? You will need to change your personal goals, hobbies, or lifestyle to take care of your child. Still, you'll need to maintain a balance of achieving personal development and self-caring without getting burnt out for preserving a healthy identity.

## 10. LEGACY & LONG-TERM PLANNING

Parenthood also brings legacies to fore—whether these are financial, cultural, or personal. Do you think that you can adequately prepare for your child's

long-term well-being? It is time to discuss estate planning and life insurance so that you will be equipped with a well-thought plan for your future, whether educational or inheritance.

## CONCLUSION

Establishing a family is one of the great transitions involving preparation in almost all aspects of life. Serious consideration of emotional, physical, financial, and social factors can be the building blocks of strong family development. The time to think through such factors helps one prepare for parenthood, but at the same time, it enables building a loving, stable, and fertile life.

The author is the Senior Director & HOD - Urology, Kidney Transplant & Robotic Urology, Max Smart Super Speciality Hospital, Saket.

## Building a Secure and Happy Marriage: Key Factors for Women's Well-Being

DR VIBHA BANSAL

Marriage is a transformative phase filled with excitement, challenges, and new responsibilities. For women, feeling happy and secure in a post-marriage relationship is essential for their personal well-being and the partnership's success. Here are key aspects contributing to women's happiness and safety in marriage.

### EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AND OPEN COMMUNICATION

Emotional support is the cornerstone of a healthy relationship. Women feel secure when their partners listen to them, validate their feelings, and provide encouragement during tough times. Open communication fosters trust and understanding. Partners need to express themselves honestly, discuss concerns without fear of judgment, and work together to resolve conflicts.

### RESPECT FOR INDIVIDUALITY

Respecting a woman's individuality—her dreams, ambitions, and personal choices—is vital. Marriage doesn't mean losing one's identity. When partners encourage each other to pursue their interests and support career goals or hobbies, it nurtures mutual respect and strengthens the relationship.

### SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES

Equitable division of responsibilities creates a sense of partnership. Women feel more secure and valued when household chores, financial obligations, and childcare duties are shared fairly. This reduces stress



and fosters a feeling of teamwork, making the relationship more balanced and harmonious.

### PHYSICAL SAFETY AND BOUNDARIES

Physical safety is a fundamental requirement in any relationship. A woman must feel free from any form of abuse or coercion. Establishing and respecting personal boundaries ensures that both partners feel safe and comfortable. Support for a woman's autonomy and decisions reinforces her sense of security.

### FINANCIAL SECURITY

Financial stability is a significant factor in ensuring happiness and safety. Transparency in financial matters, joint planning, and mutual respect for each other's contributions create a strong foundation. Whether a woman chooses to work or manage the household, her role should be appreciated

equally.

### APPRECIATION AND AFFECTION

Expressions of love and gratitude make women feel cherished and valued. Small gestures like compliments, thoughtful surprises, or spending quality time together strengthen emotional bonds. Consistent displays of affection reassure a woman that she is loved and respected.

### SUPPORT FROM EXTENDED FAMILY

Healthy relationships with in-laws and extended family members contribute to a woman's happiness. Encouraging respectful and positive interactions with family ensures a harmonious environment. Avoiding undue interference in the couple's personal matters is crucial.

### SHARED VISION AND GOALS

Having shared goals and a vision for the future fosters unity. Whether it's about starting a family, traveling, or financial planning, aligning on priorities helps create a sense of partnership. Celebrating milestones together

strengthens the bond and brings joy.

### EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL INTIMACY

Both emotional and physical intimacy are vital for a fulfilling marriage. Women feel connected and happy when they can share their thoughts and emotions openly. Physical closeness, trust, and understanding of each other's needs enhance the relationship.

### ENCOURAGING PERSONAL GROWTH

A supportive partner encourages a woman's personal growth, whether through education, career advancement, or self-care. Feeling supported in her aspirations and having the space to grow individually enriches the relationship.

In conclusion, a woman's happiness and safety in a post-marriage relationship hinge on mutual respect, trust, and partnership. By fostering open communication, sharing responsibilities, and prioritizing emotional and physical well-being, couples can build a strong, loving, and secure foundation for their marriage.

## The Game Changers: Women Making a Difference



DR HASEENA KABEER

*"You may write me down in history  
With your bitter, twisted lies,  
You may trod me in the very dirt,  
But still, like dust, I'll rise."*

Maya Angelou's iconic poem *Still I Rise* serves as a timeless anthem of resilience, strength, and empowerment, particularly for women. Through its bold, defiant tone and vivid imagery, the poem captures the unyielding spirit of women who rise above oppression, discrimination, and adversity. Angelou's verses reflect the inherent power and dignity of women, celebrating their ability to overcome challenges with grace and determination. The poem resonates as a declaration of self-worth and an assertion of identity, reminding us that women, despite societal barriers and historical injustices, possess an

indomitable strength that enables them to rise above all odds. *Still I Rise* is not just a personal assertion; it is a universal ode to the triumph of the human spirit, particularly the enduring power of women.

In today's rapidly evolving world, women are not just breaking barriers, they are reshaping the very fabric of society. From leading nations to revolutionizing industries, women are stepping into spaces once thought to be beyond their reach. They are rewriting the rules of success, challenging traditional gender roles, and advocating for equality and justice with unwavering determination. These women are changing the game, proving that the future is not only female but also one that is built on resilience, courage, and innovation. The modern woman is no longer confined by societal expectations or limited by outdated notions of what she can or cannot achieve. She is a pioneer, a creator, a problem-solver. She is in the boardroom, the laboratory, the classroom, and on the frontlines of social movements, driving change and building the world of tomorrow.

Today's woman is an en-



trepreneur who is shattering glass ceilings and building empires. With the rise of women in business, we see more female-led start-ups, innovative products, and solutions tailored to meet the diverse needs of communities. These women are not just running businesses, they are creating jobs, empowering others, and redefining what success looks like. Their resilience in the face of challenges, such as unequal access to resources or gender biases, fuels their drive to succeed and create opportunities for others. In politics and activism, women are taking on leadership roles and challenging systems of power. They are at the forefront of movements advocating for environmental justice, gender equality, and human rights. With a deep understanding

of the interconnectedness of social, economic, and environmental issues, they are pushing for policies that prioritize sustainability and equity. Their leadership is changing the discourse, shifting the focus from profit-driven agendas to people-centered solutions.

The women of today is an evidence to resilience, courage, and boundless potential. Like the unyielding voice in Maya Angelou's *Still I Rise*, they refuse to be silenced or constrained by societal expectations. Instead, they rise above challenges, shattering barriers and creating pathways for others to follow. From boardrooms to classrooms, laboratories to political arenas, women are not just participants, they are leaders, innovators, and change makers. Their unwavering determination and visionary leadership are reshaping our world into a more inclusive, equitable, and compassionate place. As Angelou's words remind us, no matter the obstacles, women will continue to rise, inspiring future generations to do the same. When women thrive, society flourishes, and their legacy of empowerment paves the way for a brighter tomorrow.

Dr Haseena Kabeer is a freelance columnist





# A SPIRITUAL PIONEER'S ENDURING LEGACY



B.K. BRIJ MOHAN

India has a rich history of spiritual leaders who have significantly influenced the country and the world with their teachings and philosophies. An inconspicuous figure among them stands out for what he did.

Prajapita Brahma founded the Brahma Kumaris, a spiritual organisation led by women, which is the largest of its kind in the world. In the 1930s, when women were allowed little education, social space, or

individual freedom, this was an unprecedented step.

A wealthy jeweller, Prajapita Brahma had a series of visions that inspired him to retire from his business and create a community to study and practise the principles of a virtuous and meditative life. This was in Hyderabad, Sindh. The community later moved to Karachi and, after Partition, to Mount Abu, where the Brahma Kumaris are headquartered today.

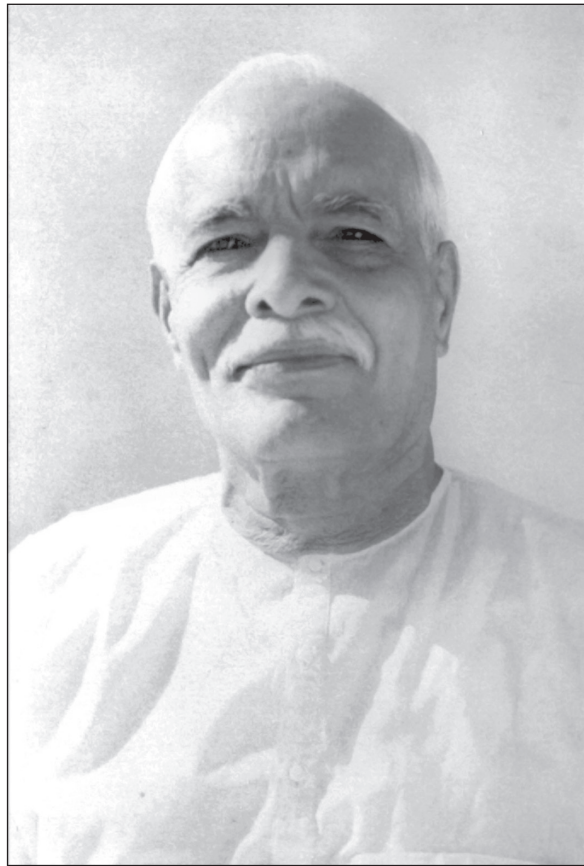
Initially, the members were mostly women and girls, who were drawn to the community by its spiritual teachings, emphasis on virtuous living, and egalitarian practices that did not discriminate against the fair sex – a sharp contrast to the prevailing social milieu. They devoted their time to intense spiritual study, meditation, and self-transformation.

The community was giv-

ing the shape of an organization, and Prajapita Brahma entrusted its administration to a committee of women. He also willed his entire wealth to the new organisation. This was perhaps the first time in history that women had been placed in a leadership position in this manner.

This extraordinary step was based on a spiritual truth, which is the first teaching of the Gita – that we are souls, not bodies. The soul is a sentient point of energy; it has no gender. The body is the physical medium through which the soul thinks, speaks, and acts. Qualities such as intelligence, courage, and industriousness reside in the soul, regardless of the gender of its body, so there is no reason why women cannot perform tasks that men can, so long as they are physically capable.

Such practical application of spirituality in every



Prajapita Brahma stressed that to make the world a better place, we need to first improve the quality of our consciousness.

aspect of life became a notable feature of the Brahma Kumaris.

Prajapita Brahma remained the spiritual beacon of the group, and he taught by example. He emphasised cultivating constant awareness of being a soul,

Soul, who is the Father of all souls. Remembering God with the awareness of being a soul, His child, is Rajyoga. Through this spiritual connection the soul receives God's power, which enables it to stay true to its innate virtues in all circum-

*Qualities such as intelligence, courage, and industriousness reside in the soul, regardless of the gender of its body, so there is no reason why women cannot perform tasks that men can, so long as they are physically capable.*

stances. The equanimity of a yogi that the Gita speaks of, is attained by regular practice of Rajyoga.

Brahma Baba, as the Brahma Kumaris refer to their founder, stressed that self-transformation was the

which would naturally give expression to the soul's innate qualities of purity, peace, truth, and love.

Soul-consciousness is a pre-requisite for establishing a living relationship with God, the Supreme

key to changing the world. The world around us is the creation of the collective consciousness of the people living in it. Making the world a better place, therefore, requires creating a better consciousness first.

Prajapita Brahma set an example of how one can elevate one's thinking and achieve angelic consciousness – a noble state of mind completely free from any weakness – by living a life based on spiritual principles.

Today, exactly fifty-six years after Prajapita Brahma attained perfection and left his mortal coil, his life continues to inspire people in 140 countries to follow the Brahma Kumaris' teachings, with the firm conviction that by changing themselves they can help create a better world.

B.K. Brij Mohan is Secretary General of the Brahma Kumaris.

## The quiet revolution that heralds a world without fear



NEVILLE HODGKINSON

A chilling tagline from Steven Spielberg's second Jaws movie, "Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the water..." has a resonance for many in today's world. Human predators seem ready to exploit others at every twist and turn.

At all levels in our societies, we see the damage caused by selfishness and greed. Dark forces exist both within us and around us.

The good news is that around the world, out of this darkness, a spiritual revolution is emerging. Through it, millions are improving the quality of their life, excelling in their field of work, building fruitful and enriching relationships, and at the same time coming close to God.

In fact, it is because of a sense of actually being able to learn how to draw on God's love and wisdom that those other im-

provements are taking place.

At its root, the change involves a shift in our sense of who we are.

When we identify with our bodies and the physical side of life, it becomes inevitable that at some point we will become victims of loss, because the world is in a constant state of change. The resulting suffering then leads many to take refuge in increasingly limited and negative ways of thinking and behaving.

Unaware of our divinity, we develop addictions of various kinds, which give us a short-term boost but increase our vulnerability to exploitation by others. A slippery slope of negative karma pulls many into a state of depression and hopelessness.

Once, it was left to renunciates such as sanyasis, hermits, monks, and nuns to try to counter this decline, seeking to experience divine peace by embracing a life of simplicity.

Today, countless others are evolving spiritually while living in normal, everyday circumstances. People from every walk of life are finding that ancient understandings about our spiritual essence help to both protect and enhance our character. They include business leaders, scientists, engineers, politicians, philo-

sophers, doctors, and teachers as well as housewives and ordinary working folk.

In my own experience, the shift has been enhanced through recognition that at this troubled time in history, when egotism and related vices have reached a peak, a Supreme Being becomes present among us in order to turn things round.

God is not human, but is the Source or Seed of all that is highest in human beings – a Supreme Parent. When we learn how to connect with that



When we restore in ourselves the awareness that we truly are eternal, spiritual beings, then peace and happiness return naturally into our lives.

One and absorb divine truth into ourselves, our worries and fears automatically start to fall away.

The key is to practise and restore in oneself the consciousness that we truly are eternal, spiritual beings, who have all come from that One. When this awareness sinks right in and we become an embodiment of it, peace and happiness start to return naturally into our lives. We develop the power to act with kindness and wisdom, even in difficult circum-

stances, and these qualities then enhance the lives of those around us.

Although incorporeal, God brings an energy of truth that will eventually restore all souls to their original condition. This energy is like a light that passes from one to another as we learn that we are eternal souls, and not the temporary roles we are called upon to play.

With this consciousness, it becomes much easier to play our parts on the stage of the world with detachment and

generosity of heart, rather than driven by the neediness we suffered when unaware of our divinity. The change of awareness brings a commitment to honesty, purity of intention, good wishes, and non-violence, which all help us to grow spiritually.

We discover that it is the quality of our thoughts, feelings, and actions that makes us spiritual, not our clothes, place of living, or any religious or spiritual pretensions.

A Biblical saying goes: "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" It was a similar realisation that led Lekhraj Kirpalani, a family man and hugely successful jeweller, to found the Brahma Kumaris as a movement for global spiritual renewal nearly 80 years ago.

His foresight, dedication, and surrender made possible the creation of an army of white-clad sisters who have so far carried the light of self-realisation into more than 130 countries. Spreading unobtrusively, this light is preparing the ground for the return of a golden age – a shark-free world where love and wisdom will once again make it safe for us to swim!

Neville Hodgkinson is a UK-based author and journalist, and a long-time student of Rajyoga.

### A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

**A new world is created when I become new. As I apply my natural creative abilities to renewing myself, I begin to change. Then my world changes as a result. By turning old habits into new ones and creating new patterns, I begin to enjoy the process of creation and see how it affects my world. Today let me create newness in myself and transform my world.**

## Brahma – the forefather of all humanity



B.K. USHA

If we liken the emergence and development of various religious traditions over the course of history to the growth of a tree, we find that Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism are the main branches of the human family's tree. The adherents of these religions make up the major chunk of the world's population.

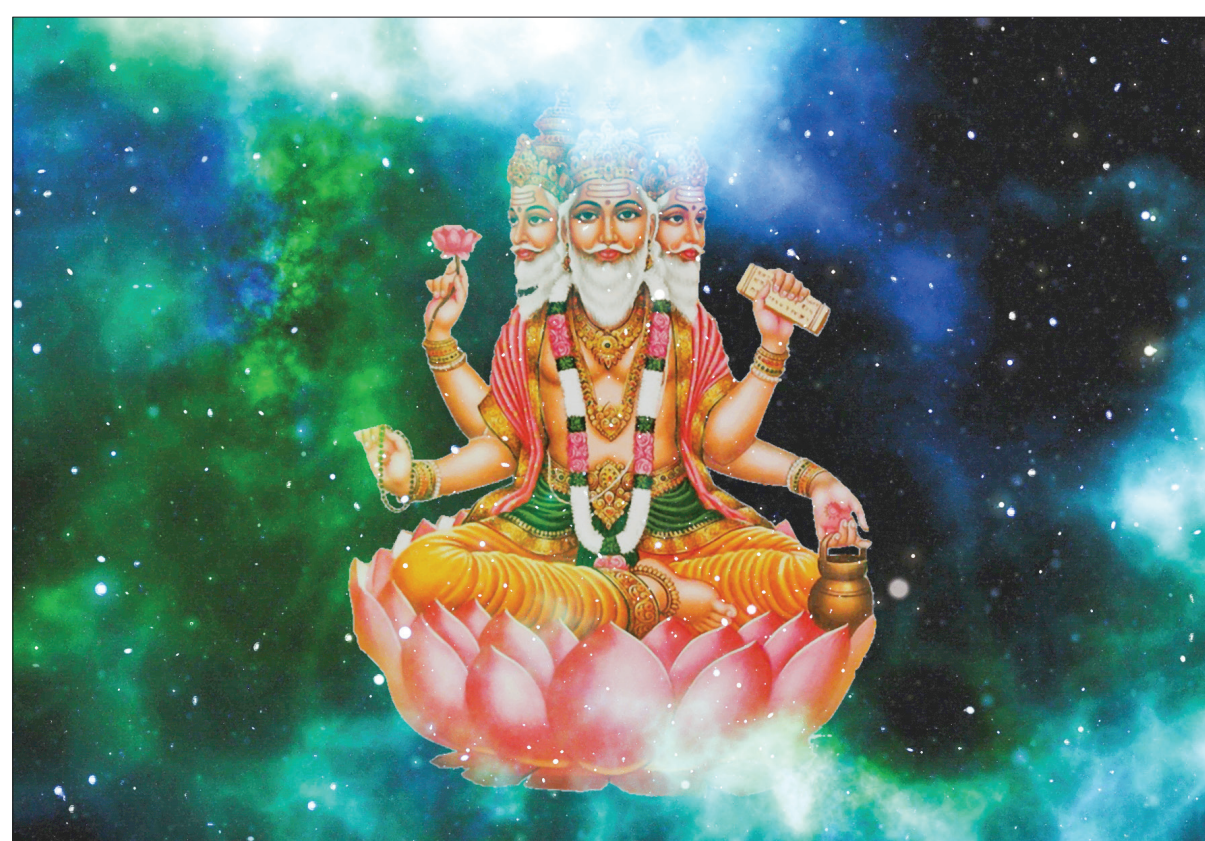
While Christianity began with Jesus Christ about 2,000 years ago, the origin of Buddhism dates back 2,250 years to Gautam Buddha, and the roots of Islam can

be traced back about 2,500 years to Abraham.

The parents of the founders of these religions obviously belonged to religious traditions that existed earlier. The Adi Sanatan deity religion is the trunk of the tree of humanity from which the branches mentioned above have emerged.

The Adi Sanatan deity religion was the religion practised in India originally. This religion originates with Prajapita Brahma, who is known by the names Adam and Adinath in different religious traditions and is recognised as the first human, or the originator of humanity.

Brahma is said to have started a 'yagya' or sacrificial fire from which emerged the deities. This fire is not physical – it is the fire of intense spiritual effort that burns away our harmful, unwanted traits, transmuted human souls into pure, divine beings. This is the key to creating a new world, because physical reality is a



Brahma's key role in the cyclical history of the world remains obscure.

manifestation of human consciousness. The world we live in today, with all its

myriad problems, is a reflection of the state of mind of the people in it. So, establish-

ing a new world requires the creation of a new consciousness first.

Brahma is the corporeal medium through whom incorporeal God Shiva, the

Supreme Soul, gives us spiritual knowledge to create an enlightened consciousness. God Shiva does this by awakening us to our true identity – that we are souls, not bodies. He reminds us of our relationship with Himself, the Father of all souls, and tells us that by remembering Him we can establish a mental connection by which His powers and virtues flow into the soul, cleansing us of old, damaging habits and making us healthy and whole again. It is by this process that humans metamorphose into deities. This transformation is accompanied by major changes in the world as the wheel of time turns, marking the dawn of a Golden Age, peopled by the deities who emerged from Brahma's yagya.

With the passage of time, the deities gradually lose their spiritual powers. Eventually, a time comes when they are no longer divine – they have become ordinary humans. Memories of the

Golden Age linger in their minds, and they remember that happy past, longing for its return. They begin to worship their ancestors, who lived in that glorious age. This practice, and the traditions and rituals of the people who engage in it, later come to be known as Hinduism.

The other religions are established in due course, as the tree of humanity grows new branches. This process continues, and various sects, sub-sects, creeds, and cults are born, giving rise to the bewildering variety of religious traditions and beliefs we see in the world today.

When we draw the tree of this variegated human family and trace our roots, we find that Brahma, worshipped as the Creator, is the corporeal forefather of all humanity.

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



# SUBASH, DEEPALI ARMANDO FELICITATED WITH DRONACHARYA AWARD

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

Coaches Subash Rana, Deepali Deshpande, Sandeep Sangwan, S Muralidharan and Armando Colaco were felicitated with the prestigious Dronacharya Award by the president Droupadi Murmu on Friday.

Various eminent sporting personalities were felicitated during the National Sports Awards ceremony by President Murmu on Friday.

Subhash, Deepali and Sandeep were honoured with the regular category Dronacharya award, while Muralidharan and Armando were felicitated with the Dronacharya Lifetime category award.

Subhash's award was in recognition of his outstanding achievements in Para-Shooting. He has trained many outstanding Para Athletes including Manish Narwal, Rubina Francis, Singhranj, Avani Lekhara. These players have won medals at the Paralympic Games 2021 and 2024, the World Championship 2022, the Asian Para Games 2023 and other international tournaments.

His most notable pupil, Avani became the first-ever



Indian woman to secure two gold medals in Paralympics during the Paris Paralympics 2024. She got a gold and bronze medal in the 10m air rifle SH1 and 50m rifle 3 positions SH1 respectively after a gold medal in the 2020 Paralympics in the 10m air rifle SHL.

Also, Deepali was honoured for her contributions to the sport of shooting. She has trained many outstanding Athletes including Swapnil Kusale, Akhil Sheoran, Arjun Babuta, Sift Kaur Samra, Anjum Moudgil and Shriyanka Sadangi. These players have won medals in Olympics 2024, World Championship

2023 and 2024, World Cups 2024, Asian Games 2023 and Asian Shooting Championships 2023. Sandeep's contributions to the sport of hockey also got their well-deserved recognition, having trained players like Sumit, Mandeep Singh, Gurjant Singh, Jarmanpreet, Sanjay, and Abhishek. These players have won medals at the Olympic Games 2021 and 2024, Asian Games 2023, Commonwealth Games 2022 and other International tournaments. In the lifetime Dronacharya award category, Muralidharan's contributions to badminton were given recognition. He has trained many outstanding



S Muralidharan



Subash Rana

ing Athletes including U Vimal Kumar, Madhumita Bisht & George Thomas. These players won medals at the Asian Games 1982, the Commonwealth Games 1998, the French Open - Badminton 1983 & 1984 and the Welsh Open - Badminton 1988. Armando's contribu-



Deepali Deshpande

tions to sport of football, most notably in training the all-time great player and captain Sunil Chhetri, were also honoured. Other than Chhetri, he has trained several players like Mahesh Gawli, Climax Lawrence, Anwar Ali, Anthony Pereira and Samir Naik.

These players won the Silver medal in the 2002 SAFF Cup, Gold medal in 2005 SAFF Cup, Silver medal in 2008 SAFF Cup, Gold medal in 2012 SAFF Cup and Gold medal in 2002 LG Cup. Dronacharya Award for outstanding coaches in Sports and Games' is given to coaches for doing outstanding and meritorious work on a consistent basis and for enabling sportspersons to excel in International events.

# Gukesh to take on Anish Giri in Tata Steel opener

AGENCIES  
WIJK AAN ZEE

World champion D Gukesh will take on local star Anish Giri in the opening round of the 87th Tata Steel Chess tournament here on Saturday, marking his first competitive outing since claiming the coveted crown last month.

Giri, the 2023 winner, holds the reputation of being a tough cookie thanks to his impeccable theoretical knowledge and research that has been the Dutchman's forte for many years now.

However, 18-year-old Gukesh, who likes to go with a no-draw approach in every game he plays, is in great form and can look forward to a solid campaign after the World Championship triumph over Chinese Ding Liren in Singapore.

Gukesh received India's highest sporting honour, the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna, in Delhi this morning from President Droupadi Murmu and left for the Dutch city immediately after the ceremony. The five-player Indian contingent will see an all-Indian duel as early as round one as Arjun Erigaisi will face last-minute-replacement Pentala Harikrishna in the opener.

Arjun, known for his ability to complicate any position, will



have an arduous task against Harikrishna who is super-solid with white pieces. Interestingly, Harikrishna came in the mix of things as another Indian Vidit Gujrathi withdrew due to personal reasons.

The most interesting battle of the first round is likely to be between R Praggnanandhaa who takes on Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan.

Praggnanandhaa did not have a great 2024 and would like to make amends by starting the year on a positive note. The fifth Indian in the fray made it to the elite group after winning the challengers in 2024. Leon Luke Mendonca may not have the credentials of other four compatriots in fray but the youngster is certainly the dark horse, who can put anyone in a difficulty position on his day. Mendonca will take on German Vincent Keymer, who is fast improving and

must have gained a lot while working for Gukesh during the world championship.

In the other lineups for the first round, defending champion Wei Yi of China will meet top seed and world number two Fabiano Caruana of United States, Dutch Max Warmerdam will face Alexey Sarana of Serbia and Slovenian Vladimir Fedoseev will be up against another local hopeful Jordan van Foreest.

In the challengers' section, Grandmaster R Vaishali will face the youngest International Master of the World Oro Faustino of Argentina. The 11-year-old will be competing in his first major classical event after some of his recent triumphs took him to a rating of 2447 points. Vaishali, as black, is hardly ever intimidated by younger players as she carved a niche for herself as a youngster too.

# India to announce ICC Champions Trophy 2025 squad today

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI

The Indian squad for the upcoming ODI series against England and the ICC Champions Trophy will be announced on Saturday, announced the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Friday.

BCCI issued a media advisory announcing the same. Skipper Rohit Sharma and the chairman of the men's selection committee Ajit Agarkar will be attending the press conference scheduled for 12:30 PM IST.

"The Men's Selection Committee will select India's squad for the IDFC First Bank ODI series against England and the upcoming ICC Champions Trophy 2025 tomorrow in Mumbai. The Selection Meeting will be followed by a press conference," the advisory from BCCI read.

Before the ODIs against England, a five-match T20I series against England will be kickstarting on January 22. The five-match T20I series will commence on January 22 in Kolkata. The second and third matches



will be held on January 25 and 28 in Chennai and Rajkot, respectively. The fourth game of the series will be played on January 31 in Pune. Mumbai will host the final match of the T20I series on February 2.

The three-match ODI series will kickstart from February 6 onwards. The freshest challenge awaiting India is the ICC Champions Trophy, starting from February 19 till March 9. It will be hosted by Pakistan and UAE, with India playing its matches in UAE under a hybrid model. The eight-team tournament will feature 15 50-over matches and will be played across Pakistan and in Dubai.

# BCCI issues new policy guidelines for Team India

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has issued strict guidelines for the Senior Men's Cricket Team, aiming to enhance discipline, streamline logistics, and promote team unity during domestic and international tours.

The new guidelines include travel, baggage limits, family visits, and team dynamics. Players are expected to travel with the team for all matches and practice sessions. Separate travel arrangements with families are discouraged to maintain discipline and team cohesion. Any exceptions must be pre-approved by the head coach and chairman of the selection committee.

"All players are expected to travel with the team to and from matches and practice sessions. Separate travel arrangements with families are discouraged to maintain discipline and team cohesion. Exceptions, if any, must be pre-approved by the Head Coach and Chairman of the Selection Committee," BCCI stated.

To streamline logistics and avoid challenges, the BCCI has set specific baggage limits for players and support staff. For away tours lasting more



than 30 days, players are allowed 5 pieces of luggage (3 suitcases and 2 kit bags) or up to 150 kg, while support staff can bring 3 pieces (2 large suitcases and 1 small) or up to 80 kg. For away tours shorter than 30 days, players are permitted 4 pieces (2 suitcases and 2 kit bags) or up to 120 kg, and support staff are allowed 2 pieces (2 suitcases) or up to 60 kg. During home series, both players and support staff are limited to 4 pieces (2 suitcases and 2 kit bags) or up to 120 kg for players, and 2 pieces (2 suitcases) or up to 60 kg for support staff.

"Excess Baggage Limit Players are required to adhere to the specified baggage limits shared with the team. Any excess baggage costs will need to be borne by the individual player. This policy helps streamline logistics and avoid unnecessary expenses.

Baggage policy:-  
Away long-duration tours (more than 30 days):  
Players - 5 pieces (3 suitcases

+ 2 kit bags) OR upto 150 kgs.  
Support staff - 2 pieces (2 big + 1 small suitcases) OR upto 80 kgs.

Away short duration tours (less than 30 days):

Players - 4 pieces (2 suitcases + 2 kit bags) OR upto 120 kgs.  
Support staff - 2 pieces (2 suitcases) OR upto 60 kgs.

Home series:

Players - 4 pieces (2 suitcases + 2 kit bags) OR upto 120 kgs.  
Support staff - 2 pieces (2 suitcases) OR upto 60 kgs." Players must adhere to these limits, with any excess baggage costs being borne individually. The presence of personal staff, such as managers, chefs, assistants, and security personnel, is restricted on tours and series. Any exceptions require explicit approval from the BCCI. This measure aims to ensure team focus and minimize logistical complications. "Restriction on Individual Staff on Tour/ Series Personal staff (e.g., personal managers, chefs, assistants and security) are

to be restricted on tours or series unless explicitly approved by the BCCI. This ensures that the focus remains on team operations and minimizes logistical challenges. - this has to be done away with," BCCI said in a statement.

Players must coordinate with team management regarding the transfer of equipment or personal items to the Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru. Any costs incurred due to separate arrangements will be the responsibility of the player. "Sending bags separately to the Centre of Excellence Players must coordinate with team management regarding equipment and personal items being sent to the Centre of Excellence, Bengaluru. Any additional costs incurred due to separate arrangements will be the player's responsibility," BCCI stated.

The family travel policy is designed to balance players' personal well-being with team commitments. Players who are away from India for more than 45 days during overseas tours are eligible to have their partners and children (under 18) join them for one visit per series, with a maximum duration of two weeks.

# Players not permitted to engage in personal shoots or endorsements

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Thursday released new policies for Team India players and stated that the cricketer won't be permitted to engage in "personal shoots or endorsements" during series or tour.

Team India conceded a disappointing 3-1 defeat to Australia in the recently concluded Border-Gavaskar Trophy 2024-25 and lost the opportunity to qualify for the World Test Championship (WTC) Final at Lord's.

In the statement, BCCI stated that the decision to stop players from "personal shoots or endorsements" during series or tour will ensure that their focus remains on cricket. "Players are not permitted to engage in personal shoots or endorsements during series or tour. This avoids distractions and ensures that the players' focus remains on cricket and team responsibilities," BCCI stated.

The statement from BCCI stated that all the players are

required to stay for the entire duration of scheduled practice sessions and travel together to and from the venue. BCCI added that it will ensure a strong work ethic within the team.

"All players are required to stay for the entire duration of scheduled practice sessions and travel together to and from the venue. This rule ensures commitment and fosters a strong work ethic within the team," it added. The statement added that the players are required to be available for BCCI's official shoots, promotional activities, and functions. "Players are required to be available for BCCI's official shoots, promotional activities, and functions. These engagements are essential for maintaining the BCCI's commitments to stakeholders and promoting the game effectively," BCCI's statement added. BCCI's new policies for Team India also made it "mandatory" for the players to participate in domestic matches to remain "eligible" for selection in the national team and for the central contracts.

# Virat Kohli added to Delhi Ranji squad: Sources

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

Star India batter Virat Kohli has been added to the Delhi squad for their upcoming Ranji Trophy clashes, but his playing is dependent on his availability, said the sources in Delhi & District Cricket Association (DDCA).

The sources said that while Virat is not likely to play the first match against Saurashtra in Group D, starting from January 23 in Rajkot, he could join the team for the second match against Railways starting from January 30.

The news on Virat's availability comes when the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has taken a much harder stance regarding the participation of



Indian international stars in domestic cricket. In a new policy released on Thursday, it made it "mandatory" to participate in domestic matches to remain "eligible" for selection in the national team and for the central contracts.

In the policy, BCCI stated that taking part in domestic cricket will remain connected to the cricket ecosystem. The statement

added that any exceptions to taking part in domestic cricket will be considered only under extraordinary circumstances.

"Participation in Domestic Matches is mandatory for players to remain eligible for selection in the national team and for central contracts, as per BCCI guidelines. This policy ensures that players remain connected to the domestic

cricket ecosystem, fostering talent development, maintaining match fitness, and strengthening the overall domestic structure. It also inspires emerging players by providing them opportunities to compete alongside top cricketers, ensuring continuity in talent progression. Any exceptions to this mandate will be considered only under extraordinary circumstances and will require formal notification and approval from the Chairman of the Selection Committee, ensuring fairness and transparency in the process," BCCI said in a statement.

Recently, Team India conceded a disappointing 3-1 defeat to Australia in the recently concluded Border-Gavaskar Trophy 2024-25 and lost the opportunity to

qualify for the World Test Championship (WTC) Final at Lord's. Also, before this, their 0-3 whitewash to New Zealand at home before the Australia tour led to debates if international stars should play domestic cricket regularly or not.

Earlier on Tuesday, Rohit Sharma reunited with Mumbai's squad for their training sessions ahead of the second phase of the 2024-25 Ranji Trophy, according to ESPNcricinfo.

Meanwhile, Shubman Gill also confirmed his availability for Punjab's upcoming Ranji Trophy sixth-round fixture against Karnataka, set to begin on January 23 at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru.

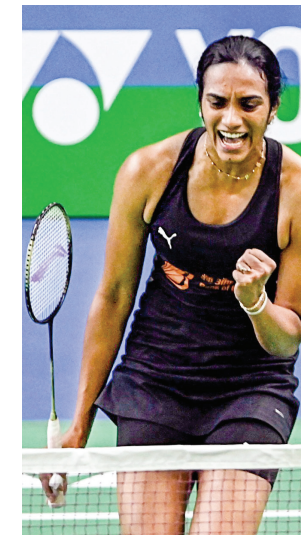
If Virat plays Ranji, this would be his first Ranji Trophy match since 2012.

# India Open 2025: Sindhu bows out in quarterfinals

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

Two-time Olympic medalist PV Sindhu bowed out of the India Open 2025 after a hard-fought quarterfinal loss to Paris Olympics bronze medallist Gregoria Mariska Tunjung on Friday. In a closely contested match, Sindhu lost 9-21, 21-19, 17-21 to the World No. 5 Indonesian shuttler in a 62-minute encounter at the Super 750 tournament in Delhi.

Sindhu, playing her first competitive event since her marriage in December 2024, showcased resilience by forcing a decider after dropping the opening game. Trailing 3-9 in the second set, she staged a re-



markable comeback, leveling the scores and winning the game 21-19. However, despite her efforts, Tunjung maintained composure in the third set to clinch the victory. Speaking to report-

ers, a disappointed Sindhu reflected on her performance: "It is definitely sad that I lost in the third set after fighting so hard. There were long rallies, and I need to be more consistent and keep the shuttle in the court. The first game had easy mistakes, but I was prepared better for the second and third."

Sindhu had earlier defeated Japan's Manami Suizu 21-15, 21-13 to reach the quarterfinals.

This marks a tough end for India's campaign, as Sindhu's exit follows that of several other Indian players. The tournament continues with Tunjung advancing to the semifinals, aiming to extend her winning run.