

**2** PM: WE HAVE TO BE UNITED FOR 'VIKSIT BHARAT' ON LINES OF AZAD HIND FAUJ



**11** ISRAELI FORCES FIRE ON ARMED MEN IN GAZA, ISLAMIC JIHAD OPERATIVE KILLED



**16** INDIA TOPS GROUP WITH FLAWLESS SHOW

## Iron Age began on Tamil soil, claims TN CM Stalin

AGENCIES CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Thursday said that the Iron Age began in the world from the land of Tamil.

"From the land of Tamil only the iron age began. Not only for India but for the whole world...5,300 years ago Iron melting technology was introduced in Tamil land. It was confirmed based on the evidence from recent excavations and also found iron in Tamil land was introduced 4,000 years BC," Stalin said during the foundation

stone laying ceremony for a new open-air museum in Keezhadi and museum in Gangaikonda Cholapuram.

The Chief Minister later said on X that with "immense pride and unmatched satisfaction" he had declared to the world that "The Iron Age began on Tamil soil!"

"Based on results from world-renowned institutions, the use of iron in Tamil Nadu dates back to the beginning of 4th millennium B.C.E., establishing that iron usage was prominent in South India over 5,300 years ago," the



The use of iron in Tamil Nadu dates back to the beginning of 4th millennium B.C.E. ...5,300 years ago Iron melting technology was introduced in Tamil land.

M K Stalin Chief Minister Tamil Nadu

Chief Minister said.

Stalin said that what was written in Tamil ancient literature was now becoming scientifically proven history, thanks to the meticulous efforts of our #DravidianModel Government. The history of the Indian subcontinent can no longer overlook Tamil

"What was written in our ancient literature is now becoming scientifically proven history, thanks to the meticulous efforts of our #DravidianModel Government. The history of the Indian subcontinent can no longer overlook Tamil

Nadu. In fact, it must begin here!" he said.

A new open-air museum, spanning 4.48 acres and costing Rs 17.10 crore, is set to showcase the rich archaeological finds of the Sangam Age, including impressive brick constructions, ring wells, and workshops. Designed using local construction methods, the museum will replicate the culture and way of life of ancient Tamils, featuring exhibits on Vaigai and Keezhadi, agriculture, water management, attire, ornaments, sea commerce, and more.

To enhance accessibility,

a new website for Keezhadi will be launched, offering a virtual tour for those unable to visit the museum in person.

The museum in Gangaikonda Cholapuram will highlight the seafaring abilities, sea commerce, and ship-building skills of the Cholas during King Rajendra Cholan I's reign, who established the capital between 1012 and 1044 AD. Archaeological explorations have uncovered remarkable artifacts, including brick constructions, roof tiles, iron and copper artifacts, and porcelain tiles.

## Pentagon moves troops to southern border

AGENCIES WASHINGTON

The US Department of Defense is deploying 1,500 active-duty service members along with additional air and intelligence assets to the southern border to support enforcement operations already under way. Acting Secretary of Defense Robert Salesses made the announcement on Wednesday. "On Monday, to protect the security and safety of United States citizens, President Trump declared that a national emergency exists at the southern border

of the United States. The president directed me to take all appropriate action to support the activities of the secretary of homeland security in obtaining complete operational control of the southern border of the United States," the Pentagon said in a press release on Wednesday.

The Pentagon has established a task force to oversee the swift implementation of border-related executive orders. US Northern Command is leading the effort, supported by US Transportation Command, the

## HARYANA WAIVES RS 2,500-CR LOAN OF TWO LAKH SMEs

- Relief is designed to stimulate small-scale entrepreneurship
- CM says full planning done to implement Lado Lakshmi Yojana

TDG NETWORK CHANDIGARH

In a push to support the backbone of the state's economy and enhance social welfare, the Haryana Cabinet, led by Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, has announced a series of decisions, including a debt waiver scheme amounting to 2,500 crore aimed at two lakh small business owners. This financial relief is designed to stimulate small-scale entrepreneurship, providing a lifeline to those struggling under debt burdens.

In the realm of social welfare, the Cabinet has committed to extending the Lado Lakshmi Scheme, which focuses on the well-being of the girl child, with specific provisions to be outlined during the upcoming budget session.

After the cabinet meeting, Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini held a press conference where he shared the decisions taken in the cabinet meeting. The CM said, "Several agendas have been approved in the cabinet



"Taxpayers with outstanding amounts between Rs 10 lakh and Rs 10 crore, who are entangled in litigation, will also have their interest waived. Additionally, 50 per cent of their principal amount has been reduced, which they can pay in two instalments. Nayab Singh Saini Chief Minister, Haryana

meeting. Pension provisions have been made for all those employees whose departments were merged. All such former employees will be given an honorarium ranging from 6 to 20 thousand rupees."

CM Saini further explained, "The cabinet has made several important decisions today. It has been decided to provide an honorarium ranging from 6,000 to 20,000 rupees to all those former employees who were associated with HSMITC, CONFED, Haryana Minerals Limited, and other departments that have been merged."

On the environmental front, the approval of the Detailed Project Report for the Haryana Clean Air Project marks a major step forward. With an investment of about 3,647 crore, this project targets a pollution-free Haryana within six years, showcasing the government's dedication to environmental stewardship.

Further enhancing social security, amendments to the Haryana Disability

Pension Rules, 2016, have been passed, expanding pension benefits to include 10 additional disability categories. This initiative will extend aid to an additional 32,000 individuals, bringing the total number of beneficiaries to around 208,000, thereby reinforcing support for the disabled community.

Culturally, the decision to form the Chulkana Dham Board to develop a place of worship in Chulkana reflects the government's commitment to nurturing cultural and religious activities.

CM Saini discussed these initiatives, underlining the government's adherence to the promises made in the Sankalp Patra.

Asserting that the BJP government is committed to fulfilling the promises made in its manifesto, Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini Thursday said the government has made full planning to implement the Lado Lakshmi Yojana.

Ahead of the October

## India open to 'legitimate return' of Indians 'illegally' living in US: Jaishankar

AGENCIES WASHINGTON

Clarifying India's stance, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said New Delhi is open to the "legitimate return" of Indian nationals living 'illegally' abroad, including in the United States.

He affirmed that India's position on the issue has been "consistent" and "principled," and he did clearly convey this to US Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

"We have always taken the view that if there are any of our citizens who are not here legally, if we are sure that they are our citizens, we have always been open to their legitimate return to India. So it's not a position unique to the United States," Jaishankar said at a



press conference in Washington DC, on Wednesday (local time).

"I understand right now that there is a certain debate going on and a resulting sensitivity which is there. But we have been consistent; we have been very principled about it, and that remains our position, and I conveyed that very clearly to US State Secretary Marco Rubio," he added.

Jaishankar, however, also emphasised that India is

very much supportive of 'legal mobility' between two countries and wants Indian skills and talent to have great opportunities at the global level.

He added that India is firmly opposed to illegal migration, adding it is not "reputationally good" and also leads to several illegal activities.

"As a government, we obviously are very much supportive of legal mobility because we do believe in a global workplace. We want Indian talent and Indian skills to have the maximum opportunity at a global level," the EAM said.

"At the same time, we are also very firmly opposed to illegal mobility and illegal migration, because you also know that when something

## Over 200 people quarantined in Rajouri as mystery deepens

A common factor among victims is involvement of brain and damage to nervous system

AJAY JANDYAL RAJOURI/JAMMU

Over 200 individuals, who came in contact with the affected families of the 17 people who died due to the mysterious illness in Rajouri, have been quarantined as a precautionary measure, an official said on Thursday. Four people, including three sisters, have been



Authorities have sealed off homes of affected families and imposing prohibitory orders

shifted to hospitals, with three airlifted to a hospital in Jammu.

Top health officials have identified a common factor among all those who lost their lives in Badhaal village as involvement of the brain and damage to

the nervous system. A mysterious illness that has claimed 17 lives, including 13 children, in Badhaal village of Rajouri district over the past month and a half, triggering a health crisis.



## 97.3 million devotees take holy dip in 11 days

PRAYAGRAJ: In just 11 days of the Maha Kumbh, more than 97.3 million devotees, Kalpavasis and revered seers have taken a holy dip at the Triveni Sangam.

With this unprecedented turnout of devotees, the total number of participants expected to touch the 100 million mark by the end of today the 11th day of the festival.

As per the data of the Uttar Pradesh government, on Thursday as of now over 16.98 lakhs people took dip in the sacred confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and mystical Saraswati.

## Punjab Police withdrawn from Kejrival's security

TARUNI GANDHI CHANDIGARH

The Punjab Police personnel deployed for the security of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal in Delhi have been withdrawn following instructions from the Election Commission. Punjab DGP Gaurav Yadav confirmed the development, stating that the decision was taken in compliance with the poll panel's guidelines.

He further added that Punjab regularly receives reports about potential threats to Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and

## CEC stresses on role of tech in polls, cautions against fake narratives

TDG NETWORK NEW DELHI

Sounding a note of caution against fake narratives which erode trust in electoral processes, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar has said that such narratives are typically timed at crucial junctures of the election process to tar-



get its very vitals. The CEC was speaking at a two-day international conference 'Global Election Year 2024: Reiteration of Democratic Spaces; Takeaway for EMBs' in New Delhi. The Conference be-

gan on Thursday ahead of the National Voters Day.

The conference brings together representatives from Election Management Bodies (EMBs) of nearly 13 countries and international organizations.

In his keynote address, Rajiv Kumar reflected that 2024 was a defining year as a test



## THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON PAKISTAN-BANGLADESH RELATIONS

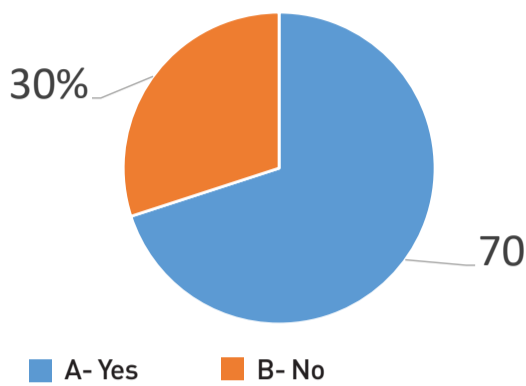
**59% of people believe that ISI and Bangladesh planning any major strategy at the Indian border before 26th January.**

Bangladesh's ties with Pakistan have warmed post-Hasina, but unresolved 1971 war issues and logistical barriers hinder progress.

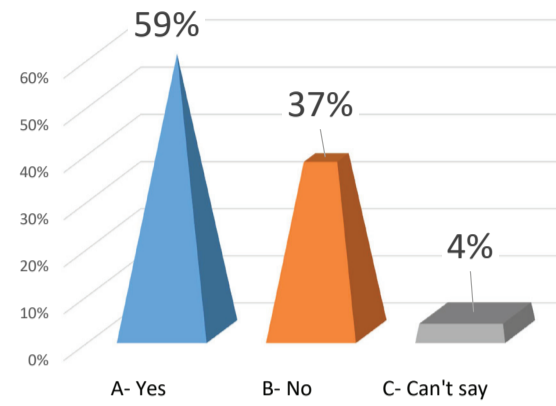
Interim leader Mohammad Yunus has prioritized Pakistan relations while distancing from India, raising New Delhi's concerns

over regional security. Balancing relations with India and Pakistan remains a key challenge for Dhaka.

**Q1. ► The ISI chief of Pakistan is reportedly planning a conspiracy with Bangladesh in Dhaka. Is this a big threat to India?**



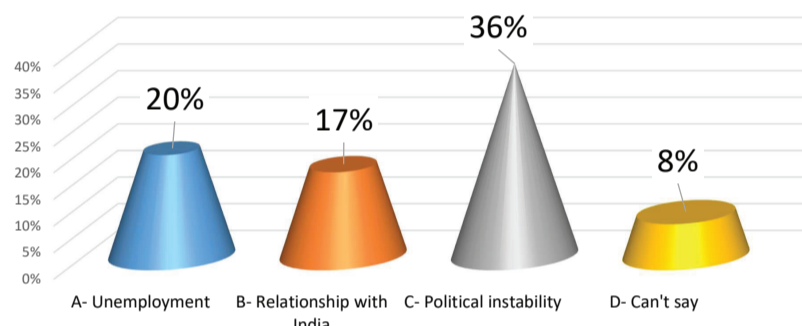
**Q2. ► Are ISI and Bangladesh planning any major strategy at the Indian border before 26th January?**



**Q3. ► Why is there such a strong closeness between Pakistan and Bangladesh?**

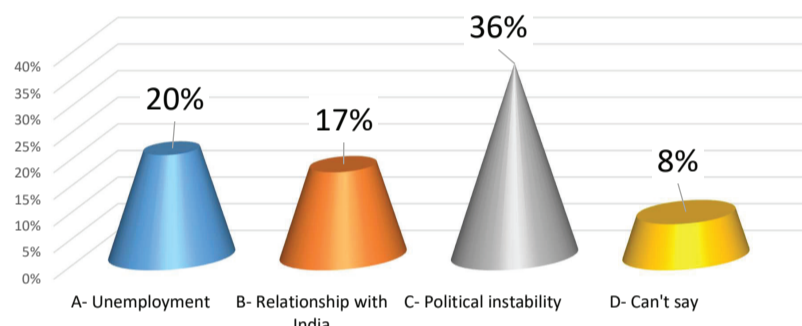
Why is there such a strong closeness between Pakistan and Bangladesh?

■ A- To corner India on both fronts ■ B- A shared anti-India agenda ■ C- Can't say



**Q4. ► After Sheikh Hasina leaves, what will be the biggest issue for Bangladesh?**

After Sheikh Hasina leaves, what will be the biggest issue for Bangladesh?



## THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON DONALD TRUMP IMMIGRATION LAW

**42% believe Trump's decision is right to change immigration laws.**

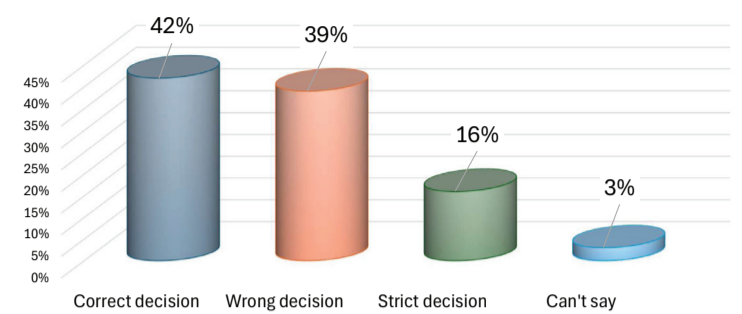
On January 22, 2025, the Republican-led House passed the Laken Riley Act, requiring the detention of unauthorised immigrants accused

of theft and violent crimes. Named after a murdered Georgia nursing student, the bill, supported by some Democrats, marks U.S. President

Donald Trump's first legislation and reflects the political shift toward stricter immigration policies following his election victory.

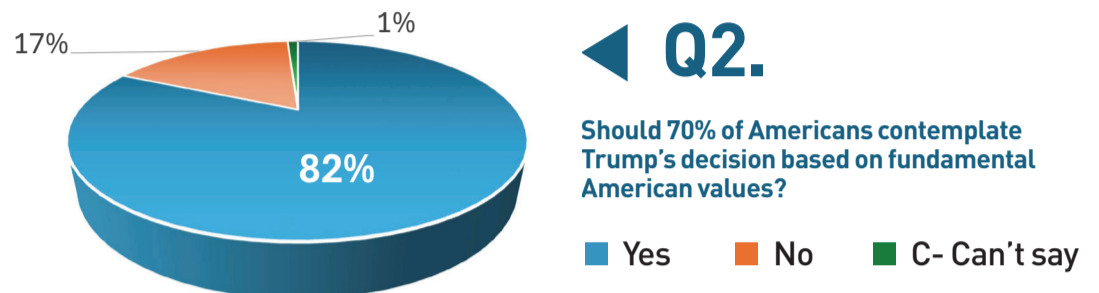
**Q1. ► How do you view Donald Trump's decision to change immigration laws?**

How do you view Donald Trump's decision to change immigration laws?



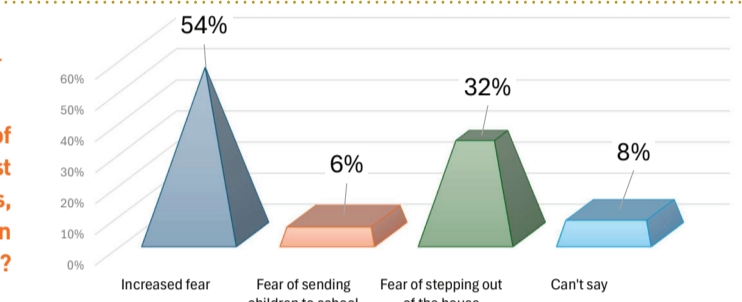
**Q2. ► Should 70% of Americans contemplate Trump's decision based on fundamental American values?**

Should 70% of Americans contemplate Trump's decision based on fundamental American values?



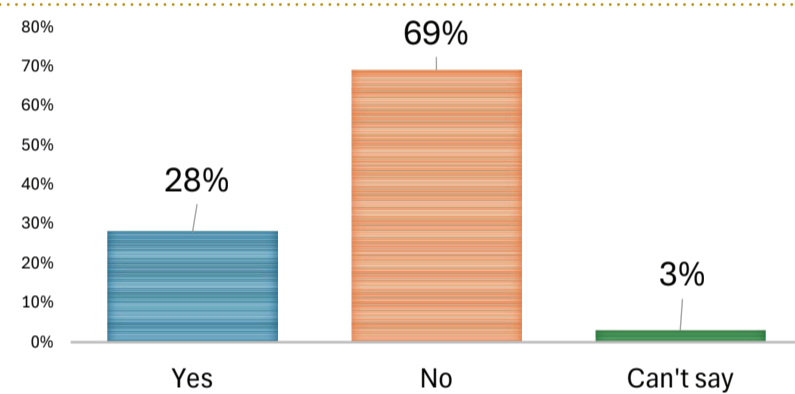
**Q3. ► What impact will the ability of immigration officers to arrest immigrants from schools, churches, and hospitals have on the immigrant population?**

What impact will the ability of immigration officers to arrest immigrants from schools, churches, and hospitals have on the immigrant population?



**Q4. ► Is Trump's decision to end the automatic citizenship of children born to immigrant parents on American soil right?**

Is Trump's decision to end the automatic citizenship of children born to immigrant parents on American soil right?



## US moves troops to southern border

CONTINUED FROM P1

National Guard Bureau, the military services, and the Department of Homeland Security.

The additional 1,500 active-duty service members authorized by Salesses will begin assisting with the placement of physical barriers and other border-related tasks within the next 24 to 48 hours, according to a senior military official. The contingent includes 1,000 soldiers and 500 Marines who had previously been on standby in Southern California for potential wildfire-related support during the Los Angeles County wildfires that broke out two weeks ago.

With 2,500 active-duty personnel already stationed in the region, the additional 1,500 troops will repre-



sent a 60 percent increase in active-duty forces since the president took office on Monday, Salesses noted in his statement.

"We anticipate that overall, on the southwest border, [active-duty personnel] will provide real-time situational awareness of persons, vehicles, vessels and aircraft, and they'll work with [US Customs and Border Protection] on operator-level maintenance, movement and staging of [CBP] assets," the senior military official said.

In addition to the ground personnel, the Department of Defense will provide air-

lift support for flights operated by the Department of Homeland Security to facilitate the deportation of over 5,000 individuals detained by CBP in the border sectors of San Diego and El Paso, Texas, Salesses added.

Notably, after being sworn in, Trump had announced that he would declare a "national emergency" at the southern border and send in the troops to stop the "disastrous invasion" of the country.

"First I will declare a national emergency at the southern border. All illegal entry will immediately be halted and we will begin the process of returning millions and millions of criminal aliens back to the place from which they came. We will reinstate my 'remain in Mexico' policy," Trump had said after taking oath.

CONTINUED FROM P1

Meanwhile, the condition of a young patient, Ejaaz, airlifted to PGI Chandigarh, is reported to be stable.

"This is an alarming situation requiring urgent action," said Dr. A. S. Bhatia, Principal of Government Medical College Hospital, Rajouri.

Local MLA and National Conference leader Javaid Iqbal Choudhary has called for the declaration of a medical emergency to curb the spread of the illness. "The government must act immediately to save lives and contain this outbreak," he

told reporters, urging the deployment of air ambulance services and better healthcare infrastructure in the region.

Authorities have declared Badhaal village a containment zone, sealing off the homes of affected families and imposing prohibitory orders on public and private gatherings. The containment measures have been divided into three zones:

Primary Zone: Homes of the deceased families, sealed under magistrate orders. Entry is strictly prohibited without official permission.

Secondary Zone: Families

in close contact with the affected are under continuous health monitoring. Tertiary Zone: All families in the village, where communal dining has been banned, and arrangements for food and water are being made.

Over 200 individuals, including relatives and those who participated in hospital visits and burials, have been relocated to a quarantine centre at a nursing college and GMC hospital in Rajouri.

Officials have implemented strict security measures, fencing off the facility and monitoring its occupants.

All individuals are screened before admission, and the aim is to break the chain of transmission.

A central team is investigating the outbreak, with over 230 samples sent to various institutes for analysis. The Special Investigation Team (SIT) formed by the police is probing the presence of neurotoxins found in the deceased, exploring potential criminal aspects. So far, more than 50 individuals have been questioned.

MLA Choudhary criticized the management of GMC Hospital in Jammu, alleging mismanagement in

handling the patients. "The children who were shifted to GMC Jammu are in critical condition, while the one taken to PGI Chandigarh is stable. We demand all patients be shifted to Chandigarh," he said.

Despite commending the efforts of the Rajouri district administration, police, and health department, Choudhary called for immediate intervention by higher authorities to address the crisis effectively.

As the situation unfolds, the people of Rajouri anxiously await answers and action to prevent further loss of life in the region.

## India open to 'legitimate returnees'

CONTINUED FROM P1

illegal happens, many other illegal activities get joined into it... this is not desirable. It's certainly not reputationally good... So we have with every country, and the US is no exception," he added.

The Foreign Minister, during his meeting with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, also pointed out the long waiting period for getting US visas and said it is not serving the relationship well.

"I also told him (Rubio) that, while we understand all of this, and I also accept

that these are autonomous processes, it is in our mutual interest to facilitate legal and mutually beneficial mobility. If it takes 400-odd-days waiting period to get a visa, I don't think the relationship is well served by this. So I think he also noted that point," he further said.

Notably, Jaishankar represented India at US President Donald Trump's inaugural function. He also carried a letter from Prime Minister Narendra Modi for President Trump. Donald Trump took the oath as the 47th US President on January 20.

## CEC stresses on role of tech

CONTINUED FROM P1

for EMBs for reaffirmation of democratic values amidst challenges and complexities. He emphasized the critical role of technology and digital innovations in enhancing efficiency, transparency and voter confidence. He added that while Technology offers significant opportunities, it also brings challenges like cybersecurity threats and misinformation.

According to an Election Commission release, he urged EMBs to streamline strategies for addressing these technological challenges to effectively mitigate the risks.

Nearly 30 representatives from the Election Management Bodies (EMBs) of 13 countries including Bhutan, Georgia, Namibia, Uzbekistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Ireland, Mauritius, Philippines, Russian Federation, Tunisia, and Nepal are attending the two-day international conference.

CEC Kumar also outlined key trends shaping the future of elections, including AI-driven processes, online and remote voting, biomet-

ric authentication and increased global collaboration and called all participants to explore the opportunities with technological advancements in making elections more transparent, inclusive and accessible. He underscored the role of EMBs in not only safeguarding electoral processes globally but also expanding their reach and impact, the statement added.

Speaking in the session on the role of technology in elections management - opportunities and challenges, Dasho Sonam Topgay, CEC of Bhutan, thanked India for providing EVMs and lauded the process efficiencies brought in by EVMs since their use in the election in Bhutan.

He added that EVMs have won the trust of people in Bhutan. Speaking on Digital IDs, Topgay said that Bhutan has a biometric Unified National ID which is used for voter authentication. He added that Bhutan is exploring the possibility of online voting in future elections.

Election Management Bodies from Uzbekistan, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Indonesia, Kazakhstan which made presentations on their electoral experience in 2024, placed their concerns regarding disinformation, misinformation and fake narratives on social media affecting electoral integrity in live elections.

CEC of Mauritius, Abdool Rahman, also stressed on the menace of fake news to undermine the electorate's trust in the EMBs. Highlighting a particular case of fake online applications for the recruitment of election staff, Rahman expressed concern on use of technology and social media in intensifying the menace of misinformation and disinformation during elections. A representative of the Electoral Commission of Namibia, while expressing concern about the rising trend of fake news, sought suggestions on tackling fake news on social media. Commissioner, General Election Commission of Indonesia, Idhan Holik spoke about their experience of using a dedicated What's App channel to tackle misinformation in real time.

## Haryana waives Rs 2,500-cr loan of two lakh SMEs

CONTINUED FROM P1

2024 Haryana polls, the BJP had promised Rs 2,100 as monthly financial assistance for all women under the Lado Lakshmi Yojna if the party returned to power. The BJP returned to power in the state for a third consecutive term.

Chief Minister Saini, when asked about the government's plans to implement the scheme, said, "It has been three months since the present government came to power. We have made its (the yojana's) full planning.

"The Budget Session is coming up and we will be making the provision of its budget. The BJP fulfils the promises it makes. Earlier too, we delivered what we promised," Saini said.

## Call on going solo in local polls at right time: Uddhav

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Thursday hinted that his party may contest the upcoming local bodies elections in the state on its own, stating that his cadres were keen on it and that he would decide on it at the appropriate time.

Hitting out at Union Home Minister Amit Shah for criticising Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) over its loss in the last year's assembly

elections, he said nobody should try to mess with his party, and dared the BJP to hold at least one election using ballot papers.

Addressing party workers on the 99th birth anniversary of Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray here, the former chief minister said he has been talking to the party rank and file in all municipal corporations and they want the party to contest in the upcoming local bodies polls independently.

## Punjab Police withdrawn...

CONTINUED FROM P1

Arvind Kejriwal. "We share such inputs with security agencies periodically. Moving forward, this information will now be shared with the Delhi Police," said Yadav.

The decision comes amid recent concerns raised by BJP leader Parvesh Verma over the presence of Pun-

jab-registered vehicles in Delhi. Verma questioned the identity and activities of individuals using these vehicles and alleged that their presence could pose a threat to security, especially with Republic Day celebrations approaching.

Verma's remarks sparked a strong response from the Aam Aadmi Party, which labeled the allegations as an

insult to Punjabis.

Earlier, the Delhi Police had written to the Punjab Police, seeking details of VIPs from Punjab currently present in the capital and their security arrangements. The Delhi Police stated that such information was crucial to ensuring proper security during the ongoing election period.

# NO FINANCIAL HELP FROM CENTRE FOR WAYANAD SO FAR, SAYS KERALA CM

Vijayan says state has received Rs 712 crore in its relief fund

TDG NETWORK  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Thursday informed the State Assembly that Rs 712 crore has been received in the relief fund so far in connection with the Wayanad landslide. The Chief Minister also clarified that no financial assistance has been received from the Central Government so far.

The Chief Minister told the Assembly that more help is expected as the Central Government has declared the disaster as a very severe disaster. Rs 2,221 crore has been requested from the Central Government. The Chief Minister also clarified to the House that it will not be possible to provide agricultural land to the disaster victims. "Land will be purchased for the township in Way-

## 'DISASTER OF SEVERE NATURE'

- The Chief Minister also told the Assembly that more help is expected as the Central Government has declared the disaster as a very severe disaster
- State has requested Rs 2, 221 crore from the Central Government.
- The Chief Minister said that it is a fact that the Central assistance has been delayed, but he still hopes to receive assistance.



anad and houses will be built here in such a way that an additional floor can be built in the future. Those who want to live outside the township being built by the government will be given Rs 15 lakh. The government will pay the rent of the houses until the resettlement is

completed. Money has been allocated for that," he said. The Chief Minister said that it is a fact that the Central assistance has been delayed, but he still hopes to receive assistance. The CM was responding to the questions raised by the Leader of the Opposition in

the House, VD Sathesan and Opposition MLAs. However, Sathesan alleged that the rehabilitation is uncertain. "Even six months after the disaster, the injured have not been provided with medical assistance. The treatment of the seriously injured, in-

cluding those who are seriously injured, is being done by taking money from their own pockets," the LoP said. He alleged that the estimated cost of Rs 30 lakh for the construction of the house is high and that many sponsors are withdrawing. Many are willing to build houses at a cost of 20 lakh or below that, he said. The Chief Minister explained that the cost of Rs 30 lakh for the construction of the house is a preliminary estimate. The cost will come down when the houses are built together.

It is hoped that when that happens, the cost can be brought down to Rs 20 lakh. The Chief Minister clarified that a letter was sent to all the MPs of the country asking for help in the disaster and that he asked everyone for Rs 1 crore each.

## Security forces seize Maoist training camp in Bijapur

TDG NETWORK  
BIJAPUR

In a major success, security forces have taken control of a Maoist training camp in the core area of PLGA Battalion No. 01 in the dense forests of Bhattiguda, Bijapur district.

The camp was left abandoned by the Maoists, who fled during the army's search operation.

The joint operation was carried out by CoBRA units 201, 204, and 210. Security personnel on Tuesday, where security forces stormed their camps and demolished the Naxal martyr memorial.

The Naxal's training camp had tall trees prepared for training purposes, trenches, and various other resources. It also housed permanent barracks and huts used by the Maoists.

Officials have called the operation a major blow to Maoist activities in the region and a step towards dismantling their infrastructure. Security forces have reaffirmed their commitment to ensur-



Security personnel return after an encounter in which 16 naxals were killed on January 21, in Gariaband on Wednesday. ANI

## Operation over, neutralised Naxals being identified: Police on Gariaband encounter

TDG NETWORK  
GARIABAND

Following the encounter by the security forces in Chhattisgarh's Gariaband district, the police confirmed that the operation is complete and 16 naxals were neutralised. Superintendent of Police Nikhil Khecha also informed that two jawans also sustained injuries are receiving treatment.

"The operation is over. 16 Naxals have been killed in the encounter. We have recovered a large number of arms and am-

munition. We are identifying the naxals neutralised. Two of the jawans were injured, they are presently under treatment," Gariaband SP Nikhil Khecha said to the media.

The operation, carried out jointly by the Chhattisgarh Police, CRPF, and Odisha's Special Operations Group (SOG) started on Sunday, and led to the recovery of a large cache of arms and ammunition, including AK-47s, SLRs, INSAS rifles, and other automatic weapons from the site.

ing peace and stability in the region.

Meanwhile, a recent encounter in Chhattisgarh's Gariaband took place where bodies of 16 naxals were recovered following an encounter with the security forces, the Chhattisgarh Chief Minister highlighted the achievements of the security forces and their success in dealing with the Maoist threat, emphasising the government's commitment to eliminating Naxalism in the state.

The operation, which was started on Sunday, also saw senior cadres of Maoists dead and a large quantity of weapons, including automatic weapons like SLR rifles, recovered. Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Tuesday reaffirmed the state's strong stance in eradicating Maoism, describing it as cancer to society. Speaking to the media on the recent encounter in Chhattisgarh's Gariaband where bodies of 16 naxals were recovered following an encounter with the security forces.

## Massive blaze at labour camp at Pune engulfs 5 shanties

TDG NETWORK  
PUNE

A fire broke out at a labour camp in the Sangvi area of Pimpri Chinchwad city in the Pune district, said officials on Thursday.

According to the Pimpri Chinchwad Fire Department, the massive fire caused significant damage, resulting in the loss of cash, and jewellery worth around Rs 10 lakh, the lifetime savings of the labourers.

Fire Officer Gautam Ingawale, present at the scene, reported that four fire vehicles from the Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) Main Fire Station and Rahatani Fire Station were dispatched to extinguish the blaze. The official said that in total, five shanties were gutted in the fire incident. No casualties or injuries have been reported from the fire incident. Further details on the matter are awaited.

## BJP wants to silence opposition, says Chhattisgarh ex-CM Baghel

TDG NETWORK  
RAIPUR

Former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister and Congress leader Bhupesh Baghel on Thursday accused the BJP of attempting to stifle opposition voices in the state. Baghel highlighted the case of senior Congress leader Kawasi Lakhma, who was reportedly targeted by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) following his vocal criticism of corruption. Speaking to the media Baghel said, "BJP wants to silence the voice of the opposition. Kawasi Lakhma (former Chhattisgarh minister) is a senior leader, he is a six-time MLA. He is the voice of Bastar. He has been repeatedly raising his voice against corruption and raised issues in Vidhan Sabha...He raised a question in Vidhan Sabha and ED reached his home eight days later...There are municipal elections and Panchayati Raj elections in Chhattisgarh. That's why he has been sent to jail."

"The same thing happened with Devendra Yadav (Bhilai Nagar MLA in Chhattisgarh). The efforts to silence the choice of opposition in



Baghel highlighted the case of senior Congress leader Kawasi Lakhma, who was reportedly targeted by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) following his vocal criticism of corruption.

the democracy show the dictatorship," the Congress leader added.

Earlier on January 16, a day after ED arrested former Chhattisgarh Excise Minister and Congress leader Kawasi Lakhma in an alleged liquor scam, Bhupesh

Baghel stated that the probe agency could not even recover even a penny from the latter's house.

He also claimed that Lakhma exposed corruption in a project which was approved without the sanction of the particular department.

Lakhma is accused of allegedly receiving a substantial amount in cash on a monthly basis out of proceeds of crime generated from the alleged liquor scam. He is the sixth person arrested in this case.

As per the agency, Lakhma was allegedly the main recipient of proceeds of crime in cash during his regime as excise minister. ED investigation into the liquor scam, which ran between 2019 to 2022, revealed that proceeds of crime were generated as illegal commission which was generated in multiple ways.

The agency has claimed that bribe was collected from the distillers per 'case' of liquor procured from them by the Chhattisgarh State Marketing Corporation Limited (CSMCL), a state body for the purchase and sale of liquor.

## Man held for murdering wife, boiling body parts in cooker in Telangana

TDG NETWORK  
RANGAREDDY

A shocking murder case has surfaced in Venkateswara Colony under Meerpet Police Station limits in Rangareddy district.

The investigation revealed that a man allegedly killed his wife and reportedly boiled some body parts in a cooker while disposing of others in a nearby lake. Meerpet Police have registered a case and are investigating the incident.

DCP, LB Nagar, stated, "A missing case was reported on January 17. In that case, the husband is self-claiming that he killed his wife. We are continuing the investigation. As of now, we are not finalizing the death. The husband claimed that he killed his wife with a knife, chopped

DCP, LB Nagar, stated, "A missing case was reported on January 17. In that case, the husband is self-claiming that he killed his wife.

and the body parts, and threw them into the lake. We have to find out the truth, and the investigation is ongoing."

The case came into light, when case of a woman gone missing was registered at Jillelaguda under Meerpet Police Station limits in the Rangareddy district. The mother of the victim had filed a missing complaint. In her complaint the lady stated that her daughter who was married thirteen years ago

and staying with her husband was missing.

According to Inspector Police Meerpet, Nagaraju, "On the 18th of this month, a lady named Subamma gave a missing complaint that her daughter Madhavi, who got married thirteen years ago with Gurumurthy, a retired army employee and currently working as a security guard in Kanchanbagh, had gone missing. For the last five years, both the wife and husband have been living with their two children in Meerpet Police Station limits in Venkateswara Colony. On the 16th of this month, the complainant's daughter Madhavi and her husband Gurumurthy argued over some issue and walked out of the house. We have registered a case and are investigating the matter."

## KTR hits back at Revanth Reddy for 'worker's mindset' jibe at him

TDG NETWORK  
HYDERABAD

Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) working president and MLA KT Rama Rao hit out at Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for purportedly labelling him an IT employee with a "worker's mindset."

BRS Working President and MLA KT Rama Rao took to X and said that being part of the IT industry requires genuine talent, education, skill, and dedication.

He stated that IT professionals across the world earn their livelihood through hard work and ingenuity.

"To those who think they can belittle me by calling me just an IT employee, I say: being part of the IT industry takes genuine talent, education, skill, and dedication... Unlike carrying bags of cash to bribe MLAs or paying Delhi bosses for a job," KTR said in a post on X.

"IT professionals across the world earn their livelihood through hard work and ingenuity. To my fellow brothers and sisters in the IT and ITES industry, I salute you. Your tireless



efforts and brilliant minds are the backbone of the modern tech world. Without you, the wheels of innovation and progress would grind to a halt," he added.

Further taking a dig at Revanth Reddy, he said, "Let's be honest: some accidental politicians can't hold a candle to your educational credentials or your work ethic. And we're all paying the price for their half-baked policies."

KTR said that he is 'unapologetically' proud of his roots, education, and work experience. "I'm unapologetically proud of my roots, my education, my work experience, my tech background, and my comrades," he said.

This comes after Telangana CM, during an interview with a private news channel from Davos, reportedly said that Rama Rao had worked in an IT firm earlier, "probably as a computer data operator," and had an IT employee "worker mindset," speaking like an employee.

He claimed that he, on the other hand, was a politician, a leader, and a policymaker and said that he "need not know everything" since there were experienced officials to take his instructions whenever he wanted to make policies.

The remarks soon triggered harsh reactions in the political circle of Telangana.

## Was attack real or was he acting: Maharashtra minister Rane stirs row over attack on Saif

TDG NETWORK  
PUNE

Maharashtra Minister Nitesh Rane has sparked another row after he made controversial remarks on attack on Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan.

In a fresh statement, the BJP leader has raised questions on the attack on Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan suspecting if the attack on the actor was real or if Khan



was just acting. Rane while addressing a public gathering in Maha-

ashtra's Pune, raised questions on attack on Saif saying - "I doubted whether he had been stabbed or he was acting."

"Look at what Bangladeshis are doing in Mumbai. They entered Saif Ali Khan's house. Earlier they used to stand at the crossings of the roads, now they have started entering houses. Maybe he came to take him (Saif) away. It is good, garbage should be taken away. I saw when he

came out of the hospital, I doubted whether he had been stabbed or he was acting. He was dancing while walking," Rane said.

Moreover, Rane also targeted the NCP (SP) leaders Supriya Sule and Jitendra Awhad saying that these leaders are only worried about Saif Ali Khan, Shah Rukh Khan's son and Nawab Malik and do not come forward when a Hindu actor is tortured.

## Mumbai school receives bomb threat, police team dispatched to probe

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

A school in the Jogeshwari-Oshiwara area of Mumbai received a bomb threat on Thursday, police said.

Acting on the bomb threat email, emergency response teams were dispatched to the school. "The local law enforcement, along with an explosive detection team dispatched to launch a thorough investigation at the school to ensure the safety of the students and staff," said Mumbai Police.

## Malegaon blasts case: Pragma seeks more time for court appearance

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

An application was filed before the special NIA court by the lawyers of former BJP MP Pragma Singh Thakur, accused in the Malegaon 2008 blasts case, requesting a delay in her court appearance due to a sudden adverse medical condition.

The court had earlier issued a bailable warrant against her for non-appearance. However, in light of her medical condition, the court decided to keep the warrant in abeyance. Thakur has been given time to appear

before the court on or before January 30.

Her lawyers informed the court that Thakur's health condition prevented her from attending the hearing, and the court accepted this as the reason for her absence.

Previously, in November, a special National Investigation Agency (NIA) court issued a bailable warrant against BJP MP Pragma Singh Thakur in connection with the 2008 Malegaon blast case. Thakur, an accused in the case, failed to appear for court proceedings, prompting the court to demand her presence.



The warrant was "returnable" by November 13, meaning Thakur was required to appear before the court by that date to have the warrant cancelled. Her continued

absence could further complicate the legal proceedings and delay the trial.

In earlier court sessions, Thakur's lawyer had applied for an exemption from her appearance, citing medical reasons, specifically her struggle with cervical spondylitis and migraines. The court had granted exemptions based on her medical reports, though it raised concerns that her absences were "hampering" proceedings and "delaying" the trial's progress. Meanwhile, in August, the Supreme Court declined the plea filed by Sameer Kulkarni, one of the accused in the 2008 Malegaon

bomb blast case, challenging the sanction for his prosecution under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

Kulkarni, along with six others, including BJP MP Pragma Singh Thakur and Lieutenant Colonel Prasad Purohit, is facing trial for the Malegaon blast.

On September 29, 2008, six people were killed and several others injured when an explosive device strapped to a motorcycle detonated near a mosque in Malegaon city, Nashik. The case was initially investigated by the Maharashtra ATS before being transferred to the NIA in 2011.



## 'AAP TURNED DELHI INTO 'GARBAGE DUMP', SETTLED BANGLADESHIS, ROHINGYAS'

Yogi alleged that in a well-planned conspiracy, AAP deprived Delhiites of basic facilities and jeopardised national security.

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday assailed the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), saying its government has turned Delhi into a "garbage dump" and "den of chaos" while helping illegal Bangladeshis and Rohingyas to settle down in the national capital. Addressing his first rally in the Kirari area for the February 5 Delhi Assembly polls, Adityanath alleged that in a well-planned conspiracy, AAP deprived Delhiites of basic facilities and jeopardised national security

## YOGI CRITICIZES AAP

- Yogi highlighted better infrastructure in UP, including cheaper and more reliable electricity.
- Yogi blamed AAP for neglecting development projects and spreading misinformation.
- Kejriwal defended AAP's 24-hour electricity supply in Delhi, questioning power cuts in UP.



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath along with BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj, BJP candidate for Karol Bagh constituency Dushyant Kumar Gautam and others show a victory sign during a public meeting for the Delhi Assembly Elections 2025, in New Delhi on Thursday. ANI

with their actions.

He also accused AAP's councillors and MLAs of being complicit in the entire plot, adding that AAP convener and former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal has committed the crime of converting the Yamuna into a "dirty drain".

"Yesterday, I along with all my ministers took a holy dip at the Sangam in Prayagraj where Maha Kumbh is on. I want to ask Kejriwal whether he can bathe in the Yamuna in Delhi along with his ministers. He should answer if he has any moral courage," Yogi said in Kirari.

The chief minister alleged that the devotees and saints

in holy Mathura-Vrindavan are also victims of AAP's "sins" of AAP as "Mother Yamuna" reaches there in the form of a dirty drain.

He alleged that "Arvind Kejriwal and company" never cooperated for the cleanliness of the Yamuna under the Namami Gange project.

They do not want to cooperate or undertake development works and provide basic facilities, Yogi charged. "Their (AAP) only job is to spread lies and videos through social media and press conferences to mislead the people."

The UP chief minister held three rallies in Kirari, Karol Bagh and Janakpuri

in the national capital on Thursday.

Taking a dig at Kejriwal, Yogi said there is an "ATM machine of lies" in Delhi.

He also slammed AAP alleging poor condition of roads, lack of sanitation, problems of drinking water and sewer overflows in the national capital.

Yogi further claimed that the UP roads in Noida and Ghaziabad are far better than in the national capital.

He said the per unit charge of electricity in UP for an ordinary consumer is not more than Rs 3-3.50 while it is Rs 9-10 per unit

in Delhi. It means they (Delhi) are charging three times more money than UP but they are unable to provide a 24-hour power

FIGHT FOR CAPITAL  
DELHI ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2025

supply, he added. Adityanath urged people to defeat those who are playing with them, making Delhi filthy and playing with national security. They have no right to come back to power,

## Kejriwal biggest liar, AAP broke all records of corruption: Nadda

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

BJP president J P Nadda on Thursday called AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal the "biggest liar" as he targeted the party's government in Delhi over its alleged failure to fulfil its promises and corruption during its 10-year tenure. If a competition of lying is organised at the national level, Kejriwal would come first, Nadda said at a public meeting in Uttam Nagar here, hitting the campaign trail for the upcoming Delhi Assembly polls.

The Union minister listed the excise policy case, in which several AAP leaders including Kejriwal were arrested, among "scams" of the Delhi government. The AAP cut pockets of everyone in Delhi during its two consecutive terms, the BJP leader charged.

The AAP government broke all records of corruption during its 10-year rule in Delhi, Nadda told the gathering.

"Waqf Board scam... they did not even spare Muslims.



They committed a scam worth Rs 100 crore (in Waqf Board)," he claimed.

Nadda termed Kejriwal the "biggest liar".

"He lies with so much innocence on his face and misleads everyone that if a competition of lying is organised at the national level, he will come first. But the people of Delhi will give a befitting reply to the AAP in the assembly polls," the BJP leader said.

He said the AAP government failed to fulfil its promise of providing clean water to the people of Delhi and was involved in corruption.

"The 'aapda' (disaster) talked about education for 10 years but was instead involved in a liquor scam of a whopping Rs 2,800 crore. In (the Delhi) Jal Board, they committed a scam of Rs 28,000 crore and left the people of Delhi in the hands

of tanker mafia," Nadda claimed, referring to the AAP.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi first referred to the AAP as "aapda" at his maiden rally in the capital ahead of the polls.

"They promised to clean the Yamuna river but were involved in a scam worth Rs 7,000 to Rs 8,000 crore. They cheated sanitary workers and Kejriwal obstructed the implementation of central government schemes.

"They talk about schools and classrooms but you will be surprised to know that they were involved in a scam of Rs 1,300 crore in the construction of classrooms," Nadda alleged.

Nadda said whatever Delhi has got in the last 10 years is from the central government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and "not anyone else".

## EMPOWERED FUTURE



Tableau of Women and Child Development Ministry on display during the full dress rehearsal for the Republic Day Parade 2025 at the Kartavya Path, in New Delhi. ANI

## Dikshit alleges 'scam' in AAP's COVID medical procurement

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Congress candidate for the upcoming Delhi Assembly Polls Sandeep Dikshit on Thursday raised serious allegations against the Aam Aadmi Party-led Delhi government, accusing it of a massive scam in the procurement of essential medical supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Speaking to ANI, Dikshit mentioned a writ petition filed in court that claims that 80-90 per cent of the budget meant for purchasing critical medicines and equipment was funnelled into the pockets of just a few companies.

"These are not my allegations. A writ petition has been filed in the court regarding a case. It reveals that there was a massive scam in the procurement of medicines within the Delhi government. The most disturbing part is that during COVID, 80-90 per cent of the budget allocated for purchasing medicines went



into the pockets of just 4-5 companies," he said.

"In this, the Delhi government purchased 4,000 oxygen concentrators from one company. During the COVID crisis, when patients couldn't be shifted to ventilators, oxygen concentrators were used to provide relief. The government ordered 4,000 concentrators and made the payment, but only 500 were supplied. Due to the shortage of 3,500 concentrators, if 200 people died, AAP's corruption directly contributed to that loss.

It was also revealed that the N95 masks, which were crucial during that time, were not supplied as per

the order. Several other machines were also ordered, and payments were made, but it's unclear where they went," the Congress leader said.

Sharpening his attacks, Sandeep Dikshit said that during a pandemic like COVID, when ordinary people were risking their lives to help each other, AAP was making money from small things like these.

Earlier on June 18, Bharatiya Janata Party Delhi Chief Virendra Sachdeva claimed that the income of AAP Chief Arvind Kejriwal increased by 40 per cent during the COVID period in 2020-21.

## Police seizes drugs worth more than Rs 20 cr

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police have seized drugs worth over Rs 20 crores and made arrests ahead of the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections, as part of a series of measures to enforce the Model Code of Conduct (MCC), confirmed Delhi police.

According to an official statement, authorities registered 504 cases for MCC violations between January 7 and January 22, with 17,879 people arrested. Additionally, large quantities of illicit liquor, unlicensed arms, and cash have been seized, underscoring the intensified security and law enforcement efforts ahead of the February 5 elections.

Delhi Police also informed that 270 unlicensed arms and 372 cartridges were seized, and 44,256 litres of liquor valued at more than Rs 1.3 crores has been seized so far since the implementation of MCC in Delhi. Cash

## NGT rejects plea for star rating on vehicle efficiency, emissions

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal has dismissed a plea for the implementation of a star rating system for all passenger vehicles, based on fuel efficiency and CO2 emission, holding it non-maintainable. On January 17, the tribunal's bench comprising judicial member Sudhir Agarwal and expert member A Senthil V examined the matter and held the Energy Conservation Act was not one of the statutes mentioned in Schedule I of NGT Act.

It therefore said the Energy Conservation Act, 2001 was not within the tribunal's ambit.

The NGT was hearing a plea saying the star rating



system, an effective mechanism to curb air pollution, was introduced across the developed nations.

Schedule I has seven laws, Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess Act, Forest (Conservation) Act, Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, Environment (Protection) Act, Public Liability Insurance Act and Biological Diversity Act. The tribunal observed the applicant was unable to dispute the fact.

"Since it is not one of the statutes mentioned, the relief prayed for is not within the domain of the tribunal. Application is accordingly

dismissed, as not maintainable," it held.

In September last year, the tribunal sought a response on the issue from the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises.

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## MCOCA case: Delhi Police alleges Naresh Balyan's role in crime

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

In opposing the bail plea of AAP MLA Naresh Balyan in the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) case, Delhi Police revealed that the investigation uncovered the involvement of Balyan and his absconding associates in organised

crime.

They allegedly conspired to dispute the legitimate properties of witnesses to gain financial or other undue advantages.

The accused, along with his associate Kapil Sangwan (alias Nandu), reportedly threatened the rightful owners of these properties to coerce them into selling

at significantly lower prices than those agreed upon in the sale contracts.

The applicant, Naresh Balyan, is said to have used agreements in the name of an absconding individual, Umed Singh, who has been evading arrest since Balyan's detention.

Following the agreements, Balyan would manipulate

the properties into disputed status, enlisting Sangwan to intimidate the legitimate sellers.

The Trial Court issued a non-bailable warrant against Umed Singh, and statements from public witnesses have been recorded to support these claims, stated Delhi Police in its reply filed opposing Balyan's bail plea.

## Delhi cyber criminals siphoned off Rs 4,900 cr abroad, says ED

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate Thursday said two Delhi-based "cyber criminals" siphoned off more than Rs 4,900 crore abroad by "misusing" special economic zone (SEZ) facilities. The two accused -- Punit Kumar alias Puneet Maheshwari alias John, a resident of Moti Nagar area, and Ashish Kakkar alias Pablo, a resident of Greater Kailash -- were arrested by the federal agency last year as part of this investigation.

On January 17, ED in a statement said a provisional or-



der was issued to attach nine residential flats in Delhi and a parcel of agricultural land in Rewari, Haryana, in the name of the two people and their families.

The ED said it got on to the case after taking cognisance

of multiple police FIRs registered across the country against people involved in crimes like online gaming fraud, multi-level marketing schemes and investment scams, including part-time job

frauds, online shopping and

fake loans disbursement frauds through mobile apps.

These "scams" were perpetrated through various "fraud" websites and apps like upbitro.com (instead of original upbit.com) and a betting website www.taj777.com created by companies based in island nations like Curacao, Malta, and Cyprus, as per the agency. It said more than 200 companies, registered in the names of the two accused, were used for "layering" the proceeds of crime. These firms were also registered in the name of their employees like office boys, drivers, and sweepers.



## TRUMP'S SWAGGER &amp; TENSION IN WORLD!

Donald Trump is wielding a double-edged sword in his second term: What will change?

## OPINION

DR VIJAY DARDA



Donald Trump is all set to assume the US presidency for the second time today. Much has changed in the world since he handed over power to Joe Biden at the end of his first term, but Trump's fiery demeanor remains intact. In fact, even before assuming the office this time, he has started brandishing a double-edged sword with statements so bold that the world is left wondering what will happen if Trump actually delivered on his words. Trump's swagger has undeniably caused a fair amount of tension across the world!

Even before assuming power, Trump made a sensational statement about Canada, suggesting that it should become the 51st state of the United States. While the motive behind his comment remains unclear, the statement

caused a political earthquake in Canada. Already on Trump's radar, Justin Trudeau, who had been accused of harbouring terrorists, had to step down from power. For context, Canada's land area is over 1,50,000 square kilometres larger than the US. Both nations are founding members of NATO and have mutual defence agreements. Given these dynamics, how could the US possibly "absorb" Canada? However, Trump has a strategy of imposing heavy taxes, a move that could bring Canada to its knees. He has already issued this threat before assuming office.

A similar statement by Trump regarding Greenland has stirred controversy. He declared that if Denmark doesn't relinquish control of Greenland, the US will impose heavy tariffs. Though 85% of Greenland is covered by thick ice, it is rich in mineral resources. Greenland Prime Minister Mute Egede outright rejected the idea of aligning with the US but expressed readiness for greater co-operation. Consider this: Greenland's population is less than 57,000. Winning over such a small population doesn't seem like an impossible task. Denmark too, realises that opposing

Trump won't be easy, leaving negotiation as the only viable option.

By announcing his plans to rename the Gulf of Mexico as the 'Gulf of America', Trump has made it clear that his approach towards Mexico will remain as aggressive as before. During his first term, he had warned about building a wall on the border, and when the Pope criticised him, Trump bluntly responded that the matter was none of the Pope's business! To tighten the reins on China, controlling Mexico is essential for Trump, as China uses factories in Mexico to manufacture goods and openly sell them in the US. This indicates that the tension with Mexico is likely to escalate further.

Immediately after his second poll victory, Trump declared that Israel and Hamas must end their war before he assumes office. This fear of Trump's influence led to a ceasefire. Trump is a staunch supporter of Israel. During his first term, he recognised Jerusalem as Israel's capital and relocated the US embassy there. Regarding the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Trump may not support Ukraine as generously as Biden did. It is widely believed that Trump shares a better understanding with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Time will reveal how their relations evolve.

From a diplomatic perspective, India could emerge as the US' most significant partner against China. Trump's closeness with Prime Minister Narendra Modi is well



*Whether one agrees with Trump's harsh approach or not, ignoring him is virtually impossible.*

known. However, under his 'America First' policy, Trump might take steps that prioritise the US interests, which might discomfort India. During his first term, he expressed displeasure over India's high taxes on Harley-Davidson motorcycles and retaliated by imposing hefty tariffs on several Indian goods. Now, Trump may pressurise India into prioritising the US in defence deals thereby implying potential consequences if it doesn't comply. Trump's stringent policies on H-1B visas are likely to have an impact on India, as the country is a major beneficiary of these

visas. Moreover, Trump has stated that he does not agree with the policy of granting citizenship based solely on birth in the US. These critical issues raise questions about whether Trump will offer India any concessions. However, in matters concerning China, India meets the criteria of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend". Therefore, we can hope for the better.

But Trump is Trump! His leadership style remains as unpredictable as ever. At 78, he has held over 200 rallies, exuding youthful energy. He has carefully chosen his team members, such as Elon Musk, whose

SpaceX faced a setback with its Starship aircraft crash, yet Musk remained unfazed. Trump's swagger is evident: When the judiciary made certain remarks, he boldly declared that the President holds ultimate power. Even at his inauguration, he has invited only select nations, excluding Pakistan -- a country long considered an ally of the US. This snub has led to an uproar in Pakistan, questioning its global standing.

Trump is returning with full swagger, bearing the weight of a decisive victory. He understands the need to make bold moves that align with his signature style.

Welcome, Mr Trump!.

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## Biting the bullet: Why India must adopt stringent food regulations

## OPINION

DR FAUZIA KHAN



*"Excessive sugar and salt are silent architects of our nation's health crisis, constructing a future burdened by preventable diseases."*

India is standing at a crucial juncture in its fight against non-communicable diseases (NCDs). The nation faces an alarming rise in lifestyle-related ailments, with cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and hypertension becoming increasingly common. These conditions, often exacerbated by excessive sugar and salt consumption, are not merely health challenges but also substantial economic burdens. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), NCDs account for 63% of all deaths in India, with dietary risks playing a significant role. This calls for urgent regulatory action to curb the excessive consumption of these dietary villains.

to over 1.6 million deaths annually in India. Similarly, diabetes has reached epidemic proportions, with the International Diabetes Federation projecting 134 million cases in India by 2045 if current trends persist. These conditions impose a staggering economic burden. The World Economic Forum estimates that India could lose \$4.58 trillion between 2012 and 2030 due to NCDs, underscoring the need for immediate action.

## THE CASE FOR REGULATION

Voluntary industry initiatives have proven insufficient in India, necessitating stronger regulatory frameworks. Policies restricting the advertisement and sales of high-sugar and high-salt products, especially to vulnerable groups like children, can yield significant health benefits. A multi-pronged approach, including mandatory front-of-pack labeling, advertising restrictions, and taxation on unhealthy products, can effectively address the issue.

Brazil's success with front-of-pack warning labels and Mexico's implementation of a sugar tax offer compelling evidence of the efficacy of such measures. Post-implementation, Brazil witnessed a 14% decline in the sales of high-calorie products, while Mexico reported a 7.6% reduction in sugary drink consumption in the first year of its sugar tax.

## THE WAY FORWARD

For India, the first step is to draft a comprehensive policy framework inspired by global best practices but adapted to local contexts. Public awareness campaigns, akin to those for tobacco control, can play a crucial role in changing consumption patterns. Simultaneously, incentivising manufacturers to innovate healthier alternatives through subsidies or tax breaks can drive industry-wide change.

Legislation targeting excessive sugar and salt must also be backed by robust enforcement mechanisms. Collaborating with state governments, healthcare professionals, and civil society organisations can ensure widespread compliance and public acceptance.

## CONCLUSION

India's battle against excessive sugar and salt consumption is not just a health imperative but a socio-economic necessity. Learning from Singapore and other countries, India must act decisively to protect its population from the dual threats of sugar and salt. Enacting stringent laws, coupled with public education and industry engagement, can pave the way for a healthier future. After all, a nation's strength lies in the health of its people, and the time to act is now.

*Dr Fauzia Khan, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha)*

## Waiting to be told: A film on the women warriors of India

## OPINION

RAJESH TALWAR



More than forty years ago, in 1982 the film director Richard Attenborough made a film called 'Gandhi'. The film garnered multiple Oscars for itself besides being a huge success at the global box office. Indians were proud that one of their own great leaders had been showcased, but they also felt a twinge of sadness that it was a Britisher who had made the film, not an Indian. The actor Naseeruddin Shah, understanding how securing the lead role could be the opportunity of a lifetime and could set his career on a different trajectory altogether, auditioned for it. Unfortunately for him, that role went to the British actor Ben Kingsley who, as it happened, performed brilliantly and received the Oscar that year for best actor.

Sixteen years later, in 1998,

India had cinematic revenge when an Indian film maker Shekhar Kapur directed 'Elizabeth' which secured multiple nominations and awards at the Academy Awards including an Oscar for its lead actress Cate Blanchett. Indians could now console themselves by saying that if a British film director had made a film on an Indian icon, Shekhar Kapur, an Indian film director had made a brilliant, award-winning film on a British queen.

How did Shekhar Kapur get the opportunity to direct Elizabeth in the first place? It was because four years previously, in 1994, he directed a film called 'Bandit Queen' based on the life story of Phoolan Devi. It caught the imagination of people across the world. A female bandit, taking revenge against landlords that had paraded her naked, gripped the public imagination. That the bandit happened to be from India made it all the more fascinating. The *New York Times* described it as 'an action-adventure film that defied credibility despite its truth.' The film garnered multiple awards and cemented Shekhar Kapur's reputation as a film maker.



Despite the accolades, Bandit Queen did not, however, set the box office on fire in India although it did excellent business in the US and Canada. This was not entirely unexpected. Furthermore, as a bandit, the character Phoolan Devi could not serve as a role model for Indian girls. This did not, however, mean that role models for girls did not exist in India. Possibly the biggest role model was Indira Gandhi a female prime minister of one of the most populous nations in the world. Across South Asia there were other female leaders who served as role models: Benazir Bhutto as the Prime Minister of Pakistan, and both Sheikh Hasina and Begum Khaleda Zia as prime ministers of Bangladesh during different periods in that troubled nation's life.

While all the aforesaid distinguished prime ministers deserve plaudits for making their way to the very top in a patriarchal society there is one problem in their becoming a role model for ordinary girls from humble

background. What is the problem? The problem is that all four women came from elite backgrounds. The women were all daughters of powerful men.

Could we not have an inspiring film that would feature a woman who came from a humble, modest background? There was the film 'Mary Kom' played by Priyanka Chopra, but such a film did not really have the possibility of resonating across the globe. Is there material in South Asia on inspiring women who can serve as role models not only for South Asian girls but for girls across the world?

There is in fact a story that is waiting to be told. It is the story of the brave women of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment that was part of the Indian National Army led by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.

These were women who fought for the INA, without any prior military experience whatsoever. No woman soldier in the INA's Rani of Jhansi regiment (named after the legendary heroine of the 1857 rebellion) ever

fought a war before but they were drawn to the cause by Bose's stirring words. This was heroism at another level altogether, rarely surpassed anywhere in the world. How did these female warriors get enlisted?

Numerous moving testimonies exist of parents in Singapore and Malaysia giving permission to their daughters, upon Netaji's request, to fight in the great Indian cause of freedom. Film-maker and writer Sagari Chhabra journeyed across India, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Burma seeking out the men and women of the INA. In her book 'In Search of Freedom' she chronicles the many quiet acts of courage that, regrettably, may not have been featured in school and university history textbooks.

A film can and must be made to honour not only the women who died fighting, the women who survived, but also their beloved parents and families who consented to have their daughters risk their lives. Girls even fought with

their parents in order to get their consent. For instance, Janaki Nahappan who subsequently became a Commander of the Rani Jhansi regiment, was only sixteen years when she was stirred by Bose's appeal for Indian women to join a 'death defying' regiment. She is reported to have immediately taken off her gold earrings and donated them. Her troubled parents resisted their daughter's appeal but eventually she managed to convince them.

These are important tales of heroism that the world needs to hear. The film that will be made must draw upon the lives not only of leaders of the regiment such as Captain Lakshmi Swaminathan and Janaki Nahappan but many others as well. Archival material available with Ms Chhabra and others may be put to use here.

A well-made film mounted on a budget assuring decent production values could not only be a success at the global box office, it would be an inspiration to girls across the country, if not the world. It will provide an indication to overseas visitors that India respects the women who fought for its independence.

Shekhar Kapur - are you listening?

*Rajesh Talwar, the author of forty-two books spanning multiple genres, has served the United Nations for over two decades across three continents. His most recent book published by Om Books International is titled 'The Mahatma's Manifesto: A Critique of Hind Swaraj'*

## LEARNING FROM SINGAPORE

Singapore's approach provides a blueprint for India. In 2020, the city-state introduced stringent measures to combat sugar-laden beverages, mandating "Nutri-Grade" labeling and banning advertisements for high-sugar drinks. This policy aims to reduce the consumption of high-calorie, low-nutrient products, nudging consumers towards healthier choices. Early evidence suggests that such interventions can significantly influence public behavior, prompting manufacturers to reformulate products to meet healthier standards.

India, too, must consider similar regulations tailored to its unique challenges. The Indian market is flooded with ultra-processed foods and sugary beverages, with children and adolescents being the primary targets of aggressive advertising campaigns. According to a 2023 report by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), the average Indian consumes approximately 19 grams of added sugar per day, well above the WHO's recommended limit of 10% of total caloric intake. Salt consumption paints a graver picture, with Indians consuming an average of 10.98 grams daily, more than double the WHO's recommended intake of 5 grams.

## ECONOMIC AND HEALTH COSTS

The health implications of excessive sugar and salt are profound. A 2022 Lancet study estimated that high sodium intake contributes



# LANDMARK DECISIONS OF AMERICAN PRESIDENTS

The US presidents in past 100 years had played a pivotal role in shaping world politics through their policies on defence, diplomacy, and economics. Decisions like military interventions, climate accords, or trade deals can influence global power structures, affect international markets, and redefine relationships with allies and adversaries alike.



White House

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

Over the past century, various U.S. presidents have made landmark decisions that have not only reshaped the trajectory of the United States but also had profound implications on world politics, economics, and global governance. These decisions altered the way nations interact, the role of international organizations, and how economies are structured across the globe. Here, we explore ten landmark decisions made by U.S. presidents that changed the course of the world.

**WOODROW WILSON AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS (1919)**

Woodrow Wilson's presidency during and after World War I was pivotal in shaping the modern international order. Perhaps his most consequential decision was his push for the creation of the League of Nations. Wilson's vision was to create an international organization that would prevent future conflicts through dialogue and collective security. The idea of a global body designed to resolve disputes diplomatically had never been attempted on such a large scale before.

The League of Nations, formed as part of the Treaty of Versailles, aimed to promote peace and cooperation. Although the U.S. never officially joined due to opposition in Congress, Wilson's ideals laid the groundwork for what would later become the United Nations in 1945. This marked a turning point in world diplomacy and helped usher in a new era of multilateral cooperation.



US President Richard Nixon shakes hands with Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai at Beijing Capital International Airport. File Photo



Woodrow Wilson

**FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT AND THE NEW DEAL (1933)**

The Great Depression was an unprecedented global economic crisis, and Franklin D. Roosevelt's response fundamentally changed the economic and political landscape of the U.S. and the world. Roosevelt's New Deal was a series of domestic programs designed to provide relief, recovery,

and reform. It involved large-scale government intervention in the economy, including the establishment of social security, unemployment insurance and financial regulations such as the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) to protect bank deposits. Roosevelt's economic policies were a departure from the laissez-faire approach that had characterized previous administrations, and

they provided a model for welfare states around the world. By implementing the New Deal, Roosevelt not only helped restore confidence in the U.S. economy but also inspired similar interventions in other nations.

**HARRY S. TRUMAN AND THE EUROPEAN AID (1948)**

After World War II, much of Europe lay in ruins, and the Soviet Union was extending its influence across Eastern Europe. President Harry S. Truman's decision to support the Marshall Plan in 1948 was a defining moment in the history of U.S. foreign policy. The plan provided economic assistance to Western European nations to help them rebuild and recover from the devastation of war. The Marshall Plan succeeded in stabilizing Western Europe's economies and promoting political stability, thereby curbing the influence of the Soviet Union. It also led to the creation of institutions such as the European Economic Community, which would later evolve into the European Union. Truman's decision to invest in the rebuilding of Europe ensured that the U.S. would have a central role in shaping post-war international institutions.

**EISENHOWER AND MIDDLE EAST INTERVENTION (1957)**

The Cold War was marked by competition for global influence between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Dwight D. Eisenhower's Eisenhower Doctrine, announced in 1957, was a key moment in shaping U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. In response to rising Soviet influence in the re-

gion, Eisenhower offered U.S. military and economic assistance to countries in the Middle East threatened by communism.

This doctrine had a profound impact on U.S. involvement in the Middle East, signaling the U.S. commitment to containing communism beyond Europe. It

**Gulf Wars.**

**LYNDON B. JOHNSON AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT (1964)**

The civil rights movement was one of the most significant social movements in the United States, and President Lyndon B. Johnson's decision to push for the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a landmark moment in American history. This landmark legislation prohibited discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, marking a decisive victory for racial equality in the U.S. The Civil Rights Act not only transformed American society by dismantling legal segregation but also influenced global human rights discourse. The U.S. became a beacon for civil rights, and the Act inspired similar movements for equality and justice across the world. Johnson's commitment to civil rights, particularly in the face of significant political opposition, redefined the U.S. political landscape.

Zedong marked the end of over two decades of U.S. isolation from China. This move was part of a broader strategy to shift the global balance of power during the Cold War. Nixon's engagement with China had profound economic and geopolitical implications. It helped China integrate into the global economy, setting the stage for its rise as an economic superpower in the coming decades. The U.S.-China rapprochement also shifted the dynamics of the Cold War, as the U.S. sought to play the two Communist giants, the Soviet Union and China, against each other.

**REAGAN ENDS COLD WAR (1987-1989)**

The Cold War, which had dominated global politics for nearly half a century, came to a dramatic end during the presidency of Ronald Reagan. Reagan's policies of military buildup and his aggressive stance toward the Soviet Union, combined with his willingness to nego-

litical and economic landscape.

**CLINTON INKS NORTH AMERICAN FTA (1994)**

President Bill Clinton's decision to support the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994 was a transformative moment in global trade relations. The agreement created a trilateral trade bloc between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, eliminating tariffs and reducing trade barriers between the three countries. NAFTA had far-reaching consequences for global trade. It led to the deepening of economic integration across North America, which helped spur economic growth in the region. The agreement also set a precedent for other free trade agreements around the world and helped globalize the world economy.

**BUSH LAUNCHES WAR ON TERROR AFTER 9/11 (2001)**

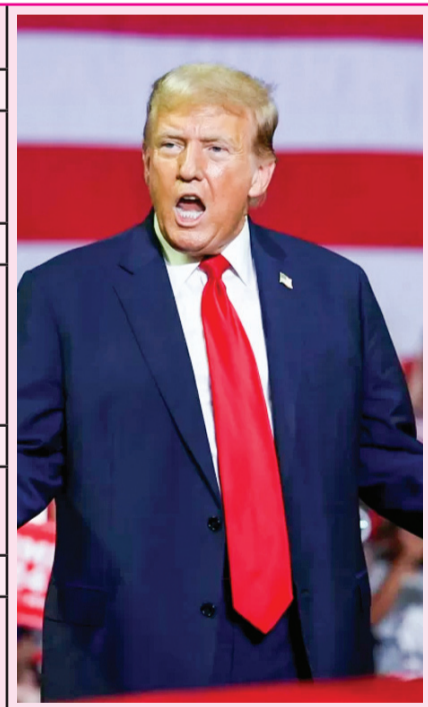
The events of September 11, 2001, forever changed the course of U.S. foreign policy. President George W. Bush's decision to launch the War on Terror led to U.S. military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, marking a new chapter in the Global War on Terrorism. The War on Terror had profound geopolitical consequences. It led to the reshaping of U.S. military priorities, the erosion of civil liberties in some countries, and the creation of institutions such as the Department of Homeland Security. The invasion of Iraq, based on the belief that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction, sparked widespread controversy and significantly influenced Middle Eastern politics.

**BARACK OBAMA AND THE PARIS CLIMATE PACT (2015)**

One of the defining global achievements of President Barack Obama's second term was his leadership in negotiating the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015. This landmark international accord brought together nearly every country in the world to combat climate change by setting targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and transitioning to renewable energy sources. The Paris Agreement represented a historic shift in global environmental governance, with the U.S. playing a leading role in promoting a multilateral response to climate change.

**TRUMP 2.0 POLICIES ATTRACT IRE FROM WORLD**

<b>America First and Unilateralism:</b>
Trump's "America First" approach prioritized U.S. interests over multilateral agreements, weakening alliances and global partnerships.
<b>Trade Wars and Protectionism:</b>
Imposed tariffs on China, the EU, and other nations, disrupting global trade and economic stability. His protectionist trade policies led to retaliatory tariffs, affecting supply chains and creating uncertainty in global markets.
<b>Attacks on Multilateral Institutions:</b>
Frequently criticized and undermined institutions like the United Nations and NATO, creating friction with long-time allies.
<b>Human Rights and Immigration:</b>
Policies like the Muslim Ban and family separations at the U.S.-Mexico border drew global condemnation for violating human rights.



**NIXON OPENS TIES WITH CHINA (1972)**

In 1972, President Richard Nixon made one of the most consequential foreign policy decisions of the 20th century: he opened diplomatic relations with China. Nixon's visit to China and his subsequent rapprochement with the Communist government of Chairman Mao

marked the beginning of significant American intervention in the region, which would continue through the 20th century and into the 21st century. The U.S. would go on to establish military bases and alliances in the Middle East, which would have lasting consequences for regional stability, particularly in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the

**TRUMAN'S BIG DECISION ON BOMB**

After Japanese leaders flatly rejected the Potsdam Declaration, USA President Truman authorized use of the atomic bomb anytime after August 3, 1945. On the clear morning of August 6, the first atomic bomb, nicknamed Little Boy, was dropped on the city of Hiroshima. As president, it was Harry Truman's decision if the weapon would be used with the goal to end the war. "It is an awful responsibility that has come to us," he wrote. This move put a brake on the World War II.



Atomic Bomb dropping in Japan. Representative Image

# SUPREME COURT: EXTRA-JUDICIAL CONFESSION IS A 'WEAK TYPE' OF EVIDENCE, REQUIRES A GREAT DEAL OF CARE AND CAUTION

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case *Sadashiv Dhondiram Patil Versus The State Of Maharashtra* observed and has reiterated that an extra-judicial confession is a 'weak type' of evidence and thus it requires a great deal of care and caution.

The court also placed reliance upon *Balwinder Singh vs. State of Punjab*, wherein the court stated that when extra-judicial confession is being surrounded by suspicious circumstances, its credibility becomes doubtful and would lose its importance.

The bench comprising of Justice J.B. Pardiwala and Justice R. Mahadevan was hearing the present matter. The bench in the case observed while overturning a judgment of the Bombay

High Court, wherein the court reserved the acquittal of the present appellant or accused for the offence of murder and to summarise, the prosecution alleged that the deceased was married to the appellant and their marital life was not very happy. One day all of a sudden, the deceased went missing and her body was recovered from the house.

The Trial Court in the case held that the prosecution in the case had failed to prove its case beyond reasonable doubt, the High Court reserved this finding.

The Trial Court in the case is of the view that a Village Police Patil is not a Police Officer and thus the confession made before him would be admissible as an extra-judicial confession.

Aggrieved with the same, the appellant preferred the present appeal. The Apex Court in the



case stated that even if the evidence is admissible, the same should be true and trustworthy in order to hold the accused guilty.

Adding to it, the court stated that the above extra-judicial confession should also be found to be free of any inducement, coercion etc. and it should be shown to have been made by the accused

on his own free will and volition.

The court stated that the same was vague and ambiguous and it could not be counted as an extra-judicial confession.

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case stated that, 'This court is of the view that the High Court fell in error

in relying upon the extra-judicial confession even while rightly holding that the same was admissible in evidence as Village Police Patil cannot be said to be a Police Officer.' Further, the court addressed the issue of concealment of the weapon, which was seized in the presence of the panch witnesses.

*The court also placed reliance upon Balwinder Singh vs. State of Punjab, wherein the court stated that when extra-judicial confession is being surrounded by suspicious circumstances, its credibility becomes doubtful and would lose its importance.*

The court reiterated that even if the panch witnesses are turned hostile, the oral evidence of an Investigating Officer can be relied upon if it inspires confidence. The court held that the I.O. did was to depose that he had drawn the panchnama and in the end identified his signature on the same and that of the panch witnesses. Thus, the same cannot be said to be proving the

contents of the panchnama in accordance with law. In such kind of circumstances, the circumstance of discovery also cannot be relied upon.

The court also opined that the prosecution can invoke Section 106 of the Evidence Act, only when it proves that its case is beyond reasonable doubt and as per the provision of Section 106 of Evidence Act, if any fact is with-

in the special knowledge of a person, the burden of proving that fact is on him and if the prosecution has failed to establish the same, it cannot throw the entire burden on the accused to establish his innocence.

Further, the court stated that, 'The initial burden of proof is always on the prosecution. Thus, in cases where husband is alleged to have killed his wife in the night hours and that too within the residential house, then undoubtedly the husband has to offer some explanation as to what had actually happened and if he fails to offer any plausible explanation, this can go against him. Therefore, Section 106 of the Evidence Act is subject to one well-settled principle of law and the prosecution has to first lay the foundational facts before it seeks to invoke Section 106 of the Evidence Act.'

## Supreme Court: Prosecution must establish contraband was seized from 'conscious possession' of accused to prove offence under NDPS Act

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case *Rakesh Kumar Raghuvanshi v. The State of Madhya Pradesh* observed and has reiterated that to prove offences under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, NDPS Act, the prosecution must establish that the contraband was seized from the 'conscious possession' of the accused.

The court in the case stated that, 'Conscious possession refers to a scenario where an individual not only physically possesses a narcotic drug or psychotropic substance but is also aware of its presence and nature. Thus, it requires both physical control and mental awareness.'

The court in the case stated that, 'The Conscious possession implies that the person knew that he had



*The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case stated that section 54 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, NDPS Act comes into play and the Trial Court was justified in drawing the presumption that the accused was in conscious possession.*

the illicit drug or psychotropic substance in his control and had the intent or knowledge of its illegal

nature.' The court also stated that the burden of proof will shift to the accused as per

Section 54 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, NDPS Act only when the conscious possession is proved.

Adding to it, the court stated that, 'It is the burden of the prosecution to establish that the contraband was seized from the conscious possession of the accused. Therefore, only when that aspect has been successfully proved by the prosecution, the onus will shift to the accused to account for the possession legally and satisfactorily.'

The bench comprising of Justice JB Pardiwala and Justice R Mahadevan was hearing the present matter. The bench made the said observations wherein an appeal is filed by a convict who was sentenced to ten years imprisonment for carrying poppy husk in train.

It has been argued by the convict before the court

that he alighted from the train when the police asked him to get out from the train along with three carton boxes found near him. Further, the convict claimed that he had no connection with the carton boxes.

The court observed that the explanation given by the accused was not palatable. The court stated that, 'This court do not find any satisfactory reply or explanation as to how come he was sitting on one of the cartons and the other two cartons were closely placed next to him.'

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case stated that section 54 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, NDPS Act comes into play and the Trial Court was justified in drawing the presumption that the accused was in conscious possession.

## Supreme Court: Bald allegation of Section 52 A non-compliance won't result in acquittal unless foundational facts of non-compliance proved under NDPS Act

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case *Rajwant Singh Versus The State Of Haryana* observed and has reiterated that unless the foundational facts of non-compliance of Section 52A of the NDPS Act are not proved by the accused, the accused cannot assert a bald allegation that the conviction for possessing contraband cannot be sustained due to non-compliance of Section 52A of the NDPS Act.

The bench comprising of Justice JB Pardiwala and Justice R Mahadevan was hearing the present matter. The bench in the case was hearing the matter wherein the accused was booked for possessing contraband and sought acquittal due to non-compliance with Section 52A of the NDPS Act.

The court doubted the appellant's case because the investigating officer detailed the recovery process and sealing of the contraband in compliance with Section 52A which was not questioned by the appellant during cross-examination of the prosecution witness that there was no compliance with Section 52A.

The court in the case stated that the petition filed for non-compliance cannot be taken out of the blue; rather, a foundation fact ought to be laid down by asking the investigating officer appropriate relevant questions.

The bench also referred to the case *Bharat Aambale v. State of Chhattisgarh*, wherein the court referred to its own order



*The court doubted the appellant's case because the investigating officer detailed the recovery process and sealing of the contraband in compliance with Section 52A which was not questioned by the appellant during cross-examination of the prosecution witness that there was no compliance with Section 52A.*

to negate the Appellant's argument of non-compliance of Section 52 of the NDPS Act holding that mere non-compliance with Section 52A would not be fatal to the prosecution's case when other cogent evidence proves the recovery of the contraband from the accused possession.

The court stated that, 'It being clear that the initial burden lies on the accused to first lay the foundational facts to show that there was non-compliance of Section 52A of the NDPS Act on a preponderance of probabilities, either by leading evidence of its own or by relying upon the evidence of the prosecution and in the present matter, no

question whatsoever was put by the defence counsel to PW-7 as regards Section 52A of the NDPS Act. Moreover, apart from a mere bald assertion that there has been a contravention of the mandate of Section 52A of the NDPS Act, wherein nothing cogent has been pointed out to us by the appellant herein that would show that there had been a violation of the requirements of Section 52A of the NDPS Act.'

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case stated that, 'This court do not find any error much less any error of law in the impugned judgment of the High Court.'

## Supreme Court imposes Rs 2 lakh cost on petitioner over repeated bail applications, asks police to arrest him

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case *Parteek Arora @ Parteek Juneja Versus State Of Punjab* observed and has imposed costs of Rupees Two Lakhs on a petitioner who intended 'to take undue advantage of procedural law' after he withdrew his anticipatory bail application twice before the High Court before moving the Apex Court.

The bench comprising of Justice JK Maheshwari and Justice Arvind Kumar was hearing the present matter.

The bench in the case was hearing the anticipatory bail.

The bench in the case noted that before the High Court the accused had withdrawn his application on September 30, 2024 on seeing the disinclination of the High Court in granting anticipatory bail.

However, another application is filed by the accused and the High Court took a stringent view. It noted that despite

the FIR being registered against the accused on June 25, 2023, no action

directed the police to file a status report of the investigation by the next

bench in the case observed that the petitioner was trying to take undue

the accused and directed the Police Commissioner of Amritsar to arrest the petitioner within 3 days.

The bench stated that, 'It is a fact that even after rejection of the first bail application and the second bail application, the petitioner has not been taken into custody. Thereby, petitioner intends to take undue advantage of procedural law for reasons best known.'

The court stated that, 'This court is inclined to dismiss this special leave petition with costs for an amount Rs.2,00,000/ (Rupees Two Lakhs). The costs is to be deposited by the petitioner with the Punjab State Legal Services Authority and proof thereof be filed within one week. Ordered accordingly.'

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case stated that, 'This court direct the Commissioner of Police, Amritsar, to arrest the petitioner within three days and to file an affidavit before the Registry of this Court on the fourth day.'



*The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case stated that, 'This court direct the Commissioner of Police, Amritsar, to arrest the petitioner within three days and to file an affidavit before the Registry of this Court on the fourth day.'*

had been taken for more than a year against the accused.

Further, the High Court

hearing. The petitioner withdrew the application again.

The Supreme Court

advantage of the law. The bench in the case imposed the cost for an amount of Two Lakhs on

## Supreme Court confers Senior designations on 4 former High Court judges

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Collegium bench comprising of Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, Justice B.R. Gavai, Justice Surya Kant, Justice Hrishikesh Roy and Justice Abhay S. Oka

have designated the following former Chief Justice or Judges of the High Courts as Senior Advocates with effect from January 22, 2025. 1. Arvind Singh Sangwan, former Judge of the High Court of Judicature at Allahabad 2. C.V. Nagarjuna Red-

dy, former Judge of the High Court of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana 3. Goutam Bhaduri, former Judge, High Court of Chhattisgarh 4. S. Vaidyanathan, former Chief Justice, High Court of Meghalaya.

TOP OF THE DAY

CHINA AIMS TO WORK WITH NETHERLANDS

HONG KONG: China's Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang said at a meeting with Dutch King Willem-Alexander in The Hague that China stands ready to increase mutual trust and that it would work together to maintain stability and smoothness of the global supply chain. The meeting was reported by China's foreign ministry on Thursday. It comes days after the Dutch government said it would expand export controls on advanced semiconductor equipment from April 1.

QATAR'S NEW LAWS FOR FOREIGN INVESTMENT

DOHA: Qatar plans to introduce three new laws as part of a sweeping review of legislation designed to make the Gulf Arab state more attractive to foreign investors, the new minister of Commerce and Economy told Reuters. Sheikh Faisal bin Thani Al Thani said in an interview that Qatar plans to introduce new legislation including a bankruptcy law, a public private partnership law and a new commercial registration law. "We're looking at 27 laws and regulations across 17 government ministries that affect 500-plus activities," he said, describing the legislative review. Sheikh Faisal said he expects the new bankruptcy and public private partnership laws to be drafted before the end of March.

TAIWAN FINDS 35 CHINESE PLANES IN ITS AREA

Taipei: Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence (MND) has detected 35 Chinese aircraft and 6 naval vessels around the island as of 6 am (UTC+8) on Thursday. Among them, 27 aircraft crossed the median line and entered Taiwan's northern, southwestern and eastern Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ). Sharing a post on X, MND wrote, "35 PLA aircraft and 6 PLAN vessels operating around Taiwan were detected up until 6 a.m. (UTC+8) today. 27 of the aircraft crossed the median line and entered Taiwan's northern, southwestern and eastern ADIZ. We have monitored the situation and responded accordingly."

AIR INDIA TO RESUME TEL AVIV-DELHI FLIGHTS

JERUSALEM: With ceasefire holding up in the north and south of Israel, several major international airlines, including Air India, have announced plans to resume flights to Israel expanding connectivity to the war-torn region. "It's official now. We are resuming flights from March 2, 2025," a representative for Air India in Israel told PTI. Several Indians staying in Israel felt a sigh of relief as the Indian carrier's website opened bookings on the said route.

ISRAELI FORCES FIRE ON ARMED MEN IN GAZA, ISLAMIC JIHAD OPERATIVE KILLED

In several other instances, masked suspects were spotted approaching soldiers. Troops fired warning shots in the air to distance them.

AGENCIES  
TEL AVIV

Israeli troops in Gaza identified several armed terrorists who posed a threat despite the ceasefire in several incidents, the Israel Defense Forces said on Wednesday night.

In one incident, in southern Gaza, soldiers killed a terrorist who was identified as Akram Atef Farhan Zanon of Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

In several other instances, masked suspects were spotted approaching soldiers. Troops fired warning shots in the air to distance them.

"The IDF is determined to fully maintain the terms of the agreement in order to return the hostages. The IDF is prepared for any scenario and will continue to take all necessary actions to thwart any immediate threat to IDF soldiers," the army said.

The first phase of the ceasefire will see 30 more Israeli hostages freed over several weeks in exchange for hundreds of Palestinian terrorists imprisoned in Israel. The exact number will depend on how many of the hostages

CEASEFIRE TENSIONS



Men in Gaza amid dilapidated buildings bombed by the IDF earlier: File Photo

- **IDF Kills Terrorist:** IDF forces killed Akram Atef Farhan Zanon, a member of Palestinian Islamic Jihad, in southern Gaza.
- **Ceasefire Violations:** Despite the ceasefire, armed suspects posed a threat to IDF soldiers, leading to defensive actions.
- **Warning Shots Fired:** Masked suspects approaching soldiers were met with warning shots.
- **Hostage Exchange:** 30 Israeli hostages to be freed in exchange for Palestinian prisoners. Fate of remaining hostages to be determined after 16 days.

are alive. The fate of the remaining 65 hostages will be determined by negotiations to begin on the 16th day of the ceasefire. Critics say the phased approach condemns hostages not freed in the beginning to open-ended captivity and undermines Israel's war gains.

IDF KILLS A TERRORIST IN GAZA

TEL AVIV: The IDF (Israel Defense Forces) reported that during the last day, its forces acted to defend themselves after they came under threats posed to them in the Gaza Strip, despite the terms of the ceasefire agreement that entered into force on Sunday. In the south of the Gaza Strip, the IDF forces acting in accordance with the terms of the ceasefire agreement, identified a number of armed suspects who posed a threat to them.

Pakistan govt expresses regret over PTI's 'rigid' stance on talks

AGENCIES  
ISLAMABAD

The Pakistani government has expressed disappointment over Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) refusal to attend the fourth round of talks unless a judicial commission is formed, calling the opposition party's stance "rigid," as reported by Geo News on Wednesday.

Pakistani Prime Minister's political affairs aide, Rana Sanaullah, emphasised that negotiations were the only way forward in a democratic system and assured that no harm would come to PTI if they participated in the talks, Geo News reported. "We would not snatch anything from the PTI if they attend [the fourth round of talks]...negotiations are not a decree," Sanaullah said as quoted by Geo News.

PTI's senior leader Omar Ayub announced the party's decision to boycott the upcoming round, claiming the talks would be meaningless without the establishment of



a judicial commission.

"The constitution of the judicial commission is necessary before the fourth round of talks," he said as quoted by Geo News. The PTI had previously presented demands for a judicial probe into the events of May 9, 2023, and November 26, 2024, as well as the release of political prisoners, during the third round of negotiations on January 16. The party also warned it would not continue talks if the government failed to form two separate commissions to investigate these events. Meanwhile, Sanaullah pointed out that the government had already formed a

sub-committee to address PTI's demands and that a written response would be provided within a couple of days, Geo News reported. He added that further discussions could lead to a consensus on common issues. National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq, speaking to Geo News, also regretted the "rigidity" in the negotiation process, highlighting that talks require flexibility from both sides to make progress.

Regarding the formation of a judicial commission, PML-N Senator Irfan Siddiqui, a government negotiation team spokesperson, said the ruling coalition had not yet decided on the matter.

Kathmandu: Fire guts property worth millions

AGENCIES  
KATHMANDU

Properties worth millions were destroyed in a fire at a godown of home appliances in Kathmandu.

The fire, which was caused by faulty wiring, spread quickly, sending sparks and thick smoke that engulfed two homes. Fire tenders, along with security officials, swiftly responded to control the blaze.

Speaking to ANI, Purnima Chand, spokesperson for the District Police Range, Kathmandu, said, "The fire started from a house in the old shopping area of Kathmandu - the Ason. The fire had started at 3:30 in the afternoon. Fire tenders as well as Nepal Police, the Armed Police Force and the Nepal Army were deployed on the scene to control the blaze. Properties have been damaged which might amount in billions. Final estimate will be available after thorough inspection."

After battling the fire for over two hours, it was finally extinguished at around 5:00 in the evening.

Syria turns to Islamic law in effort to rebuild Assad's police

AGENCIES  
DAMASCUS

Syria's new authorities are using Islamic teachings to train a fledgling police force, a move officers say aims to instil a sense of morality as they race to fill a security vacuum after dismantling ousted president Bashar al-Assad's notoriously corrupt and brutal security forces.

Police they brought into Damascus from their former rebel enclave in the northwestern region of Idlib are asking applicants about their beliefs and focusing on Islamic sharia law in the brief training they offer recruits, according to five senior officers and application forms seen by Reuters.

Ensuring stability and winning the trust of people across Syria will be crucial for the Sunni Muslim Islamists to cement their rule. But the move to put religion at the centre of policing risks seeding new rifts in a diverse country awash with guns after 13 years of civil war and alienating foreign governments they have been trying to woo, regional analysts warn. "There are many Syrians who will find this concerning," said Aron Lund, a fellow at Cen-



Syrian police members attend their graduation ceremony, after the ouster of Syria's Bashar al-Assad, at the Police Academy under the Syrian Salvation Government, in Damascus, Syria January 14, 2025. File Photo

POLICE DISBANDED

Assad's myriad security forces were widely feared for tyrannical and predatory behaviour, ranging from arrests of dissidents who ended up tortured or killed to demanding bribes to resolve minor infractions. The extent of public anger against them was evident in the days after Assad was toppled on Dec. 8. Most of the capital's police stations were ransacked by looters, with equipment and records pillaged or destroyed. Police said half of the roughly 20 stations have since reopened, but they are each staffed by around 10 officers, mostly brought in from Idlib, instead of their previous complement of 100-150 officers.

tury International, a Middle East-focused think tank, when asked about Reuters' findings. "Not just minorities - Christians, Alawites, Druze - but also quite a lot of Sunni Muslims in places like Damascus and Aleppo, where you have a fairly large secular, cosmopolitan population that's not interested in religious law." "The religious foundations of

the police training are also making Western governments wonder how big a role Islam might play in Syria's constitution, which the former rebel faction now in power plans to revise, said one diplomat, who was not authorized to speak publicly on the matter.

"It's not a good sign, but it

Bangladesh: 22 injured in clashes between BNP factions

AGENCIES  
DHAKA

At least 22 people, including police officers and security personnel, were injured in clashes between two factions of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) in Bangladesh's Shyamnagar upazila in Satkhira District on Wednesday, despite Section 144 being imposed by authorities, as reported by the Dhaka Tribune.

According to the Dhaka Tribune, the conflict occurred in the Ismailpur area of Shyamnagar after tensions escalated between the two groups. The clash followed the organisation of a rally by the leaders of the newly formed Shyamnagar BNP committee, which prompted members of the dissolved committee to take measures to prevent the event. Fearing further violence, the Upazila administration imposed Section 144 in the area.

However, when the procession led by Solaiman Kabir, former acting general secretary of the Upazila BNP, was heading toward Shyamnagar



Fights between two factions of the BNP in Satkhira District's Shyamnagar upazila on Wednesday. File Photo

town, a stick was thrown, sparking a clash between the two factions, as reported by Dhaka Tribune.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Roni Khatun and Assistant Commissioner (Land) Abdullah Al Rifat attempted to intervene with the help of police and security personnel, but the violence continued, resulting in 22 injuries.

According to the Dhaka Tribune, the injured included Shyamnagar police station's officer in charge, Humayun Kabir; security personnel, Saiful Islam; and several BNP activists.

Solaiman Kabir claimed that his supporters had been attacked on January 19 and 20, which led to their protest

march. He accused leaders of the dissolved committee, along with Awami League activists, of attacking his group, causing multiple injuries. Kabir also accused Abdul Alim, district BNP member secretary, of inciting the violence and declared him "undesirable" in the upazila, as reported by the Dhaka Tribune.

Meanwhile, according to Dhaka Tribune, Ashik-e-Elahi Munna, the joint general secretary of the dissolved committee, alleged that Solaiman and his supporters were trying to disrupt a 31-point meeting organised by the Chhatra Dal (Student Wing) of BNP in Shyamnagar.

Thailand to legalise same-sex marriage

AGENCIES  
BANGKOK

Hundreds of same-sex couples are tying the knot in Thailand on Thursday, as the country becomes the first in Southeast Asia to legalize marriage equality, according to a report by CNN.

According to Bangkok Pride, which partnered with local authorities to organize the event, over 200 couples registered to marry at the Siam Paragon shopping center.

This bill marks a major victory for the LGBTQ+ community, which has



spent more than a decade advocating for equal marriage rights. The law, approved by Thailand's parliament and endorsed by the king in 2024, grants

same-sex couples the ability to legally register their marriages, offering them full legal, financial, and medical rights, as well as adoption and inheritance rights.

S Korea's anti-graft agency hands over martial law probe to prosecutors

AGENCIES  
SEOUL

South Korea's anti-corruption agency has handed over its investigation into President Yoon Suk Yeol's alleged attempt to impose martial law to the prosecution, urging that he be charged with insurrection and abuse of power, according to a report by Yonhap News Agency.

The Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials (CIO) announced on Thursday that it transferred all related investigation ma-



terials, totaling over 30,000 pages compiled into 69 volumes. The CIO does not have indictment powers against a president.

"The suspect continues to

be uncooperative and defy the procedures under the criminal justice system despite facing nationally serious charges of being a leader of an insurrection.

when the Taliban took power. The Foreign Ofce spokesperson said Pakistan was ready to engage with the new US administration to take the longstanding bilateral ties forward.

Earthquakes above magnitude 5 strike Philippines

AGENCIES  
MANILA

Two earthquakes jolted the Philippines several hours apart on Thursday, authorities said, but there were no immediate reports of injuries or major damage.

A magnitude 5.8 quake occurred off the town of San Francisco in Southern Leyte province in the central region of Visayas at 07:39 a.m (2339 GMT), according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS).

A magnitude 5.4 earthquake followed four hours later that hit Siocon town in the southern Mindanao region. The agency had recorded at least 68 aftershocks from the Visayas tremor. There were no immediate reports of injuries from either tremor.

Pak says US committed to take in large number of Afghan refugees

AGENCIES  
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan on Thursday said that the US is committed to take in a large number of Afghan refugees now staying in Pakistan, days after

the new Trump administration suspended the US Refugee Admissions Programme from January 27 for at least three months.

Foreign Office spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan said, "We have an arrangement

with the US by virtue of which it is committed to take a lot of Afghans from Pakistan to the US for resettlement by September this year."

At the weekly brief, he said that "this arrangement

is in place so far". Khan said that Pakistan would continue to implement its existing policies regarding Afghan refugees, clarifying that there was no plan to alter the policy towards the Afghans living in the country.

The programme was set up to help Afghans at risk under the Taliban because of their work with the US government, media, aid agencies and rights groups, after US troops pulled out of Afghanistan in 2021,

when the Taliban took power.

The Foreign Ofce spokesperson said Pakistan was ready to engage with the new US administration to take the longstanding bilateral ties forward.

PATRIOT AIR DEFENCE



Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz, the Polish defence minister, and his German counterpart, Boris Pistorius, visit a military base in Jasionka, where Patriot air defence system units are located in Jasionka, Poland. Source: Patryk Ogorzalek

# 'MUSK WORKED RAMASWAMY OUT OF DOGE FOLLOWING DIFFERENCES'

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON

As Indian-origin entrepreneur and Republican leader Vivek Ramaswamy pulled out of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), just 69 days after he was announced the co-head of the team along with tech billionaire Elon Musk, a report has revealed that it was the Tesla CEO who wanted Ramaswamy 'out' of the team.

Politico reported citing three people with Elon Musk's preference said the billionaire made it known that he wanted Ramaswamy out of DOGE in recent days.

Hours after Trump's inauguration as the 47th US President, Ramaswamy announced that he would not co-head DOGE.

Musk's ability to ice out Ramaswamy, who for a variety of reasons had irked some Republicans in Trump's circle, is the latest sign of his influence in the incoming administration. It presages an encore of all of the infighting that marked Trump's first term.

Ramaswamy "just burned through the bridges and he finally burned Elon," said a Republican strategist close to Trump advisers. "Everyone wants him out of Mar-a-Lago, out of DC."

According to the report, Ramaswamy's comments on X during a discussion of H-1B visas were the 'main reason' for some Republicans' getting frustrated with him.

In December last year, the Indian-origin leader criticised American cul-



Elon Musk (Left) and Vivek Ramaswamy. File Photo

*A person familiar with Ramaswamy's thinking said they are now on good terms and that "the reality is that it wasn't possible" to run for governor and co-lead DOGE "both at once."*

ture, saying that tech companies hire foreign workers because the country that has "venerated mediocrity over excellence."

"They wanted him out before the tweet -- but kicked him to the curb when that came out," one of the three people familiar with his departure, told Politico.

Ramaswamy is planning to announce a run for Ohio Governor next week, as reported by Politico. A person close to DOGE said Musk did not think it was feasible for him to campaign for office while working on DOGE.

Meanwhile, Trump transition spokesperson Anna Kelly lauded Ramaswamy and said that he "played a

critical role in helping us create DOGE" and that his plan to run for governor "requires him to remain outside of DOGE based on the structure that we announced today."

Politico reported citing sources, that Ramaswamy maintained to confidants as late as Saturday evening that he was actively involved in DOGE, saying he was at work writing executive orders. However, a person familiar with the arrangement informed that he had done almost no DOGE-related work since early December.

Last week, he was hoping to achieve some significant milestones before leaving to run for governor. Now, Ramaswamy

and his team are trying to present his exit in a positive light, especially since it's happening as Trump begins his term.

Ramaswamy has chosen not to comment on the rumoured tensions between him and Musk.

A person familiar with Ramaswamy's thinking said they are now on good terms and that "the reality is that it wasn't possible" to run for governor and co-lead DOGE "both at once."

Ramaswamy attended US President Donald Trump's inauguration, where he spoke to Susie Wiles, Trump's chief of staff.

On Monday morning, Ramaswamy posted a photo of himself with Musk shaking hands.

"A new dawn," he wrote. But he was already on his way out. That same day, a person close to Ramaswamy who was granted anonymity to speak freely confirmed Ramaswamy was leaving, the Politico report stated.

## Trump announces potential tariffs on Chinese imports soon

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump on Tuesday announced that the first phase of US tariffs on Chinese imports could be implemented as soon as next week, as reported by Radio Free Asia.

According to Radio Free Asia, Trump had initially threatened to impose a 10 per cent tariff on Chinese imports on his first day in office, following his campaign pledge the previous year that tariffs on Chinese goods could potentially exceed 60 per cent.

The tariffs were not included in the series of executive orders the new president signed on his first day back in the White House on Mon-



day. However, on Tuesday, Trump indicated that February 1 could mark the day the tariffs are imposed, emphasising that they are necessary to strengthen domestic industry, the Radio Free Asia reported.

"We're talking about a tariff of 10 per cent on China based

on the fact that they're sending fentanyl to Mexico and Canada," Trump said, following the announcement of an USD 500 billion AI infrastructure investment by Oracle, OpenAI, and SoftBank.

According to Radio Free Asia, Trump mentioned that he had discussed the issue with Chinese President Xi Jinping during a phone call on Friday, prior to his return to power. "I told him, we don't want that crap in our country," Trump recalled.

Efforts to curb the flow of fentanyl precursors from China were a key focus of former US President Joe Biden's diplomatic efforts with Beijing. One of the main outcomes of the 2023 summit between Biden and Xi in

San Francisco was Xi's pledge to crack down on precursor exports.

In the months following that meeting, Biden administration officials largely acknowledged that China had made progress on its commitments. However, Trump argued that insufficient action had been taken, RFA reported.

Fentanyl is an extremely potent synthetic opioid that US authorities hold responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of Americans annually. The drug's precursors are manufactured in China and then converted into fentanyl by Mexican transnational drug trafficking organisations, who smuggle it into the United States.

## Slovak govt plans security measures around protests, citing coup risks

AGENCIES  
BRATISLAVA

Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico's administration plans measures to prevent long-running public protests from escalating into attempts at overthrowing the government, citing intelligence showing opponents seeking to gain power.

Protest organisers and opposition parties have firmly rejected Fico's accusations, and say Fico is abusing security agencies and seeking to silence opponents in order to distract from policy problems faced by his fragile ruling coalition.

Fico returned as prime minister for a fourth time in 2023, and protests have built amid worries over his leftist-nationalist government weakening democratic values and shifting foreign policy away from EU and NATO allies and closer to Russia.

Fico has also stepped up attacks against the liberal



Slovakia's PM Robert Fico during a parliamentary session in Bratislava, Slovakia on January 21, 2025. File Photo

and conservative opposition since he survived an assassination attempt last year.

He said this week that opposition groups planned to escalate their protests and create chaos, including through the occupation of government buildings.

Citing information from intelligence services, Fico reiterated accusations, without showing evidence, that there was a group of unidentified experts in Slovakia that had helped in protests in Ukraine in 2014 and Georgia last year.

## British Indian peer Alok Sharma to chair UK's Transition Finance Council

AGENCIES  
LONDON

Alok Sharma, a British Indian peer in the House of Lords and former president of the UN's COP climate summit, was on Thursday appointed to chair the Transition Finance Council.

The council is geared towards promoting financial products and services that facilitate a UK economy-wide transition to Net Zero to meet the country's clean energy climate targets.

The City of London Corporation, which has co-launched the government initiative, said the new council aims to leverage the UK's strengths to become the best market in the world to raise and deploy "high-integrity transition finance".

[23:53, 23/1/2025] TDG Kaushal: The Transition Finance Council will support finance capacity



Representative Image

building through engagement with UK and international stakeholders and convene working groups to advance priority areas in the sector.

"To support growth and meet national and corporate climate goals, it is absolutely vital to grow the transition finance market," Lord Sharma said.

"I look forward to working with colleagues on the Transition Finance Council to help develop the UK into the preeminent global

2021.

In this role, Sharma is credited with leading the UK's work in bringing together the world to tackle climate change and getting almost 200 countries, including India, to sign up to the historic Glasgow Climate Pact.

"Lord Alok Sharma has been a tireless advocate for climate action and I look forward to working with him in his new role as Chair," said Ed Miliband, UK Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.

"Clean energy is the economic and industrial opportunity of the 21st century and transition finance can help to accelerate investment into these sectors. The Transition Finance Council will play an important role in mobilising this finance to help deliver our clean energy superpower mission and meet our international climate goals," he said.

From 2020 to 2022, he served as president designate and subsequently as president of the COP26 UN Climate Conference held in Glasgow in November

## NATO chief Rutte says Europe will pay for US arms for Ukraine

AGENCIES  
DAVOS

NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte on Thursday urged the United States to keep supplying Ukraine with weapons to fight Russia's invasion and said he was sure Europe was ready to pay the bill.

Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos, the NATO chief said Europe must invest more in defence, ramp up arms production and take a bigger share of spending on Ukraine aid.

## UK warns of 'action' as Russian spy ship detected in its area

AGENCIES  
LONDON

The UK has warned of "robust action" after the Royal Navy tracked Russian spy ships in the English Channel just weeks after it claimed to have caught it "loitering over" critical undersea infrastructure in Britain's waters.

Defence Secretary John

His comments came after U.S. President Donald Trump said earlier this week that the European Union should be doing more to support Ukraine.

"On Ukraine, we need the U.S. also to stay involved," Rutte said.

"If this new Trump administration is willing to keep on supplying Ukraine from its defence industrial base, the bill will be paid by the Europeans, I'm absolutely convinced of this, we have to be willing to do that," he added.

Healey made a statement in Parliament on Wednesday to inform the House of Commons that the Royal Navy deployed Somerset and Tyne to monitor a vessel named 'Yantar' through UK waters. The minister described the vessel as a "Russian spy ship" used for gathering intelligence and mapping the UK's critical underwater infrastructure.

## Donald Trump's Ukraine deal vs Putin's concern over Russia's economy

AGENCIES  
OTTAWA

President Vladimir Putin has grown increasingly concerned about distortions in Russia's wartime economy, just as Donald Trump pushes for an end to the Ukraine conflict, five sources with knowledge of the situation told Reuters.

Russia's economy, driven by exports of oil, gas and minerals, grew robustly over the past two years despite multiple rounds of



Western sanctions imposed after its invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

But domestic activity has become strained in recent months by labour shortages and high interest rates introduced to tackle inflation, which has accelerated under record military spending.

That has contributed to the view within a section of the Russian elite that a negotiated settlement to the war is desirable, according to two of the sources familiar with thinking in the Kremlin.

Trump, who returned to office on Monday, has vowed to swiftly resolve the Ukraine conflict, Europe's biggest since World War Two.

This week he has said more sanctions, as well as tariffs, on Russia are likely unless Putin negotiates, adding that Russia was heading for "big trouble" in the economy. A senior Kremlin aide said on Tuesday that Russia had so far received no specific proposals for talks.

"Russia, of course, is eco-

nomicly interested in negotiating a diplomatic end to the conflict," Oleg Vyugin, former deputy chairman of the Central Bank of Russia said in an interview, citing the risk of growing economic distortions as Russia turbo-charges military and defence spending.

Vyugin was not one of the five sources, who all spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the situation in Russia. The extent of Putin's concerns about the economy,

described by the sources, and the influence of that on views within the Kremlin about the war, are documented here for the first time.

Media has previously reported that Putin is ready to discuss ceasefire options with Trump but that Russia's territorial gains in Ukraine must be accepted and that Ukraine must drop its bid to join the U.S.-led NATO military alliance.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, when asked

about the Reuters reporting, acknowledged "problematic factors" in the economy, but said it was developing at a high rate and was able to meet "all military requirements incrementally" as well as all welfare and social needs.

"There are problems, but unfortunately, problems are now the companies of almost all countries of the world," he said. "The situation is assessed as stable, and there is a margin of safety."

## STAR OF 'BLING EMPIRE: NEW YORK' REALITY SHOW LYNN BAN PASSES AWAY



AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON DC

Lynn Ban, the Singaporean jewellery designer and star of *Bling Empire: New York* who suffered brain and head injuries in a skiing accident just before Christmas, passed away on Monday apparently as a result of the accident, reported Deadline. She was 51.

Lynn's son Sebastian announced the death of his mother. In his Instagram post, Sebastian wrote,

"My mum passed away on Monday, I know she wanted to share her journey after her accident and brain surgery, so I thought she would appreciate one last post sharing the news to people who supported her." as quoted by Deadline.

Lynn Ban, the owner of Lynn Ban Jewelry whose designs have been worn by celebrities including Beyonce, informed fans about her accident in the city of Aspen in Colorado while she was on vacation with her family on December 30.

It was accompanied by a photo of the designer with a partially shaved head and an incision from the emergency craniotomy she underwent on Christmas Eve.

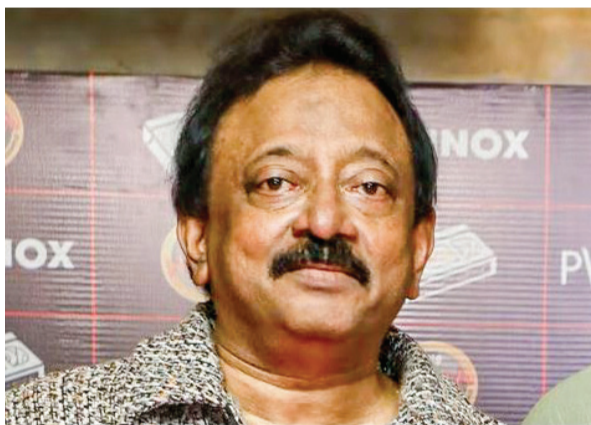
In her Instagram post, the Singaporean jewellery designer revealed that she was on vacation in Aspen with family when she suffered an accident at the top of the mountain. She was wearing a helmet but still sought out the ski patrol to get checked for a possible concussion.

"I had a bit of a headache but thought after lunch it would be fine and I could ski again. The paramedic suggested I go to the hospital for a CAT scan. This saved my life," wrote Lynn.

Describing her accident, Lynn wrote,

"Within 30 minutes they told me I had a brain bleed and needed to be airlifted to the trauma hospital," she wrote. "Last thing I remember was being intubated and waking up after an emergency craniotomy with Jett by my side."

## RAM GOPAL VARMA GETS 3 MONTHS JAIL IN CHEQUE BOUNCE CASE



TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Filmmaker and screenwriter Ram Gopal Varma has been sentenced to three months in jail in the old cheque bounce case. Ram Gopal Varma was sentenced today, on January 23, by a Mumbai court. A non-bailable warrant has also been issued against him for execution of the sentence as per the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) as Ram Gopal Varma failed to present himself before the court.

Judicial Magistrate (First Class) in Andheri, YP Pujari, had convicted Ram Gopal Varma for the offence punishable under the provisions of the Negotiable Instruments Act on Tuesday, January 21.

Apart from a jail sentence, Ram Gopal Varma has also been ordered to pay Rs.3.72 lakh in compensation to the complainant. The filmmaker has been directed to pay the amount within three months. If Ram Gopal Varma fails to pay Rs.3.72 lakh to the complainant, he will have to face an additional three months of imprisonment.

The court found Ram

Gopal Varma guilty under Section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act which 'penalises cheque dishonour due to insufficient funds or exceeding the account's arranged amount'.

Reacting to his sentencing and a non-bailable warrant against him, Ram Gopal Varma said, "With regard to the news about me and Andheri court, I want to clarify that it is to do with a 7-year-old case of Rs.2.38 lakhs relating to an ex-employee."

"It is not about settling the meagre Rs.2.4 lakhs but is about refusing to be exploited in the attempts to fabricate. That's all I can say for now as it's in court," he said.

The case dates back to 2018 when Shree, a company represented by one Maheshchandra Mishra, alleged that a cheque issued by Ram Gopal Varma's firm bounced. The filmmaker was granted bail in April 2022 on a personal bond and a security of Rs.5,000.

The magistrate later noted that there would be no "set-off under Section 428 of the Code of Criminal Procedure" as the filmmaker had not spent any time in custody.

### PICTURE PERFECT

Sarvari poses for her social media. (Instagram)



## OSCARS 2025 TO HONOUR LOS ANGELES AMID WILDFIRE CRISIS

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has shared exciting updates for the upcoming 2025 Oscars ceremony, set to take place on March 2.

In light of the ongoing wildfire crisis in California, the Academy plans to pay special tribute to Los Angeles, a city known as the "city of dreams" and the heart of the film industry.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, in a letter sent to its full membership, Academy CEO Bill Kramer and President Janet Yang announced, "We will honour Los Angeles as the city of dreams, showcasing its beauty and resilience, as well as its role as a beacon



for filmmakers and creative visionaries for over a century."

The letter went on to express the Academy's commitment to recognizing the strength, creativity, and optimism that have long defined the city and its in-

fluence on the global entertainment industry.

Kramer and Yang emphasized that the ceremony would reflect recent events, particularly the ongoing challenges faced by the region due to wildfires, while also celebrating the indomi-

table spirit of the city's residents and its artistic community.

The Academy aims to spotlight Los Angeles not just as a backdrop for filmmaking but as a vital part of the storytelling tradition.

## Boman Irani's directorial 'The Mehta Boys' to be out in February

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

Boman Irani's directorial debut "The Mehta Boys" is all set to be out on OTT.

Avinash Tiwary, Shreya Chaudhry, and Puja Sarup will be seen in the lead roles along with Boman Irani.

As per the makers, "The Mehta Boys" tells the "story of a father and son, at odds with each other, who are unexpectedly compelled to spend 48 hours together. The film follows their tumultuous journey and offers a nuanced exploration of the complexities often inherent in a father-son relationship."

"The Mehta Boys" had its global premiere at the prestigious 15th Chicago South Asian Film Festival (CSAFF) held in September 2024, winning the Best Feature Film Award at the festival followed by a Best Actor win for Boman Irani



at the International Film Festival of South Asia in Toronto held in October 2024. The movie made its Asia debut at the International Film Festival of India (IFFI), Goa in November 2024 and also opened the Indian Film Festival Berlin in January 2025.

On directing the film, Boman Irani in a press note, said, "Bringing The Mehta Boys to life has been an

immensely rewarding and fulfilling journey. As an actor, I have always been fascinated by the power of storytelling, and this project gave me the opportunity to explore a completely new creative avenue as a filmmaker. To me, the intricate bond between a parent and a child has always been intriguing - their dynamics are raw, relatable, and, most im-

portantly, deeply human. I couldn't have asked for a more compelling story or a better team. With Alexander Dinelaris' unique perspective shaping the narrative, the incredible performances of Avinash, Shreya, and Puja breathing life into the characters, and Prime Video's unwavering support, I am thrilled to share this dream project with audiences."

## Ben Affleck returns for action-packed sequel in 'The Accountant 2'

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON

Ben Affleck is back on the big screen in the highly anticipated sequel to his 2016 hit action film "The Accountant". Amazon MGM Studios unveiled the first look at "The Accountant 2", bringing Affleck back in the lead role alongside Jon Bernthal.

The sequel is set to continue the high-stakes, action-packed journey of Christian Wolff, a highly skilled and estranged figure with a complex past, as per People magazine.

In "The Accountant 2," Christian Wolff (played by Affleck) is pulled out of hiding after someone close to him is killed by mysterious



assassins.

To uncover the truth and solve the murder, Wolff enlists the help of his estranged, but lethal, brother Brax (played by Bernthal).

The movie will see the re-

turn of JK Simmons as Ray King, the director of the Treasury Department's financial crimes bureau, who also appeared in the original film.

The film's synopsis teases

an intense and emotional storyline, "Christian Wolff is brought out of hiding by Treasury Agent Marybeth Medina (Cynthia Addai-Robinson) after someone close to them is killed by unknown assassins. To solve the murder, Wolff must recruit the help of his estranged but highly lethal brother Brax," as per People magazine.

"The Accountant 2" will premiere at the SXSW Film Festival on March 8 before hitting theaters on April 25.

However, not all characters from the first film will be returning, with Anna Kendrick, Jeffrey Tambor, Jean Smart, and John Lithgow not reprising their roles.

### BRAIN PICKING



When someone hates you for a reason, give them the reason.



— RASHMIKA MANDANNA  
(Indian Actress)

## VIKRAM'S 'VEERA DHEERA SOORAN' TO RELEASE ON MARCH 27



TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Vikram's *Veera Dheera Sooran: Part 2* will hit screens on March 27, announced the makers on Wednesday. As reported earlier, *Veera Dheera Sooran* will be released in two parts, with the second part being released before the first. It is written and directed by

SU Arunkumar, who last made the widely acclaimed *Chithha*.

An action thriller, *Veera Dheera Sooran* stars SJ Suryah as a cop and Malayalam actor Suraj Venjaramoodu in another prominent role as a gangster.

Dushara Vijayan plays the female lead in the film, produced by Riya Shibui under the banner of HR Pictures.

## KAPIL SHARMA, RAJPAL YADAV RECEIVE DEATH THREATS VIA EMAIL



TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

Comedian Kapil Sharma and actor Rajpal Yadav have reportedly received death threats through an email.

The threatening message was sent to Rajpal Yadav's email account from a person named Vishnu, who allegedly warned that Sharma, his family, his associates, and Rajpal Yadav would be killed.

The email, sent on December 14, 2024, raised concerns and led to a formal complaint.

The Amboli Police has registered the case under Section 351(3) of the Indian Penal Code, which deals with the threat of harm.

They are now conducting an investigation into the threat and the person behind the malicious email.

At this stage, the police have not identified the person responsible, and investigations continue.

Kapil Sharma, known for his wit and humour, has been a beloved figure in Indian entertainment

*The Amboli Police has registered the case under Section 351(3) of the Indian Penal Code, which deals with the threat of harm.*

The threatening message was sent from the email address don99284@gmail.com to Rajpal Yadav's team email account, teamrajpal-yadav@gmail.com.

This led to immediate action, with Yadav's wife, Radha Rajpal Yadav, filing a police complaint at the Amboli Police Station in Mumbai.

for years.

He first gained widespread attention with his victory on *The Great Indian Laughter Challenge 3* and went on to star in hit comedy shows like *Comedy Circus*.

However, it was the 'Comedy Nights with Kapil' show that made him one of India's most prominent comedians.

# Bollywood Actresses Who Embodied Valor in Uniform: A Republic Day Tribute

TDG NETWORK

Republic Day is a celebration of India's unity, sovereignty, and the values enshrined in our Constitution. It's also a time to honor the countless individuals who serve the nation with unwavering dedication. Bollywood, as a powerful medium of storytelling, has often brought such stories to life, showcasing the courage and resilience of women in uniform. Many leading actresses have donned the badge



Tabu's portrayal of IG Meera Deshmukh added depth to the representation of women in authority. Her character's complexity highlights the delicate balance between personal loss and professional duty, echoing the ideals of justice and fairness celebrated on Republic Day.

## PHANTOM

As a RAW agent, Katrina Kaif's portrayal of courage and resilience honors the contributions of those working behind the scenes to safeguard national security.

A Republic Day Reflection These actresses have brought to life the valor and dedication of women in uniform, serving as a reminder of the countless real-life heroes who work tirelessly to uphold the values of justice, equality, and freedom.

honor our heroes in real life, let's also celebrate the cinematic stories that keep their legacy alive, inspiring generations to value and protect the ideals of our great nation.



or represented authority on screen, portraying characters that inspire and remind us of the sacrifices made to uphold justice and protect the nation.

## PRIYANKA CHOPRA IN JAI GANGAAJAL

Priyanka Chopra's portrayal of SP Abha Mathur is a powerful representation of an honest police officer standing firm against corruption. Her fearless character symbolizes integrity and justice, core values celebrated on Republic

Day.

## RANI MUKERJI IN MARDAAANI SERIES

As Senior Inspector Shivani Shivaji Roy, Rani Mukerji brought to life the grit and determination of women in law enforcement. Her fight against human trafficking and crime highlights the relentless pursuit of justice that defines Republic Day's spirit.

## TABU IN DRISHYAM SERIES



her country resonates deeply with the patriotic spirit of Republic Day.

## KATRINA KAIF IN

us to reflect on the sacrifices made for the nation and celebrate the indomitable spirit of service. This Republic Day, as we



# A Complete Guide to Using Henna Cream for Hair Care

CLELIA CECILIA ANGELON

Earlier henna lovers would soak the henna overnight in iron utensils, with coffee and tea powders and add herbs like amla, shikakai to get best results, today life has become simpler with henna cream. The good old henna, that has proven efficacy is now available in a more contemporary form. This pre-mixed henna cream is for the modern-day users who want the benefits of henna but don't have so much time. Readily available in market, henna cream is a great alternative to harsh chemical-based hair dyes as this natural product does not contain any harmful ingredient. It comes with easy to apply applicator, ensuring a mess-free experience, where each strand gets covered easily and you don't have to worry about

staining your hands. Another problem regular henna users face, especially those with more number of grey hair is the orangish tint it gives. While some are okay with it, others prefer shades that are more inclined towards natural brown and black. When mixed with Herbs found in Amazonian forests such as Acai, Guarana, Jaborandi, Cumaru, Babacu oil along with Ayurvedic herbs such as amla henna can give varied colors like copper, dark brown, natural black, chocolate, and even red. Thus, such henna cream will not just cover greys but it is also apt for the fashionistas who love to flaunt the latest hair color. The henna cream is a natural alternative, and it is vegan and cruelty-free. Henna cream is a natural conditioner for hair as it leaves hair soft. It also nourishes the scalp as



well as the hair from root to tip, strengthening and ensuring that there is less hair fall. The deep conditioning with henna cream also makes your hair frizz-free and provides hydration to the hair. The added herbs also further nourish

the hair, leaving you with gorgeous tresses. Compared to harsh chemical dyes that are more popular nowadays, henna is safe to use. These harsh chemical-based hair dyes contain ammonia and its by-products such as

Ethanolamine, Diethanolamine, and Triethanolamine. With henna cream you can be sure that no such chemicals will impact you. Infact it does not contain parabens, EDTA, synthetic fragrances, PPD, Resorcinol or heavy met-



als. They don't just impact hair health but can lead to cancer upon prolonged use. With henna cream you can be sure of a great, natural product that has no side effect. With so many benefits, henna cream is becoming quite popular amongst users. It also offers the comfort of home as you can apply it on your own, relax and unwind or finish your pending chores and wash it off in one and a

half to two hours. You can also apply it at night, and wash off before you sleep. This convenience is only possible because you don't need to visit a salon to apply it. Wait for a day and then shampoo your hair with a mild shampoo. Infact it is better to use a post-coloration hair care range that consists of shampoo, conditioner. Being mild in nature, they ensure that the hair color stays longer. Henna cream when ap-

plied with right products can give lasting results. The color stays for as long as two-three months or up to 10 washes. You will only need to do root touch-up as per your hair growth. With such great benefits, who wouldn't want to incorporate it in their hair care. Henna cream not just colors the hair but nourishes them too, leaving you with gorgeous, flowy mane.



Clelia Cecilia Angelon.

## PRITHVIRAJ JEWELS HOSTS AN EXCLUSIVESHOWCASE OF TIMELESS LUXURY AT TAJ PALACE

TDG NETWORK

Prithviraj Jewels, celebrated for its luxury craftsmanship, recently hosted an exclusive exhibition at Taj Palace, New Delhi. The event unveiled a stunning collection of diamond, Polki, and bridal jewelry, reflecting the brand's signature fusion of tradition and contemporary elegance.

The showcase captivated discerning guests with meticulously designed pieces, from dazzling diamond necklaces to intricate Polki earrings, catering to refined tastes. Founder Kanika Agrawal remarked, "Each piece tells a story of craftsmanship, heritage, and beauty. This exhibition was a perfect platform to present our vision of timeless luxury for the modern woman." Guests enjoyed per-



sonalized consultations, gaining insights into the artistry behind each design. The event also emphasized Prithviraj Jewels' commitment to sustainability and ethical sourcing, ensuring that every creation represents not only luxury but also environmental responsibility.

Established in 2012 by Kanika Agrawal, Prithviraj Jewels has become a

The showcase captivated discerning guests with meticulously designed pieces, from dazzling diamond necklaces to intricate Polki earrings, catering to refined tastes.

leader in luxury jewelry, blending traditional Indian techniques with modern aesthetics. With showrooms in Chandni Chowk and South Ex-

tension II, the brand continues to redefine responsible luxury, offering timeless creations crafted from the finest materials.

# New Year New Launches!

SANJANA CHAWLA

New Year has come upon all of us in its full spirit and I can not wait to delve in the new year and try new launches! From makeup to skincare and fragrances, the India market is bustling with new products already and there are some we totally approve of! Read on as we share our top picks for January 2025.

## POMEGRANATE WRAP REPAIRING HYDRATING LIP MASK BY 82E

I'm obsessed with the Pomegranate Wrap Repairing Hydrating Lip Mask by 82E by Deepika Padukone! As someone who's always on-the-go, my lips tend to get dry and chapped. But this mask has been a game-changer. The creamy texture and subtle scent of pomegranate are absolute winners. After just one use, my lips felt noticeably softer and smoother. I'll definitely be adding this to my weekly self-care routine!

Pearly Glow Liquid Highlighter by House of Makeup I'm absolutely loving the Pearly Glow Liquid Highlighter



by House of Makeup in the shade Moonlight! As someone with fair skin, it can be tough to find a highlighter that doesn't look too harsh. But this one is perfect. The lightweight, buildable formula of these highlighters, which are available in four shades, gives my skin a radiant glow without looking too over-the-top. I've been applying it to the high points of my face for a subtle, lit-from-within look. Brand also caters to those with deeper skin tones, giving them a stunning, sun-kissed glow.

2000 CALORIE LIP GLAZE BY MAX FACTOR The 2000 Calorie Lip Glaze

by Max Factor in the shade Floral Cream has become my new go-to lip gloss! The rich, creamy texture and sweet, floral scent are absolute winners. The shade Floral Cream adds a subtle wash of color to my lips, and the glossy finish is perfect for everyday wear. Lip Glaze in shade Cotton Candy is just as good and I love the subtle nude-pink hue it adds to my lips! These lip glazes are very lightweight and easy to build up, making it a perfect pick for everyday use. Want to know the best part? The glazes are enriched with hyaluronic acid and squalane - ensuring

that your makeup is enriched with all the goodness!

## SOLID PERFUMES BY BLUR INDIA

Last but not least, I've been testing the Solid Perfumes by Blur India. I'm a big fan of the sleek, compact packaging, and the subtle, lingering scent is perfect for everyday wear. I love that these perfumes are solid, making them perfect for tossing into my bag-on-the-go. Overall, I'm really impressed with these solid perfumes and would definitely recommend them to anyone looking for a convenient, long-lasting fragrance.

# HANDLING A COCKTAIL OF EMOTIONS: ONKAR SHARMA ON VENGEANCE, DESPAIR, AND HOPE IN HIS WRITING

“Revenge is a complex emotion”, says author Onkar Sharma.



PROF SHIV SETHI

Onkar Sharma, author of the gripping political thriller ‘Revenge Theory’ and the evocative poetry collection ‘Songs of Suicide’, has established himself as a storyteller who delves deep into the complexities of human emotions. His works resonate

with cultural crossovers and universal appeal, offering raw and unflinching insights into the human psyche. While ‘Revenge Theory’ captivates with its morally ambiguous narrative, ‘Songs of Suicide’ has been lauded for its direct and empathetic portrayal of mental health struggles.

We caught up with Sharma to explore his inspirations, creative process, and what lies ahead.

Why Revenge Theory? Isn’t revenge an overused theme in fiction?

Writing ‘Revenge Theory’ wasn’t a planned effort—it was born from a story that had been sim-

merging within me for years. I had to let it out, and the characters that I created helped shape that narrative. Revenge, as a theme, might seem over-used, but what sets a story apart is the treatment of that theme. My goal was to craft a narrative that entertains, drives readers to the edge, and makes them think even after the last page is turned.

Through ‘Revenge Theory’, I explore the darker facets of human emotions and how they drive individuals to make life-altering decisions. Pratigya’s resilience and Kuldeep’s role as her emotional an-



chor symbolize the intricate interplay of support and transformation.

How does the theme of revenge tie into justice

and morality in Revenge Theory?

Revenge is a complex emotion—it often blurs the lines between justice and morality. Through Pratigya’s journey, I wanted to explore whether revenge truly provides closure or simply perpetuates a cycle of pain. The twists in the novel challenge readers to reflect on their own beliefs about right and wrong. It’s this ambiguity that makes the story compelling and leaves a lasting impression.

What emotions or experiences influenced your poetry collection, Songs of Suicide?

‘Songs of Suicide’ is deeply personal to me. The inspiration came from witnessing the struggles of my mother, who battled a psychotic disorder with suicidal tendencies. That experience gave me a unique perspective on the anguish and isolation that people in similar situations face.

My intention was to be direct and honest, not subtle or abstract. I wanted the verses to speak to readers in a way that feels immediate and relatable, offering understanding and perhaps even solace.

Your works explore intense emotions like

vengeance and despair. How do you balance such themes with relatable storytelling?

I believe the key is grounding the story in reality. Even in extreme situations, I ensure that my characters face dilemmas and emotions that readers can connect with. This relatability keeps the narrative engaging and impactful.

At the same time, I avoid preaching or being overly didactic—it’s important to respect the reader’s intelligence.

What’s next for you? Fiction or poetry?

I’m working on several

ideas for my next novel, which could potentially turn into a series. It’s an exciting project, but I’d prefer to keep the details under wraps for now. Readers can expect something very soon.

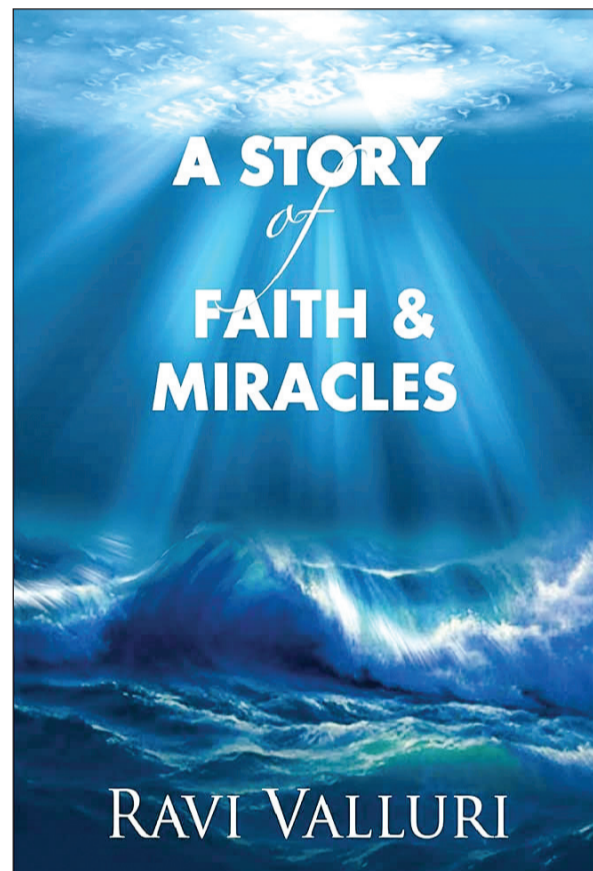
I’m also continuing to write poetry on a range of topics, including climate change, modern life’s challenges, and the complexities of human relationships. Through both fiction and poetry, my aim is to offer readers a mirror to their own experiences—stories and verses that inspire introspection, empathy, and understanding.

## FAITH CAN MOVE MOUNTAINS

RUPALI SETHI

When it comes to miracle, people have varied opinions. The votaries of science and the advocates of logic are most of the times stubbornly of the opinion that miracles have no solid grounds. Hence, they give no credence to the idea of miracles and outrightly repudiate the concept with rather somewhat undue vehemence and a smirk on their faces. Though the other strata of society firmly opines that miracles are not the sheer longings of a dejected mind sauntering in some imaginary realms. They do happen in real life. Arguments are galore pertaining to these both schools of thought but when we leaf through the page of the book “A Story of Faith & Miracles” by India’s eminent author Ravi Valluri, we tend to have a strong conviction that the dish of miracles can waft out soul-stirring aroma if it is leavened with the catalytic ingredient of faith.

“A story of faith & miracles” is an outspoken and a re-



markable autobiography of author Ravi Valluri which certainly makes him one of the outstanding authors from India who has now carved

his niche in the mainstream print media. Since the book is a meticulously written autobiography, it transports the readers to the landscape

*“A Story of Faith & Miracles” is an outspoken and a remarkable autobiography of author Ravi Valluri which certainly makes him one of the outstanding authors from India who has now carved his niche in the mainstream print media. Since the book is a meticulously written autobiography, it transports the readers to the landscape of author’s personal life.*

of author’s personal life. The life of author is nothing short of a rollercoaster ride that offers the readers multiple experiences. Such is the transformative impact of the book under discussion that recently it has received India’s top most literary accolade known as ‘Eminence & Glory Award’. Having read this book with rapt attention, a literary critic can draw the most pertinent conclusion that the author Ravi Valluri does subscribe to “Art For The Sake of Art” movement of Benjamin Constant and Victor Cousin. He rather seems to be a firm

exponent of Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin, who believe in “Art for the sake of Life” theory. The moral point of view, according to Carlyle and Ruskin, should be the norm on which literature should be judged. Art should be used to improve people’s life and this is exactly what the author of this book has done through his magnum opus work of sublime artistic sensibilities.

The author embarks on the process of the narration of this beautiful tale with his birth and how his mother reposes a firm faith in a few great personalities like Swami

Vivekananda. The influence of these intellectuals is quite conspicuous on the author. The book can be life changing for millions of those youngsters who have fallen into the quagmire of illicit drugs. It sheds a flood of light on author’s struggling days when he himself had developed addictions and the most heart-touching manner, he confesses his addictions to his mother and the ensuing changes he has to confront. Much to our delight, he successfully manages to defeat the demons of drugs.

Most of us are of the opinion that spirituality can be our chief bulwark during the times of adversity and a real Guru can hold our hand as a true guide. Similarly the book depicts author’s spiritual evolution under the tutelage of his great grand master.

The fact cannot be refuted that having read this book, readers are bound to experience a new lease of vigor and vitality in every nerve of theirs. Hence, it comes in the category of “A Must Read” book.

POEM

THE SARAIGHAT- RANVEER



ARBIND KUMAR CHOUDHARY

Veer Lachit Borphan is as bright as silver  
Who watches over the latin lover

For the moon silver of the thanksgiver

Amidst many a thirty pieces of silver?

This Charaideo-liver is the rare thriver

Who has many arrows in the quiver

For the river of the striver

Amidst many a back seat driver?

This Ahom-Balveer is really the Rudraveer  
Who creates wreathed silver

For the silver of Gulliver

Amidst many a chopped liver?  
How can one carry over this war-fever

Amidst many a money fever?

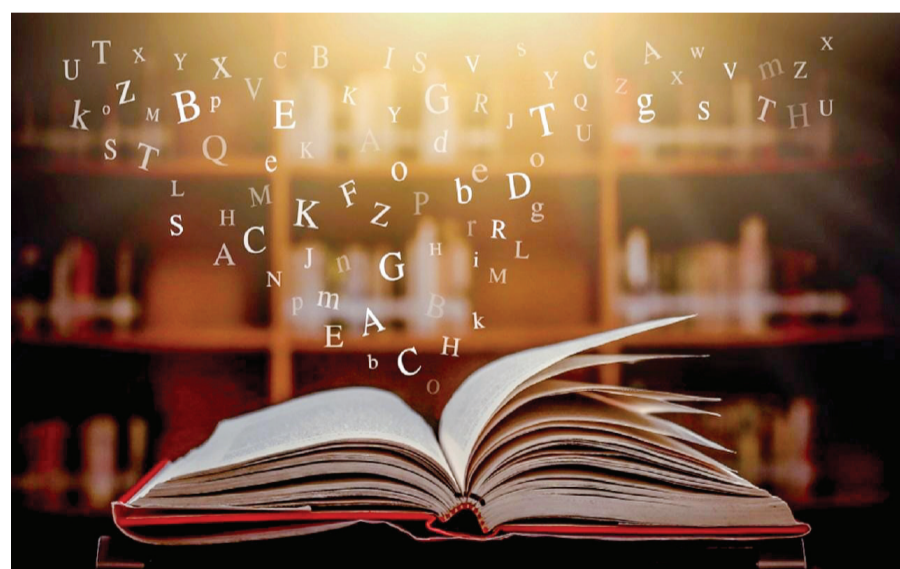
## How literature can foster empathy and understanding

TDG NETWORK

Literature has long been celebrated as a mirror to society, reflecting the complexities of human emotions, relationships, and experiences. Beyond entertainment, literature serves as a powerful tool for fostering empathy and understanding, bridging cultural, social, and emotional divides. By immersing readers in diverse perspectives, literature enables them to see the world through the eyes of others, cultivating a deeper sense of compassion and awareness.

### THE POWER OF PERSPECTIVE

One of the most remarkable aspects of literature is its ability to transport readers into the lives of characters from different backgrounds, time periods, and cultures. Whether it’s Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which explores racial injustice in the American South, or Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner*, which delves into the struggles of friendship and redemption in war-torn Afghanistan, literature allows readers to step into unfamiliar worlds. This immersion helps readers understand



the challenges, joys, and sorrows of others, fostering a sense of shared humanity.

By experiencing life through the eyes of fictional characters, readers develop an emotional connection that transcends their own realities. This connection builds empathy, as it encourages readers to consider situations and feelings they might never encounter in their own lives.

### BREAKING CULTURAL BARRIERS

In an increasingly globalized world, literature serves as a bridge between cultures, helping readers appreciate the

richness and diversity of human experiences. Books like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun* or Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* offer insights into the intricacies of Nigerian and Indian cultures, respectively. Through these stories, readers gain a nuanced understanding of traditions, values, and struggles that may differ from their own.

This cultural exposure is especially important in combating stereotypes and prejudices. Literature humanizes people from different backgrounds, presenting them as multi-dimensional individuals rather

than mere caricatures. As readers engage with these stories, they learn to appreciate the complexities of other cultures, fostering a sense of mutual respect and understanding.

### EXPLORING EMOTIONAL DEPTHS

Literature also provides a safe space for readers to explore their own emotions and those of others. Through characters’ struggles with grief, love, fear, and hope, readers gain insights into the human condition. For instance, Viktor Frankl’s *Man’s Search for Meaning* offers profound reflections on suffering and resilience, while Elizabeth Gilbert’s *Eat,*



Pray, Love explores self-discovery and healing.

These emotional journeys encourage readers to reflect on their own feelings and empathize with those who may be experiencing similar challenges. This emotional resonance not only deepens self-awareness but also nurtures a greater understanding of others’ inner worlds.

### LITERATURE AS A CATALYST FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Empathy cultivated through literature can inspire readers to take action in the real world. Books that highlight social injustices, such as George Orwell’s 1984

or Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*, provoke critical thinking and raise awareness about pressing issues. By engaging with these narratives, readers are often moved to advocate for change, whether it’s through activism, education, or simply spreading awareness.

Moreover, literature often gives voice to marginalized communities, shedding light on their struggles and aspirations. Works like Angie Thomas’s *The Hate U Give* and Maya Angelou’s *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* empower readers to empathize with those who face systemic oppression, fostering a col-

lective sense of responsibility to address these issues.

### THE ROLE OF DIVERSE REPRESENTATION

For literature to effectively foster empathy, it must represent a wide range of voices and experiences. Diverse narratives ensure that readers are exposed to perspectives that challenge their assumptions and broaden their horizons. By reading stories from underrepresented groups, readers not only learn about others but also recognize the importance of inclusivity and equity in storytelling.

Literature’s ability to

One of the most remarkable aspects of literature is its ability to transport readers into the lives of characters from different backgrounds, time periods, and cultures.

foster empathy and understanding lies in its power to connect people across boundaries of time, culture, and experience. By immersing readers in diverse narratives, literature encourages them to see the world through the eyes of others, cultivating compassion and awareness. In a world often divided by differences, literature serves as a unifying force, reminding us of our shared humanity and the importance of understanding one another. As we continue to read and share stories, we take small but significant steps toward building a more empathetic and harmonious society.

WOMEN'S U-19 T20 WORLD CUP

# INDIA TOPS GROUP WITH FLAWLESS SHOW

AGENCIES  
KUALA LUMPUR

India finished at the top of Group A after blowing away Sri Lanka on Thursday in the Women's Under-19 T20 World Cup 2025. In the other game, the West Indies secured their spot in the Super Six stage by knocking out the hosts, Malaysia.

India maintained its flawless run in the group stage in Kuala Lumpur with an emphatic 60-run victory over Sri Lanka, who were also unbeaten before the match.

Opening batter Gongadi Trisha lifted India to 118/9 with her valuable 49(44). Mithila Vinod chipped in with a crucial cameo of 16(10), which propelled India to a fighting total.

India was in a dire situation when they lost two wickets in



File Photo.

four balls. But Trisha came to India's rescue and helped her side recover from 17/2 to 78/4.

When Sri Lanka came to chase 119, it wasn't the picture-perfect start they would

have hoped for. In the first five overs, Sri Lanka lost a wicket, with Shabnam Shakil and VJ Joshitha claiming two wickets each.

Rashmika Sewwandi

tried to inject some life into Sri Lanka's chase with her 15(12), but it proved to be insubstantial. Sri Lanka's final pair of Pramudi Methsara and Chamodi Praboda toiled

hard to survive 10 overs and successfully avoided getting bowled out.

Before India's triumph, the West Indies ousted Malaysia with a 53-run triumph. Even though the Caribbean side managed to put just 112/7 on the board, the West Indies managed to skittle out Malaysia on 59, finishing third in Group A. West Indies opener Asabi Callendar laid the foundation with her 30(42). Jahzara Claxton (19) and Abigail Bryce (14) provided valuable contributions to take the West Indies to 112/7.

In reply, Malaysia never found the rhythm, with batters failing to put up a defiant stand. Wickets kept falling one after another, adding to Malaysia's misery, which eventually ended in the 18th over as they folded their innings on 59.

# West Indies crush Malaysia to secure Super Six spot

TDG NETWORK  
KUALA LUMPUR

West Indies secured their place in the Super Six stage of the Women's Under-19 T20 World Cup 2025 with a commanding 53-run victory over hosts Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur on Thursday. Despite posting a modest total of 112 for 7 in their 20 overs, the West Indies bowlers dismantled Malaysia's batting lineup, bowling them out for just 59 runs and finishing third in Group A.

The loss marked Malaysia's exit from the tournament, as they ended at the bottom of the group with three consecutive defeats.

West Indies captain and all-rounder Samara Ramnath was the standout performer in this virtual knockout clash. Although she scored only 5 runs at the top of the



File Photo.

order, she made a significant impact with the ball, claiming 4 wickets for just 6 runs. Her figures are the third-best in this edition of the tournament, behind the five-wicket hauls of Vaishnavi Sharma (India) and Maisie Maceira (Scotland).

Malaysia appeared steady at 38 for 2 after 10 overs while chasing a target of 113, but Ramnath triggered a dramatic collapse. She took four crucial wickets, all either bowled

or lbw, reducing Malaysia to 59 all out as they lost their last eight wickets for just 21 runs.

Ramnath struck in her second over, dismissing her counterpart, Nur Daniya Syuhada, who had earlier taken her wicket. In the same over, she trapped Nur Izzatul Syafiqah lbw. Returning for her next spell, she clean-bowled Suabika Manivannan before sealing the demolition in the 18th over.

# MCA achieves a unique record

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI

The Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) on Thursday achieved the Guinness World Record for the largest cricket ball sentence using 14,505 red and white varieties of the ball here at the Wankhede Stadium.

The feat came as a part of MCA's grand celebrations for the completion of 50 years of one of India's iconic cricket venues, the Wankhede Stadium here, which has been home to some of Indian cricket's superstars. It was also the venue where India achieved their second 50-over World Cup title in 2011 under the legendary



MS Dhoni.

"We are thrilled to announce that the Mumbai Cricket Association has achieved a Guinness World Record for the largest cricket ball sentence at Wankhede Stadium, using 14,505 red & white cricket balls," said MCA president Ajinkya Naik.

"This incredible feat, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the first Test match at Wankhede, is dedicated

to the memory of Late Shri Eknath Solkar and other former Mumbai players who have served Mumbai cricket and are no longer with us," he added.

The record was created on the anniversary of the first international match at the Wankhede Stadium played in 1975 from January 23-29 between India and the West Indies. Solkar had scored a century in that contest.

"MCA will give the balls, which were used to achieve this record, to the aspiring cricketers of schools, clubs and NGOs in the city, encouraging them to take inspiration from this record and achieve greater milestones in their careers," the governing body said in a statement.

# Abhishek joins Yuvraj in elite T20 record



Abhishek Sharma plays a shot.

AGENCIES  
KOLKATA

Abhishek Sharma engineered an explosive performance and delivered

India's second-fastest fifty for India against England (in terms of balls faced) in the T20I format at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata. Indian left-handers

bashing English bowlers in the T20I format has been a love affair that became famous with Yuvraj Singh's exploits in the 2007 T20 World Cup.

Mentored by Yuvraj, Abhishek put his power-hitting ability on exhibition in the series opener against English tearaways. His swift 79 from a mere 34 deliveries took centerstage as India effortlessly chased down 133 with more than seven overs to spare.

During his blitzkrieg, Abhishek celebrated his 50 in just 20 balls, the second fastest by an Indian against England in the T20I format.

Abhishek's mentor, Yuvraj, holds the record for hammering the fastest fifty, brought up in just 12 deliveries in Durban in 2007. KL Rahul's heroics in Manchester, in 2018 saw him celebrate his fifty in 27 deliveries.

In Eden Gardens on Wednesday, out of Abhishek's 79 runs, 68 came in the form of boundaries. With his repertoire of shots, he reeled away five

fours and a whopping eight maximums while striking at 232.35.

He certainly had luck on his side after being dropped twice in the game. He unleashed a flurry of boundaries during his swashbuckling performance and brought up his fifty in style with a dazzling six.

After being dropped for the second time, his luck eventually ran out. He attempted to loft a delivery from Adil Rashid but was caught by Harry Brook at long-off, ending his explosive knock of 79 (34 balls). Abhishek's efforts saw India chase down a paltry 133-run target with 43 balls to spare. This is the fastest successful chase for India against England in men's T20Is with the most balls remaining.

Before the record-shattering display in Kolkata, India's fastest successful chase with most balls to spare dates back to 2012. When India set out to chase 158 in Pune, the hosts managed to achieve the feat with 13 balls left.



# Rohit's struggles continue with a 3-run knock in Ranji

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI

Team India captain Rohit Sharma's poor form with the bat continued as he was dismissed for just 3 runs on the opening day of the Ranji Trophy match against Jammu & Kashmir at Mumbai on Thursday. Rohit faced 19 deliveries before falling to pacer Umar Nazir Mir, extending his run of disappointing performances.

Rohit's last Ranji Trophy appearance for Mumbai was in November 2015 when he

scored a blazing 113 off 140 balls against Uttar Pradesh in a match that ended in a draw.

In Test cricket, Rohit's recent performances have raised concerns about his form. During India's tour of Australia, the seasoned opener managed just 31 runs in five innings across three Tests. The 2024-25 Test season, in particular, was disappointing for Rohit. He accumulated only 164 runs in eight matches and 15 innings at an average of 10.93, with his highest score being 52, a solitary half-century against Bangladesh.

As captain, Rohit faced some significant challenges. Before the Test series against Australia, India suffered their first home Test series

defeat in 12 years, losing 0-3 to New Zealand. This was also India's first-ever white-wash in a home Test series since 2000.

After India's 295-run victory in the first Test against Australia at Perth under the leadership of Jasprit Bumrah, Rohit rejoined the team following the birth of his second child.

The Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) announced the senior selection committee's decision regarding Rohit's inclusion on January 20.

Young southpaw Yashasvi Jaiswal who is Rohit's batting partner in red-ball cricket for India was dismissed early as well, he managed only 4 runs before being trapped LBW by Auqib Nabi.

RACING



SIR LEWIS HAMILTON, SCUDERIA FERRARI DRIVER.(X)

# Sabalenka in Australian Open final

AGENCIES  
MELBOURNE

Two-time champion Aryna Sabalenka reached her third successive Australian Open final, defeating 11th seed Paula Badosa in the semifinal on Thursday.

Beating Badosa 6-4, 6-2, the defending champion now has a chance to win her third Australian Open title. She also extended her winning streak at Melbourne Park to 20 matches.

The star player remains undefeated in 2025, extending her win streak to 11 matches. Sabalenka, 26, is the first woman to reach three Australian Open fi-



nals since Serena Williams and the youngest since Martina Hingis.

With this win, Sabalenka improved her record against Badosa to six wins and two losses. She will face either world number two Iga Swi-

atek or number 14 Madison Keys in the title clash. Sabalenka is also aiming to become the first woman to win three successive Australian Open titles since Hingis, who won from 1997 to 1999.

Badosa, the Spaniard, is set to return to the top 10 in the WTA rankings after making it to her first-ever Grand Slam semifinal. She also secured her first top-10 win at a Grand Slam, defeating Coco Gauff in the quarterfinals.

Beating Badosa 6-4, 6-2, the defending champion now has a chance to win her third Australian Open title. She also extended her winning streak at Melbourne Park to 20 matches.

Badosa made a strong start to the match, holding a 2-0, 40-0 lead but failed to convert it into a triple-game point. Sabalenka steadied herself and broke Badosa in an eight-minute game to put the match back on serve. The world number one then won four successive games to build a 4-2 lead. From that point, she never looked back and did not face another break point in a match that lasted almost one and a half hours.

Sabalenka secured the win with 26 winners and 18 unforced errors, while Badosa managed just eight winners and 14 unforced errors.

# Coach Jude vows to play free-flowing hockey

TDG NETWORK  
RANCHI

Soorma Hockey Club is a step away from qualifying for the Final of the Women's Hockey India League (HIL) 2024-25. They need to secure at least one point against Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers at the Marang Gomke Jaipal Singh Munda AstroTurf Hockey Stadium in Ranchion Friday to advance to the final, a release from the league said.

Soorma Hockey Club is

at the top spot in the women's HIL with three wins and two losses, giving them a total of 10 points.

"Our approach to this whole campaign has been that we want to win every game we play. So, we're just focusing now on the match against the Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers. That's the most important game for us at this stage so we're taking it one step at a time and after that game, then we look ahead of what we have got to do. We have still got to do the busi-

ness in the next game," head coach Jude Menezes shared ahead of the game as quoted by a HIL press release.

Soorma has been flying high in the League. Sonam has been in scintillating form up front, scoring four goals in five matches for Soorma while Charlotte Englebert has chipped in with two goals. Although, all of their 11 goals have come from open play with the teams struggling to convert from penalty corners across the League.