



4
MAHA TO SOON GET 3RD DEPUTY CM FROM SHIV SENA (SHINDE): RAUT



11
ISRAELI ARMY WITHDRAWAL FROM LEBANON WILL LAST BEYOND 60 DAYS



16
DJOKOVIC QUILTS MID-MATCH; ZVEREV REACHES AUSTRALIAN OPEN FINAL

RUCKUS AT WAQF JPC MEET, OPPOSITION MPs SUSPENDED

JPC chief accuses TMC MP of using unparliamentary language

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Jagdambika Pal, chairman of the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, accused Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Kalyan Banerjee of using “unparliamentary” language against him. He said that the House was adjourned twice due to the alleged ruckus created by the opposition leaders, who have been suspended from the JPC meeting.

Pal said that BJP MP Nishikant Dubey moved a motion to suspend the opposition MPs for creating a “ruckus” after they resorted to “shouting” and “sloganeering” while not allowing the meeting to continue.

“We adjourned the House twice. We had given time to Mirwaiz Umar Farooq on the suggestions of the opposition only. Kalyan Banerjee used unparliamentary words against me and abused me. I kept requesting him to let the invitees speak. However, they were adamant about creating a ruckus. We adjourned the house again and again but they (opposition MPs) did not want the meeting to



Hurriyat Conference chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and others after attending the JPC meeting on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill 2024, in New Delhi on Friday. (ANI Photo)

continue. From Jammu and Kashmir, a delegation had come but they (opposition MPs) kept shouting and sloganeering...so finally Nishikant Dubey had to move a motion and everyone agreed to suspend them,” Jagdambika Pal said.

Responding to allegations of changing the subject of the notice for the JPC sitting, Pal said that the agenda was changed only for today and considering the requests made by the opposition, who wanted Kashmiri cleric Mirwaiz Umar Farooq to be invited to the meeting.

“We changed the agenda for today only on the request of the opposition leaders who contacted me saying that Mirwaiz should be invited and shifted today’s agenda (to hold a discussion clause-by-clause to January 27,” Pal added.

Responding to the allegations of rushing the proceedings for the JPC meeting owing to Delhi assembly elections, the senior BJP leader said that it was Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju who urged the speaker to refer the bill to JPC and not the opposition.

“If the government wanted to hasten things, why would it refer the bill to JPC? The government has a majority in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. The opposition didn’t, but Kiren Rijju, after introducing it in the Parliament, himself urged the speaker to refer the bill to JPC,” Pal said, adding, “Mirwaiz and his delegation expressed their concerns and raised objections to certain sections (of the bill). This shows that the parliamentary democracy in the country is being strengthened.”

P3

Hurriyat leader takes part in meet

NEW DELHI: As Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, the religious head of Muslims in Kashmir, opposed the Waqf (Amendment) Bill before a parliamentary committee, several BJP members took heart from his decision to be part of the constitutional process as the Hurriyat leader has been associated with separatist politics in the Valley.

“The best part was that he put his points strongly and cited his constitutional right to express his objections to different clauses of the Bill,” BJP MP Sanjay Jaiswal, a member of the joint committee of Parliament scrutinising the proposed law, said.

Though Farooq appeared before the committee in his capacity as patron of Muttahida Majlis-e-Ulema, he is also the leader of the moderate faction of Hurriyat.

AGENCIES

India asks UK to act against disruptors of ‘Emergency’ screening

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India on Friday said it expects the UK to take strong and appropriate action against anti-India elements allegedly involved in disrupting the screenings of actor Kangana Ranaut’s new movie ‘Emergency’ in that country.

There were reports that the screening of the movie was disrupted in North-West London, Wolverhampton, Birmingham, Slough, Staines and Manchester.

During the weekly press briefing, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal commented on the reports citing obstructions towards the screening of the ‘Emergency’ movie in the UK.

Freedom of speech and



Freedom of speech and expression cannot be applied selectively: MEA

expression cannot be applied selectively and those obstructing it must be held accountable. External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

He also spoke about the reports citing the presence of Khalistani terrorist Pannun at Donald Trump’s swearing-in ceremony.

Jaiswal said the Indian

high commission in London remained in touch with the Indian community members for their safety and welfare.

“We expect the UK side to take strong and appropriate action in this matter,” he said.

“Emergency” is a biographical drama that is seen as an attempt to chronicle events that took place under the leadership of former prime minister Indira Gandhi during the period when she imposed Emergency in the country.

When asked about the destructions being caused by Khalistani forces in some UK theatres screening ‘Emergency’, Jaiswal said, “We have also seen several reports on how the film, ‘Emergency’, which was being screened in several halls was being obstructed. We consistently raise

P3

MP bans liquor in 17 religious cities

AGENCIES
KHARGONE (MP)

Mohan Yadav-led Madhya Pradesh government held a cabinet meeting in Maheshwar, Kharbone district on Friday and approved a significant decision of liquor ban in 17 religious cities in the state.

CM Yadav stressed that the liquor shops running in those cities will be shut down permanently and it would not be shifted elsewhere.

“To ensure that the state move towards liquor ban

gradually, we have decided that in the first phase liquor shops would be shut down in Nagar Palika, Nagar Parishad and Nagar Panchayat of 17 cities in the states. These shops will not be shifted anywhere else. It has been decided to shut down these shops permanently,” CM Yadav said.

The 17 religious cities where liquor has been banned include one municipal corporation, six Nagar Palika, six Nagar Parishad and six gram panchayats in the state.

Liquor shops will be com-

pletely shut down within the limits of Ujjain Municipal Corporation. Similarly, liquor banned Nagar Palikas include Datia, Panna, Mandla, Multai, Mandasaur and Maihar.

Additionally, the Nagar Parishad where liquor shops will be shut down permanently includes Omkareshwar, Maheshwar, Mandleshwar, Orchha, Chitrakoot and Amarkantak.

Furthermore, the Gram Panchayats where liquor will be banned include Salkanpur, Barman Kala, Linga,

Barman Khurd, Kundalpur and Bandakpur. (ANI)

Expressing pleasure over the decision, the Deputy Chief Minister, state ministers, and residents welcomed it and thanked Chief Minister Mohan Yadav for making the decision.

Meanwhile, Congress leaders demanded that if the state government wanted to maintain the purity of the religious cities then all kinds of intoxicants should be banned, alleging that the state is affected by dry intoxicants.

P3

Haryana Police books Alok Nath, Talpade

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

Bollywood Actors Alok Nath and Shreyas Talpade, who promoted the Human Welfare Credit Cooperative Society as brand ambassadors, have been



Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with the participants of the Republic Day Parade, in New Delhi on Friday. ANI

Akhilesh alleges ‘disparity’ in Ayodhya administrative postings

TDG NETWORK
LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav on Friday alleged a disparity in the representation of backward castes, Dalits and minorities in the administrative postings in Ayodhya.

Sharing a chart on X that highlights the alleged under-representation, Yadav targeted the BJP-led Uttar Pradesh government for “discrimination in governance”.



“Under the BJP’s rule, the inverse arithmetic of bias prevails. Despite the PDA (a combination of backward castes, Dalits and minorities) making up 90 per cent of the population,

their share in Ayodhya’s administrative appointments is around 20 per cent. Meanwhile, communities that form only 10 per cent dominate 80 per cent of the posts,” the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister said in a post on X.

The graph shows 13 administrative postings in Ayodhya, of which only three have been given to members of the PDA communities.

Yadav has coined the term

P3

Gold price breaches Rs 83k-mark for first time

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Gold prices rose Rs 200 to breach the level of Rs 83,000 per 10 grams for the first time in Delhi on Friday. The hike in prices comes amid aggressive buying triggered by global market uncertainties.

All-India Sarafa Association said the metal of 99.9 per cent purity rose Rs 200 to hit a fresh lifetime high of Rs 83,100 per 10 grams. It had closed at Rs 82,900 per 10 grams on Thursday. “Gold extend-



P3

Amul cuts milk prices by Re 1/litre across India

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Amul milk prices have been cut by Re 1 per litre across India. The Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), which markets dairy products under the Amul brand, has reduced milk prices. The reduction in is only for one-litre packs.

News reports quoted GCMMF managing director Jayen Mehta as saying that “we have reduced the prices of one-litre packs by Rs 1 per litre across India.”

In Delhi, the



P3

Auto, taxi basic fare up by Rs 3 in Mumbai

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

The transport authority has approved a hike of Rs 3 in the basic fare of CNG-run autorickshaws and black-and-yellow taxis from February 1 in Mumbai and its surrounding metropolitan region, an official said on Friday. A Mumbai Metropolitan Region Transport Authority (MMRTA) release said the new basic fare for autorickshaws will be Rs 26 instead of Rs 23, while it will rise to Rs 31 from the current Rs 28



P3

SKM rejects new agri-marketing policy

AGENCIES
CHANDIGARH

Rejecting the National Policy Framework on Agricultural Marketing (NPFAM), calling it a new version of the three controversial farm laws that were repealed after massive protests, Samyukta Kisan Mor-

cha (SKM) has announced to launch countrywide protests to unite farmers against the policy.

The decision was taken at a meeting attended by 165 representatives from 73 farmer organizations across 12 states.

DETAILS P2

Blast in ordnance factory kills 8 in Maharashtra

AGENCIES
BHANDARA (MAHARASHTRA)

The death toll in the ordnance factory blast in the Jawahar Nagar area of Bhandara district, has risen to eight, according to officials on Friday.

The blast incident claimed the lives of eight, while 13

people have been rescued from the site of the incident and five people are currently undergoing treatment.

Nagpur Range Inspector General Dilip Patil Bhujbal also shared the development and said, “Today, at around 11 am, a huge explosion took place at the Ordnance factory in Bhan-



dara. The officials reached the spot immediately.

The search and rescue operations were completed within 8 hours. It was a unit to make low-temperature plastic explosives.”

“13 people were working at the unit. 8 lost their lives and 5 were injured. Two of the injured have

been shifted to Nagpur and 3 are in Bhandara. Five tonnes of RDX is still there under debris. The process of removing it safely will begin in phase 2. An SOP would be created so that such an incident does not happen again,” said the official.

P3

SKM REJECTS NEW AGRI-MARKETING POLICY, TO STEP UP STIR NATIONWIDE

Farmers' body calls it a version of the scrapped farm laws

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

Rejecting the National Policy Framework on Agricultural Marketing (NPFAM), calling it a new version of the three controversial farm laws that were repealed after massive protests, Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) has announced to launch countrywide protests to unite farmers against the policy.

The decision was taken at a meeting attended by 165 representatives from 73 farmer organizations across 12 states. The meeting resolved to fight the policy with full force if the government does not withdraw it. The farmer leaders announced to hold protests at the residences of all the MPs and to also organize countrywide strikes if the government failed to resolve withdraw NPFAM.

During the meeting the SKM leaders accused the government of introducing the policy through state governments as a backdoor attempt to benefit multina-

TO LAUNCH NATIONWIDE PROTEST



- The decision was taken at a meeting attended by 165 representatives from 73 farmer organizations across 12 states
- During the meeting the SKM leaders accused the government of introducing the policy through state governments as a backdoor attempt to benefit multinational corporations and private companies
- As part of their plan, the SKM has called for 'mass deputation' in front of MPs' offices and residences on February 8 and 9 to request them to stand with farmers

tional corporations and private companies. They criticized the policy for targeting government mandis and pushing privatization to ensure cheap raw materials for agro-processing industries via farmer-

producer organizations (FPOs), e-NAM, and contract farming.

The SKM highlighted the lack of provisions in NPFAM for MSP, government procurement, and food grain storage for

public distribution. They termed the policy a conspiracy against farmers, aligned with WTO and World Bank recommendations.

As per the strategy the leaders have decided to

organize protests by establishing permanent protest sites at district and state levels, building pressure on state assemblies to pass resolutions rejecting NPFAM and organizing Mahapanchayats and public awareness campaigns nationwide.

As part of their plan, the SKM has called for Mass Deputation in front of MPs offices and residences on February 8 and 9 to request them to stand with farmers. The protesting farmers to highlight the harmful effects of the policy and press for their other demands, including, legal guarantee of MSP based on the C2+50% formula for all crops, Loan waivers for all farmers and agricultural workers and fulfillment of pending demands from December 9, 2021.

The SKM warned that if the government does not withdraw the policy, they will call for a "Gramin Bharat Bandh" (Rural India Strike) in collaboration with other movements.

organize protests by establishing permanent protest sites at district and state levels, building pressure on state assemblies to pass resolutions rejecting NPFAM and organizing Mahapanchayats and public awareness campaigns nationwide.

PM Modi, Nitish Kumar, Yogi pay tribute to Karpoori Thakur

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tribute to Bharat Ratna and Former Chief Minister of Bihar Karpoori Thakur on his birth anniversary on Friday.

Remembering Karpoori Thakur as leader of the masses, PM Modi said that he dedicated his entire life to social justice.

"Respectful tributes to former Bihar Chief Minister Bharat Ratna Karpoori Thakur ji on his birth anniversary. The leader of the masses dedicated his entire life to social justice and made many efforts in this direction. His life and ideals will continue to inspire every generation of the country," PM Modi wrote on X.

Bihar CM Nitish Kumar remembered Karpoori Thakur and wrote on X, "Respectful tributes to the people's leader Karpoori Thakur ji on the occasion of his birth anniversary."

Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath also paid tribute to Thakur and said that his



Bihar Chief Minister and JD(U) National President Nitish Kumar pays floral tribute to Bharat Ratna and Former Bihar Chief Minister Karpoori Thakur on his 101st birth anniversary, in Patna on Friday. ANI

ideals and struggle will always inspire us to follow the path of justice, equality and service. "Humble tribute to the great freedom fighter, pioneer of social justice and former Chief Minister of Bihar, 'Bharat Ratna' Karpoori Thakur on his birth anniversary! Your ideals and struggle will always inspire us to follow the path of justice, equality and service," CM Yogi wrote on X.

Karpoori Thakur, born in 1924 at Pitaunhia (now Karpoori Gram) in Darbhanga, Bihar, was a freedom fighter and former CM of Bihar. He

was awarded Bharat Ratna posthumously in 2024. He was popularly called 'Jan Nayak' for his work for the cause of people. He became a member of the Bihar Vidhan Sabha in 1952. He was a strong advocate of socialist ideology and worked tirelessly for the Praja Socialist Party and the Joint Socialist Party.

Thakur served as a minister and as Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar, before serving two terms as CM of Bihar - from 1970 to 1971 and 1977 to 1979. He died on February 1988 in Patna.

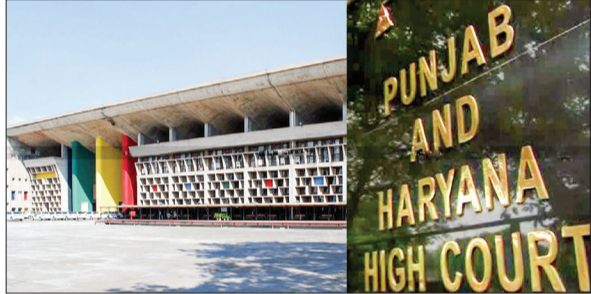
HC raps Haryana for token Rs 1 hike to pay scale, calls it mockery of court orders

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

The Punjab and Haryana High Court strongly criticized the Haryana Government for granting just a Rs 1 increase in the pay scale of executive engineers, in compliance with the High Court's earlier direction to revise salaries-termining the move as mockery of court's orders.

The bench, comprising Justice Sanjeev Prakash Sharma and Justice Meenakshi I. Mehta, termed the revised pay as "non-functional" and "patently illegal."

"The action of the State authorities makes a mockery of the Court's orders. Officers responsible for such decisions must be held accountable. We



strongly disapprove of this practice, which amounts to mere lip service to judicial directives.", the judges remarked.

The sharp observations came during a hearing on the Haryana government's appeal against a single judge's ruling that directed the revision of pay scales for Executive Engineers and Superintending Engineers.

The case was filed in 2012

when the Haryana Federation of Engineers, Hisar, petitioned the Court, seeking a revision in pay scales for Executive Engineers and Superintending Engineers. They demanded that the Executive Engineers should receive a pay scale one step higher than Assistant Engineers and the superintending engineers should receive a pay scale one step higher than Executive Engineers.

The single judge had ruled in favour of the federation, stating that Executive Engineers and Superintending Engineers deserved higher standard pay scales, effective from May 1, 1989, to December 31, 1995. The Court also directed the government to release all consequential benefits, including arrears, to eligible engineers within six weeks. Instead of complying with the ruling, the Haryana Government revised the pay scale for Executive Engineers by a mere Rs 1, which the High Court deemed a deliberate disregard for its orders. The Court noted that this action undermined the intent of the single judge's judgment and deprived the engineers of their rightful benefits.

BJP capitalises as Haryana Cong MLAs sore over internal strife

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

The Congress MLAs in Haryana are now fed up with the ongoing internal strife within the party. The ruling BJP is leaving no opportunity to capitalize on the infighting among Congress leaders.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini is gradually moving forward in gaining the trust of Congress MLAs. Due to the Chief Minister's generosity and his approach of respecting opposition MLAs, Congress MLAs are increasingly sharing the BJP's political platform.

It has only been three months since Haryana's Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini returned to power, and once again, there is upheaval within Congress. There is speculation that two Congress MLAs may leave the party to join the BJP. In the 90-seat assembly, the BJP won 48 seats to secure power. By forming the government for the third consecutive term, the BJP has created history in the state. Recently, Congress MLAs Shailee Chaudhary and Gokul Setia praised Saini, calling him a hardworking CM. One of them even went as far as saying, "I applaud such a personality."

Additionally, they expressed heartfelt thanks for the funds provided for the development of their areas.

Shailee Chaudhary is the MLA from Narayanagar constituency in Ambala, while Gokul Setia is the MLA from Sirsa. Over the past few days, these two MLAs have been at the center of political discussions in Haryana, though neither Congress nor BJP leaders have confirmed anything so far. Predicting the next move of any leader in politics is always difficult, but signs often reveal the story, as in this case. The praise from these MLAs comes at a time when CM Saini is conducting a "Thanksgiving Tour," during which he is visiting various areas and announcing development projects. Recently, Nayab Singh Saini visited Narayanagar and Sirsa.

Nayab Singh Saini was given charge just six months before the assembly elections. With his measured tone and sensitivity toward even small issues, Saini has carved out a unique identity among the public.

On January 20, Nayab Singh Saini had a program in Narayanagar. During the event, MLA Shailee Chaudhary was also on the stage. Her remarks

about the CM have caught everyone's attention. She said, "It is our good fortune to have such a hardworking Chief Minister. We are proud that he is one of us. Not just Narayanagar, but the entire state is praising him. Our area has been lagging politically and in terms of development. The CM has removed the political backwardness. Now, I urge him to work on development as well."

During this event, Shailee Chaudhary raised several demands, including a trauma centre and a medical college, and also referred to the CM as the "son of Narayanagar." She expressed confidence that he would understand Narayanagar's problems and make every effort to address them. On the same day, CM Saini announced projects worth Rs 43 crores for the area.

Similarly, during his Sirsa visit, Congress MLA Gokul Setia openly praised the CM on stage. Gokul Setia went so far as to say, "If a Chief Minister is doing good work, there should be no hesitation in praising them beyond party lines." Gokul Setia's public praise for the CM and sharing the stage with him made state-level Congress leaders uncomfortable.

National Girl Child Day: Rahul calls for ensuring girls' bright future

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha LOP and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday emphasized the responsibility to prepare girls for a 'bright and secure future' on National Girl Child Day.

In a post on X, Rahul said that daughters are the symbol of strength, courage and dedication. "Daughters are the symbol of strength, courage and dedication; they are full of hopes and aspirations for their better tomorrow," he said in his post. "It is our responsibility to prepare a bright and secure future for them, take a pledge to



give full rights to half the population," his post further reads. Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge underscored the significance of gender equality in the progress and stated that Congress-led UPA government established National Girl Child Day in 2008.

Over 10 crore take holy dip so far at Maha Kumbh

TDG NETWORK
PRAYAGRAJ

A sea of devotees was seen taking a holy dip in drone visuals from Triveni Sangam in the ongoing Mahakumbh in Prayagraj on Friday.

Braving the intense cold over 30.29 lakhs of devotees, including 10 lakh 'kalpwas' took a holy dip by 10 am, as per the official data shared by the government of Uttar Pradesh.

More than a total of 102 million people have taken a dip in Mahakumbh since its



An illuminated view of a drone showing the Triveni Sangam during the Maha Kumbh 2025, in Prayagraj on Friday. (ANI Photo)

commencement. The mega spiritual event has witnessed an unprecedented turnout of devotees, and on Thursday the number crossed 10 crore milestones. The state gov estimates that this Maha Kumbh will host over 45 crore visitors and the early achievement of 10 crore bathers reaffirms these projections.

Apart from this, the morning Aarti, a hallmark of devotional celebration along the Ganga ghats, was also performed by priests holding huge lighted oil lamps, while the river Ganga was

worshipped by offering flowers and diyas.

Visitors from around the world are often left in awe as they witness people from different languages, lifestyles, and traditions coming together at the Sangam for a holy dip.

Several devotees from Russia and Ukraine -- two countries embroiled in deadly conflict for close to three years -- attended the Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 in Prayagraj on Thursday and presented a message of spiritual unity. The atmosphere in Prayagraj

turned sublime, as devotees in the cold winter evening gathered to perform kirtan, and sang 'Hare Rama Hare Krishna'.

Speaking to ANI, a devotee from Russia shared a message of unity and peace and stated that monks of different nationalities were present at the gathering.

"I came here from Russia, and my Guru Maa came from Ukraine. Many of my Guru sisters and brothers have come from countries like Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Europe, and the USA.

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain a PIL seeking to declare that the Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) system is "manifestly arbitrary, irrational and violative of various fundamental rights".

A bench of Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar declined the plea filed by advocate petitioner advocate Ashwini Upadhyay and said he may approach High Court with his plea.

"Sorry, we will not entertain. It is very badly drafted. You can move the High Court. Some judgments have upheld it. We will not entertain. Dismissed," said the bench.

The petition contended that the TDS system disproportionately burdens assesses with significant administrative expenses.



Law Commission should examine the legality of the TDS system and prepare a report within three months, it sought.

The petition said the system violated Article 14 by disproportionately burdening economically weaker sections and small earners who lack the capacity to navigate its technical requirements.

The plea while referring to Article 23 said the imposition of tax collection duties on private citizens amounted to forced labour.

"The regulatory and procedural framework surrounding TDS is excessively technical, often requiring specialised legal and financial expertise, which most assesses lack. The result is an unjust shifting of sovereign responsibilities from the government to private citizens without adequate compensation, resources, or legal safeguards," it said.

RIVER POLICE ON GUARD



River Police conducts boat patrolling along the Brahmaputra River ahead of the Republic Day 2025, at Pandu in Guwahati. ANI

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON TRUMP'S BIRTHRIGHTS CITIZENSHIP ORDER

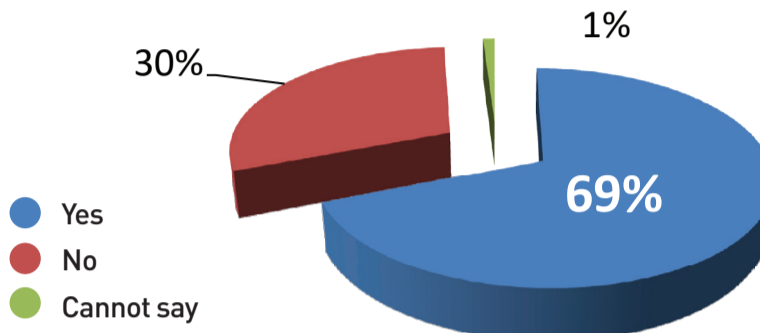
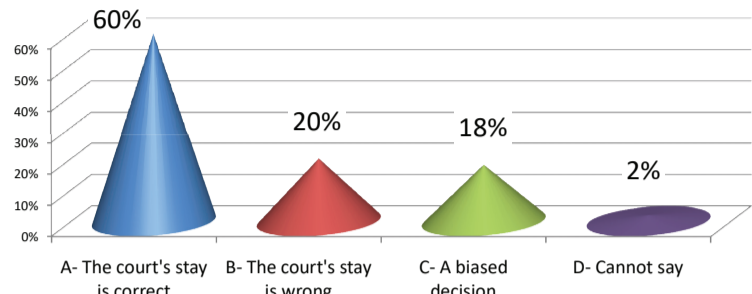
69% consider Trump's order against immigrants living in the U.S. unconstitutional.

A survey reveals that 69% of respondents view Donald Trump's order against immigrants in the U.S. as unconstitutional. Many believe the move undermines legal protections and targets vulnerable communities. Meanwhile, 30% support the order, while 1% remain undecided. The debate highlights deep divisions over immigration policies and constitutional rights in the U.S.

lieve the move undermines legal protections and targets vulnerable communities. Meanwhile, 30% support the order, while 1% remain undecided. The debate highlights deep divisions over immigration policies and constitutional rights in the U.S.

Q1. ▶

The court has halted the order to end the provision of birthright citizenship for children born in the U.S. What is your opinion?

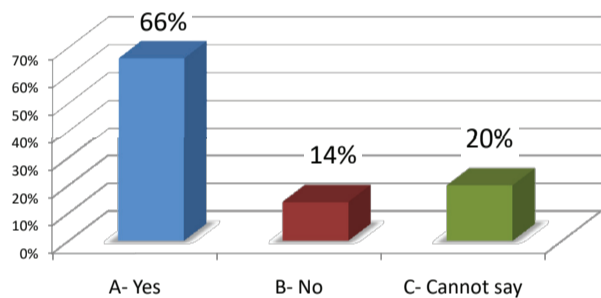
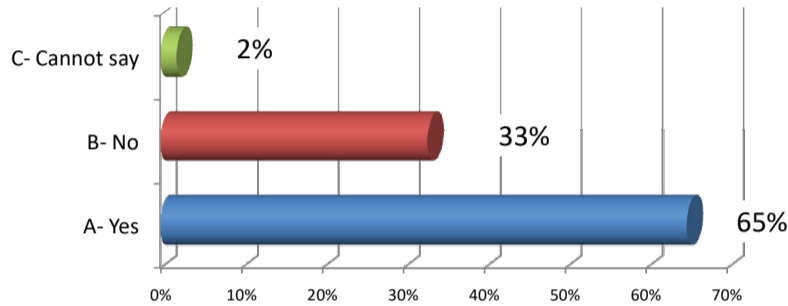


Q2. ◀

Do you consider Trump's order against immigrants living in the U.S. unconstitutional?

Q3. ▶

Do you think Donald Trump is disregarding the U.S. Constitution and making arbitrary, dictatorial decisions?



Q4. ◀

The Republican Party in the U.S. is preparing to amend the Constitution to allow a president to serve three terms. Is this being done for Trump's benefit?

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON BANGLADESH BORDER CLASH

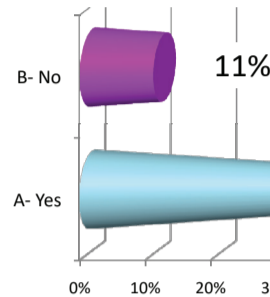
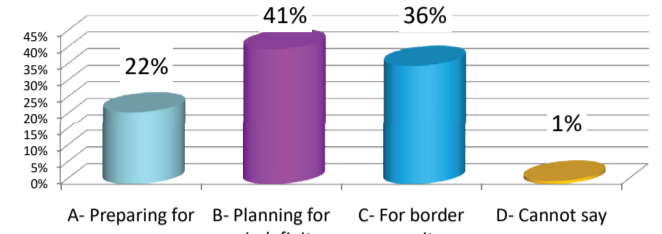
22% believe Bangladesh is building bunkers on the Matda border to prepare for war.

22% of respondents believe Bangladesh is constructing bunkers on the Matda border in preparation for war. This suggests rising tensions and potential military strategies along the border. The move raises concerns about regional security, prompting speculation about Bangladesh's motives and its impact on India-Bangladesh relations in the future.

This suggests rising tensions and potential military strategies along the border. The move raises concerns about regional security, prompting speculation about Bangladesh's motives and its impact on India-Bangladesh relations in the future.

Q1. ▶

Why is Bangladesh building bunkers on the Matda border with India?

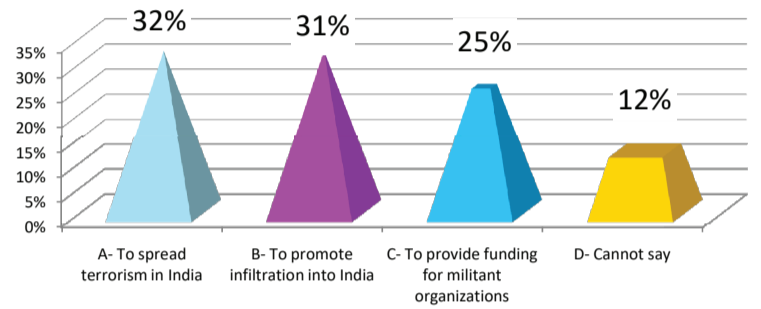


Q2. ◀

Are Indian farmers cutting crops near the Matda border being threatened, and is the BGB provoking action against them?

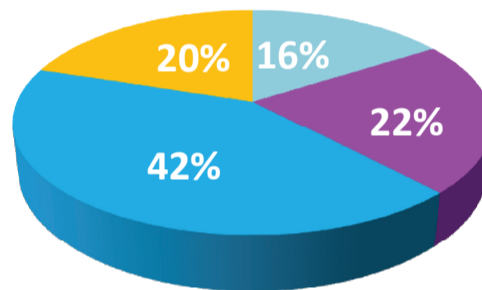
Q3. ▶

Why did the ISI meet leaders of militant organizations in Cox's Bazar and Chattogram?



Q4. ◀

What is the purpose of Bangladesh's "Chicken Neck" plan?



- A- Cutting off India's Northeast
- B- Strengthening its military presence
- C- Seeking China's help
- D- Cannot say

Ruckus at Waqf JPC meet

CONTINUED FROM P1

Earlier in the day, all the Opposition MPs that are part of the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, were suspended from Friday's sitting.

The suspended MPs include Mohammad Jawaid, Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader Kalyan Banerjee, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) leader A Raja, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) chief Asaduddin Owaisi and Nasir Hussain, Samajwadi Party (SP) leaders Mohib-

ullah Nadvi, M. Abdullah, Shiv Sena (UBT) leaders Arvind Sawant, Nadimul Haque, and Congress' Imran Masood.

"What is going on is an undeclared emergency," Banerjee asserted while referring to the happenings inside the JPC meeting. He said that the subject and dates for the meeting were changed after they landed in Delhi for the meet. The TMC MP accused the government of "hurrying" owing to the upcoming Assembly polls in the national capital, which are scheduled to be held on February 5.

Meanwhile, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Nishikant Dubey accused the Opposition of creating a "ruckus" during the JPC meeting, saying that their conduct was against parliamentary democracy. He informed the next meeting will happen on January 27 and submission to the Speaker will happen on January 29. The Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill is to submit its report during the Budget session. The term of the committee was extended during the winter session of Parliament.

Liquor banned in 17 religious cities

CONTINUED FROM P1

"The decision to ban liquor is fine, but if the cleanliness and purity of religious cities is to be maintained, then all kinds of intoxicants should be banned. Madhya Pradesh is affected by dry intoxication and dry intoxicants are arriving via Gujarat and Odisha in the state. Additionally, factories were seized in the state where intoxicants worth around Rs 3000 crores were manufactured. So, why is it not banned; it should be stopped too," Bhupendra Gupta said.

"To ensure that the states move towards liquor ban

gradually, we have decided that in the first phase liquor shops would be shut down in Nagar Palika, Nagar Parishad, Nagar Panchayat of 17 cities in the states. These shops will not be shifted anywhere else. It has been decided to shut down these shops permanently," he said. The 17 cities where liquor shops will be permanently closed include one municipal corporation, six Nagar Palika, six Nagar Parishad, and six Gram Panchayats. Liquor shops will be completely shut down within the limits of Ujjain Municipal Corporation. Similarly, liquor will be

banned in Datia Nagar Palika, Panna Nagar Palika, Mandla Nagar Palika, Multai Nagar Palika, Mandsaur Nagar Palika and Maihar Nagar Palika, the CM added. On the same line, the Nagar Parishads where liquor shops will be shut down include Omkareshwar, Maheshwar, Mandleshwar, Orchha, Chitrakoot and Amarkantak. CM Yadav said, "We should all pay attention to the fact that these Nagar Parishads are all such centres of our religious faith so on the basis of the liquor policy, we have decided to close the shops in all these places."

India asks UK to act against disruptors of 'Emergency' screening

CONTINUED FROM P1

concerns with the UK Government regarding incidents of violent protest and intimidation by anti-India elements, freedom of speech and expression cannot be applied selectively and those obstructing it must be held accountable".

He added, "We hope that the UK side will take appropriate action against those responsible.

Our High Commission in London remains in touch in regular communication with our community members for their safety and welfare. We expect the

UK side to take strong appropriate action in this matter".

Responding to a question about reports and videos of Pannun being circulated on social media where he was seen at Donald Trump's inauguration and whether India has raised the issue with the US, the MEA Spokesperson said, "Whenever there is an anti-India activity, we take up such matters with the US Government.

So we will continue to raise such issues with the US Government which have a bearing on our security, which have an anti-India agenda".

Akhilesh alleges 'disparity' in Ayodhya administrative postings

CONTINUED FROM P1

"PDA" to describe the political coalition of "Pichde (backward)", Dalits and "Alpsankhyak (minorities)" communities.

Yadav concluded his post with a pointed remark, saying, "Nothing more needs to be said."

This criticism comes ahead of the February 5 Milkipur Assembly bypoll in Ayodhya district (Faizabad parliamentary constituency).

The SP has increasingly highlighted caste representation and empowerment, positioning itself against the BJP governance model. Yadav has on previous occasions also

alleged a similar bias in administrative postings in the state.

Responding to reporters' queries in Lucknow on Wednesday about the Milkipur bypoll, the SP chief accused the BJP of misusing the administrative machinery.

"The district magistrate and superintendent of police are working at the behest of Lucknow. The public wants a fair election and if that happens, the SP will achieve a historic win. The BJP is attempting to rig the election using police and officials," he had said.

Yadav had also slammed the "growing practice of using officials to influence

elections", saying, "This tradition is wrong for democracy."

Later, in a statement issued by the SP, Yadav said, "The BJP is the biggest land mafia. BJP people are occupying land.

The government is forcibly acquiring the land of the poor and farmers at low prices and selling them to BJP people."

"This government has not done any work in the interest of people. Every section of the society is troubled by inflation, unemployment and corruption. Farmers, youngsters and women are distressed. The chief minister has nothing to say to the public.

Haryana Police books Alok Nath...

CONTINUED FROM P1

booked along with 11 others in a cheating case. As per the Haryana police, the FIR has been registered at Murthal police station of Sonapat district on the complaint of a Sonapat resident, Vipul Antil alleging that the society duped investors of crores of rupees. As per the police com-

plaint, the society, registered under the Multi-State Cooperative Society Act, 2002, had been operating in several states, including Haryana, since 2016. He alleged that the society offered fixed deposit and other investment schemes with promises of high returns. The actors endorsed the society, encouraging people to invest their mon-

ey. The society reportedly organized seminars in luxury hotels across Haryana to attract investors. It claimed to have over 250 offices in the state, with its head office in Mahendragarh. Initially, investors received returns and incentives, but by 2023, payments were delayed, and the society's offices shut down.

Blast in ordnance factory kills 8

CONTINUED FROM P1

dara Collector Sanjay Kolte also spoke to ANI and said, "Today, our priority was the rescue operation.

That has just been concluded. Police and allied agencies will carry out the further investigation."

According to an official release from the Ordnance Factory in Bhandara, "Today, on January 24, 2025, at about 10.40 am, a massive explosion suddenly occurred in LTPE Building No. 23 in the HEX section (LTPE

of this factory. Immediately after the explosion, the factory's rescue and relief team, fire brigade team and medical team reached the spot and started the rescue operation at a rapid pace. On receiving the information, the teams of District Administration, NDRR, and SDRF reached the spot and started the relief and rescue work of the personnel trapped in the building."

"People were evacuated from the spot, out of which 5 injured people were taken to the local hospital for treatment and are being given proper medical assistance."

Gold price breaches Rs 83k-mark

CONTINUED FROM P1

ed gains on Friday, with spot gold in the domestic market hitting fresh all-time highs," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

The current bullish momentum in gold is driven by uncertainty surrounding the potential US tariffs

plan and other policies from President Donald Trump, which has led to a recent surge in safe-haven buying, Gandhi added. The yellow metal of 99.5 per cent purity also appreciated by Rs 200 to hit a record high of Rs 82,700 per 10 grams from the previous close of Rs 82,500 per 10 grams.

Amul cuts milk prices by Re 1 per litre

CONTINUED FROM P1

rate of Amul Gold milk has been reduced to Rs 67 from Rs 68 per litre while price of Amul Taaza will now be Rs 55 from Rs 56 per litre earlier.

GCMMF's turnover increased 8 per cent to Rs 59,445 crore in the 2023-24 financial year. Mehta had earlier said that the cooperative is expecting double-digit growth in revenue during this fiscal on strong demand.

GCMMF handled 310

lakh litres of milk per day on average during the last fiscal. It has a total annual milk processing capacity of around 500 lakh litres. GCMMF is the world's largest farmer-owned dairy cooperative having 36 lakh farmers across 18,600 villages of Gujarat and its 18 member unions procure 300 lakh litres of milk per day.

It also ranks 8th among the top 20 dairy companies in the world in terms of milk processing, as per the International Farm Comparison Network (IFCN).

Auto, taxi basic fare hike in Mumbai

CONTINUED FROM P1

for black-and-yellow taxis. The fare for blue-and-silver AC cool cabs will start at Rs 48 instead of the current Rs 40 for the first 1.5 kilometres, the release added.

The decision was approved in a meeting of the MMRTA held on Thursday. The revised rates are applicable only for CNG-run taxis and autorickshaws. Majority of the taxis and autorickshaw plying in the MMR are CNG-run and only a small portion of them are petrol-operated. The new fares can be charged only after me-

ters are recalibrated, the MMRTA release clarified. Starting March 9, 2020, the Maharashtra government adopted the formula derived by B C Khatua panel for the fare revision of taxi and autorickshaws in the state. The panel was set up on October 10, 2016. Using the Khatua panel's formula for deriving the fare hike of CNG-run taxis and autorickshaws in the Mumbai metropolitan region, the revised fare is calculated taking average vehicle price consumer index rate of interest for vehicle loan and other things, the release said.

MAHA CONG DEMANDS WHITE PAPER ON DAVOS DEALS

Patole slams liquor deals with Heineken and AB InBev

TDG NETWORK
MAHARASHTRA

Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole on Friday demanded a White Paper on the investments received and jobs generated from MoUs signed during previous visits to the World Economic Forum in Davos.

Patole said Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has informed that 61 MoUs were signed for investments of Rs 15.70 lakh crore with the potential to create 15.95 lakh jobs.

"While significant investments in Maharashtra are welcome, the public has the right to know the specifics of these agreements and the reality behind them. Similar grand announcements have been made in the past as well. The Mahayuti government must release a White Paper on investments and job creation from previous deals at Davos," Patole said.

Patole said that out of the 61 companies that have signed agreements with the Maharashtra government in Davos this time, 51 are based in India, of which 43 are from Mumbai and

'PUBLIC HAS RIGHT TO KNOW'

■ The Mahayuti government must release a White Paper on investments and job creation from previous deals at Davos," Patole said.

■ Another agreement was with Hiranandani, a company under probe for preparing fake documents related to demolition activities in Powai's Jay Bhim Nagar and for an EPFO scam being investigated by CBI, Patole further alleged.

■ While Fadnavis was in Davos, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai came to Mumbai and secured investments worth Rs 6000 crore for his state, the Congress leader pointed out.



Pune, he said, adding only 10 are foreign-based. These include a Rs 1,500 crore deal signed between CIDCO and Book My Show, despite Mumbai police investigating the firm for black marketing of Coldplay concert tickets, he alleged.

Another agreement was with Hiranandani, a company under probe for preparing fake documents related to demolition activities in Powai's Jay Bhim Nagar and for an EPFO

scam being investigated by CBI, Patole further alleged. Is the government encouraging black marketing by collaborating with such firms, he asked.

Despite Article 47 of the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) in the Constitution asking states to work towards prohibiting consumption of intoxicating drinks etc, the Maharashtra government has signed a Rs 750 crore deal with alcohol manufacturer Heineken and a Rs

1,500 crore deal with beer producer AB InBev, Patole claimed. Does the BJP-led government want to turn Maharashtra into a liquor state, he asked. A deal was signed with Dhanashree Mandhani's PRYM Company in Jalna to manufacture drones, Patole said.

The target is to produce 6,000 drones and the company claims it has a 10000 square foot factory but no such facility exists, he alleged. The company only assembles parts of knocked-down drones imported from abroad, Patole alleged.

While Fadnavis was in Davos, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai came to Mumbai and secured investments worth Rs 6000 crore for his state, the Congress leader pointed out. Similarly, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav visited Pune and met entrepreneurs to attract industries to that state, he added. MP and Chhattisgarh, incidentally, are ruled by the BJP. The Maharashtra government must bring genuine investments into the state instead of misleading people in the name of Davos, Patole said.

Sharad Pawar has upset many by refusing to retire: Supriya

TDG NETWORK
KOLHAPUR

Nationalist Congress Party (SP) working president Supriya Sule on Friday said her father and veteran politician Sharad Pawar has upset many people by refusing to retire from active politics.

Speaking at an event in Maharashtra's Kolhapur district, the Lok Sabha MP from Baramati also made light-hearted comments on the 2022 split in the Shiv Sena, whose one faction is now an ally of her party in the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA).

Sule said she told Dharyasheel Mane, Shiv Sena MP from Hatkanangale in Kolhapur district, in Parliament in a lighter vein that "your party split because your leader did not give enough time (to the organisation and its workers), while our party (NCP) split because our leader devoted a lot of time to the party".

When the Shiv Sena split in June 2022, the rebel faction led by Eknath Shinde, who is now deputy CM in the BJP-led Mahayuti government, accused party president Uddhav Thackeray of neglecting his elected representatives and ignoring the party.

Maha to soon get 3rd deputy CM from Shiv Sena (Shinde): Raut

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut on Friday claimed that Maharashtra will soon have a third Deputy Chief Minister, stating that the candidate would be from the Shiv Sena (Shinde faction).

"...Maharashtra will get a third deputy CM soon. It will be someone from among them (Shiv Sena-Shinde)," Raut told media persons.

Criticizing Eknath Shinde after the Shiv Sena split into two factions, Raut remarked, "These people ran away in fear of the ED and CBI." He further added that Shiv Sena (UBT) remains a strong organization, stating, "Power comes and goes, but we are standing firmly on our feet here."

The statement follows sharp criticism from Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister and Shiv Sena Chief Eknath Shinde, who accused Uddhav Thackeray of abandoning Balasaheb Thackeray's principles for personal political ambitions.

"You left Balasaheb Thackeray's ideology in 2019 only for the CM chair. You trampled on his principles, so you have no moral right to talk about the Balasaheb



Criticizing Eknath Shinde after the Shiv Sena split into two factions, Raut remarked, "These people ran away in fear of the ED and CBI." He further added that Shiv Sena (UBT) remains a strong organization, stating, "Power comes and goes, but we are standing firmly on our feet here."

Thackeray memorial," Shinde said.

Shinde made these remarks during the 'Shivoutsav' function at Bandra Kurla Complex on Thursday evening, marking the 99th birth anniversary of Balasaheb Thackeray.

Reflecting on his tenure, Shinde stated, "I received the opportunity to serve the people of Maharashtra wholeheartedly for two and a half years. At the same time, the recognition I received

as a beloved brother of 2.4 crore sisters in the state is greater than all positions."

He emphasized, "Self-respect is more important to us than any chair," adding that this value was instilled by Balasaheb Thackeray. Shinde concluded by reiterating his criticism of Uddhav Thackeray, asserting, "Those who trampled on Balasaheb's thoughts have no moral right to talk about the memorial."

Saif stabbing case: Police custody of accused extended till January 29

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Bandra Magistrate Court on Friday extended the police custody of the accused, who allegedly stabbed actor Saif Ali Khan at his residence last week, till January 29.

The court observed that there is substantial progress in the matter and to investigate other consequential aspects is necessary. The offence is serious and triable by the sessions court.

Such investigation is necessary even for ascertaining the innocence of the accused so taking all facts into account the submissions pertaining to the notice under BNS section 35 don't apply. Nothing from the records inferred that arrest is illegal, the court observed. Mumbai Police had sought further custody of the accused, suspecting involvement of more accomplices in the stabbing case.



The police said that the suspect was not cooperating with the sources of the weapon which he used for the crime. The police further added that they needed to do the facial recognition match with CCTV footage and for this, they needed the accused in custody.

"We are still to receive his shoes which he wore during the crime," the police added.

The police have recovered a Gamchha of the accused which he used during the

crime.

Additionally, police will record the statement of Kolkata resident Khukmoni Jahangir Sheikh, whose Aadhar card accused used to buy a SIM card in Kolkata.

Police have recorded the statement of actor Saif Ali Khan in the case related to his stabbing at his Bandra residence by a Bangladeshi national last week, officials said on Friday. According to Satyanarayan Choudhary, Joint CP of Law and Order, the actor's statement was recorded at his residence 'Satguru Sharan' on Thursday.

"Earlier, Kareena Kapoor's statement was also recorded by Bandra Police," Chaudhary added.

Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan was attacked last week by an intruder, later identified as Mohd Shariful Islam Shehzad, who entered his home with the intent to commit theft. After a violent con-

frontation with the accused, Saif Ali Khan sustained stab wounds to his thoracic spine and other body parts. He was rushed to Lilavati Hospital for immediate treatment following the attack.

On Wednesday, Mumbai Police found several fingerprints of the accused at the actor's residence in Bandra, the police found the accused's fingerprints on the stairs of the building, the door of the toilet, and the door handle of his son Jeh's room.

According to the police, the accused attempted to enter three houses before reaching Saif Ali Khan's residence with the intent to steal. Mumbai Police believes the discovered fingerprints will play a significant role in the investigation. Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan was discharged from Lilavati Hospital after surgery on Tuesday.

Those who spread Hindu-Muslim enmity can't be Hindu: Uddhav

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray launched a scathing attack on the Bharatiya Janata Party and said that anyone who spreads communal disharmony "can't be a Hindu", while also affirming that the 'Hindutva' of his party is "clean".

The former Maharashtra Chief Minister also challenged the BJP-led Centre of holding elections on ballot papers.

He was addressing a public meeting, on the occasion of Shiv Sena founder Balasaheb Thackeray's birth anniversary.

"If you have any shame, keep EVMs aside and hold elections using ballot papers. Anyone who spreads Hindu-Muslim enmity cannot be a Hindu. Our Hindutva is clean," Thackeray said.

Notably, the 2024 Maha-



rashtra Assembly Election was a huge drubbing for Shiv Sena (UBT), which itself reduced to 20 seats as the BJP-led Mahayuti, registered a landslide victory with 235 seats.

Meanwhile, several opposition leaders of the INDIA bloc, have been questioning the 'fairness' of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in elections across constituencies. The petitioner had raised concerns regarding the use of EVMs, arguing that Section 61-A of the relevant law requires the respondent (Election Commission of India) to provide specific justifications for the use of EVMs in each constituency individually.

The bench, led by Acting Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and comprising Justice Tushar Rao Gedela, dismissed the appeal, stating, "We find no merit in the present appeal, and the same is dismissed."

paper ballots for voting, saying, "Returning to the outdated paper ballot system is unwarranted and regressive. This is aimed at derailing the election process."

This week, a Division Bench of the Delhi High Court dismissed an appeal challenging the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in elections across constituencies. The petitioner had raised concerns regarding the use of EVMs, arguing that Section 61-A of the relevant law requires the respondent (Election Commission of India) to provide specific justifications for the use of EVMs in each constituency individually.

The bench, led by Acting Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and comprising Justice Tushar Rao Gedela, dismissed the appeal, stating, "We find no merit in the present appeal, and the same is dismissed."

YSRCP MP Vijayasai Reddy quits politics, to resign from RS today

TDG NETWORK
HYDERABAD

YSRCP Rajya Sabha member V Vijayasai Reddy on Friday said he will be resigning from his parliament membership on January 25.

Reddy, a close aide of the YS family, clarified that he would not go on to join any other political party, emphasising his decision to retire from politics is purely personal and not taken under any pressure or influence.

In a post on 'X', he said he is not joining any other party and also quitting politics.

"I am resigning from the Rajya Sabha membership tomorrow, (January) 25th. I will not join any political party. I am not resigning hoping for any position, benefits, or money. This decision is completely my personal one. There was no pressure. No one influenced me," he said in the



post. Reddy is currently serving his second term as Rajya Sabha member from YSRCP from Andhra Pradesh.

He is one of the key figures in former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy-led party in the state.

Reddy, 67, has been a central figure in Andhra Pradesh politics and a trusted associate of both Jagan Mohan Reddy and his father, YS Rajasekhara Reddy, the former Chief Minister of the state. He is also accused in Jagan's quid pro quo cases which are currently being probed by CBI as well as the Enforcement Directorate.

Some get frustrated by Dravidian Model: Stalin takes dig at opponent

TDG NETWORK
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and Chief of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) MK Stalin on Friday addressed over 3,000 newly joined party members and said that some get frustrated with the party for talking of Dravidian Model so let them get frustrated.

The Tamil Nadu CM was speaking at a mass induction event organised by DMK at Anna Arivalayam in Chennai where around 3,000 members 'joined' DMK.

"If someone asks what is the meaning of the Dravidian Model of Government, for them the answer is this gathering of you all. If we say Dravidian Model few are getting frustrated. Let them get frustrated, we will say 'Dravidian Model' continuously. We won't get angry seeing their frustration," said Stalin.



"I do not want to diminish the prestige of the party platform by mentioning the name of a party that is living off of a disguised drama," he added.

Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister and son of MK Stalin, Udhayanidhi Stalin was also present at the event. Speaking at the event he said, "In 13 months we have State assembly election. Usually, as election nears people from the ruling party join the opposition party, but today from the opposition you all have joined the ruling party. So, we can say you all know what is

the result of the upcoming election. Not only for election but accepting our party ideology, policy and CM's headship you all have joined DMK.

Further speaking at the event Udhayanidhi accused Governor R N Ravi of promoting Saffronisation in state and destroying Tamil identities

"On behalf of Union Government, one has been sent here, that is Governor. Is he people elected? He is an appointed one. What he is doing? He is making efforts to destroy our Tamil Nadu identities one by one. Saffronising Thiruvalluvar, degrading Tamil Thai Vazhthu, saying Tamil Thai Vazhthu shouldn't be played in Assembly and boycotting Assembly. This is what he is doing."

Udhayanidhi also claimed that the party is going to register a massive victory in the upcoming Erode (East) by-poll.

VEGANS AT R-DAY PARADE EVE



People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India activists spread a message to 'Go Vegan' ahead of Republic Day, in Nagpur on Friday. ANI

CONG PLEDGES MINISTRY FOR POORVANCHALIS

The promises also includes a separate budget if the party is elected to the power

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday announced that there will be a separate ministry and budget for Poorvanchalis in Delhi if the party is elected to power in the upcoming assembly elections.

The Congress leaders alleged that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has destroyed Delhi's world-class infrastructure and turned it into a garbage. They accused the AAP government of indulging in corruption to the tune of Rs 382 crore in the health-care sector.

Talking to reporters in the Delhi Congress office, the party's Bihar unit president and former Union minister Akhilesh Prasad Singh said if Delhi has become a world-class city, the Poorvanchalis have as much role in it as others living in the national capital.

Singh emphasized that the nearly 35 lakh Poorvanchalis residing in Delhi have been neglected by both the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the BJP, who have treated them as mere vote banks without



Congress leaders Akhilesh Prasad Singh, Supriya Shrinete, Kanhaiya Kumar, and Pranav Jha address a press conference at the DPCC office in New Delhi, Friday, Jan. 24, 2025. X

- Congress claims Poorvanchalis (35 lakh people) have been neglected by both AAP and BJP, treated as vote banks without basic services.
- Congress highlights the poor conditions in unauthorized colonies, calling for better housing, education, and healthcare.
- Congress slams Kejriwal for disrespecting Poorvanchalis and BJP's Nadda for comparing them to foreigners.
- Congress stresses Poorvanchalis' contributions to national development but says they are unfairly treated in Delhi.

providing basic living facilities. Despite their significant contributions to Delhi's development, Poorvanchalis have been forced to live in deplorable conditions, he said.

"Today, we want to make two important announcements. There will be a separate ministry and a separate

budget for the people of Poorvanchalis if the Congress is elected to power in the upcoming polls so that issues related to their health and education can be addressed," Singh said.

He highlighted his observations during an election meeting in Sangam Vihar, South Delhi, where he witnessed the poor living conditions in unauthorized colonies. He criticized Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for disrespecting Poorvanchalis after securing their votes, citing Kejriwal's controversial remark about them coming to Delhi with a Rs 5 ticket and availing treatment worth Rs 5 lakh. He also condemned

the poor living conditions in unauthorized colonies. He criticized Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for disrespecting Poorvanchalis after securing their votes, citing Kejriwal's controversial remark about them coming to Delhi with a Rs 5 ticket and availing treatment worth Rs 5 lakh. He also condemned

BJP president J.P. Nadda for comparing Poorvanchalis to Bangladeshis and Uzbeks. Dr. Singh reiterated that Congress would create a dedicated ministry to address critical issues affecting Poorvanchalis, such as housing, education, health, and overall living standards.

Delhi residents from eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand are referred to as Poorvanchalis in the national capital. They constitute a sizable

percentage of the voters who can decide the fate of candidates in several constituencies of Delhi due to which the Congress, BJP and AAP woo them during the elections.

Congress leader Supriya Shrinete said the Poorvanchalis have gone to every corner of this country and developed those places. But when it comes to their rights, they are being treated unfairly, she said.

'CM Yogi should 'guide' Shah to improve law, order in Delhi'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath should "guide" Union Home Minister Amit Shah about how to improve law and order and eliminate gangsters in Delhi, AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal said on Friday.

Adityanath, in back-to-back to election rallies in Delhi on Thursday, slammed



AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal addresses a press conference in New Delhi, Friday, Jan. 24, 2025.

electricity will be stopped and you will be slapped with bills of Rs 5,000 or more," he said.

Kejriwal slammed Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath over the electricity-supply scenario in Uttar Pradesh. "I want to ask the Uttar Pradesh chief minister, why are there power cuts for five to eight hours in Lucknow? Why are there six-hour power cuts in Noida?" he asked.

The former Delhi chief minister also alleged that he was pressured to hand over the power companies operating in the national capital to a close ally of Prime Minister Narendra Modi but claimed that he resisted the move to safeguard the interests of Delhiites.

The AAP supremo accused the BJP of continuously targeting and abusing him. He also took the opportunity to reiterate his party's development promises in the face of a tough electoral challenge from the saffron party.

The Najafgarh constituency is set to witness a three-way contest in the February 5 polls.

FIGHT FOR CAPITAL DELHI ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2025

Meanwhile, AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal addressed a rally in the rural constituency of Najafgarh here on Friday, promising round-the-clock electricity supply for free if his party retains power in the upcoming Delhi Assembly polls.

Claiming to be the "only magician who can give free electricity", Kejriwal warned the voters against bringing the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to power. "If the BJP comes to power, your free

the-clock electricity supply for free if his party retains power in the upcoming Delhi Assembly polls. Claiming to be the "only magician who can give free electricity", Kejriwal warned the voters against bringing the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to power. "If the BJP comes to power, your free

HC refuses to direct sitting of assembly for tabling CAG reports

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday said there was an "inordinate delay" by the AAP government in tabling the CAG reports in the state assembly but refused to direct a special sitting of the legislature, saying it was "impractical" to hold a special sitting a few days before elections. Justice Sachin Datta underlined the tabling of the audit reports was mandatory under the Constitution and directed the reports to be placed in the assembly by Delhi government after the elections as expeditiously as possible.

"It is quite evident that there has been an inordinate delay on the part of the respondents/Government of NCT of Delhi in taking requisite steps for laying the CAG Reports before the Legislative Assembly," the court



said. It went on, "In such a situation (when the current legislative assembly is about to expire), it would be impractical to hold a special sitting of the assembly... Given that the legislative assembly is at the fag end of its current term, the examination and scrutiny by the PAC (public accounts committee) will now take place only after the newly-elected assembly is reconvened."

The court is not inclined to

accept the prayers of the petitioners for a mandamus to the speaker for summoning a special session of the legislative assembly at this stage, it added. Opposition leader Vijender Gupta and BJP MLAs -- Mohan Singh Bisht, Om Prakash Sharma, Ajay Kumar Mahawar, Abhay Verma, Anil Kumar Bajpai and Jitendra Mahajan -- filed the petition last year and sought a direction to the speaker to call a sitting of the assembly

for tabling the CAG reports.

In a 31-page judgement, Justice Datta observed the timeline revealed the government's "disdainful disregard" of its constitutional obligations as it failed to act with alacrity in laying all the 14 CAG reports before the legislative assembly in the present session even after the LG approval. The court therefore said once the legislative assembly was constituted and summoned pursuant to the elections, steps should be taken by Delhi government under the procedural rules for tabling the CAG reports as expeditiously as possible.

The court said laying the reports before the legislature comprising elected representatives was in the "nature of a mandatory constitutional imperative" and aimed to hold the government of the day accountable in the field of financial administration.

Centre, Delhi Police conspiring to kill Kejriwal: AAP

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Friday accused the BJP-led Centre and the Delhi Police of conspiring to "kill" its supremo Arvind Kejriwal and urged the Election Commission (EC) to restore his security cover provided by the Punjab Police that was withdrawn. There was no immediate reaction from the BJP or the Delhi Police to the allegation.

Addressing a press conference here, Delhi Chief Minister Atishi and her Punjab counterpart, Bhagwant Mann, said they have written to the EC demanding "fair grounds" for the AAP in the February 5 Delhi Assembly polls and the restoration of Kejriwal's security cover given by the Punjab Police, along with an audit of "life-threatening" attacks on him.

They alleged that the Delhi Police, which comes under the Centre, has turned a



Delhi Chief Minister Atishi and her Punjab counterpart Bhagwant Mann address a press conference in New Delhi, Friday, Jan. 24, 2025.

blind eye on the alleged attacks on Kejriwal in accordance with Union Home Minister Amit Shah's order. "There are two players involved in this conspiracy to kill Kejriwalji -- the BJP and the Delhi Police. They are both conspiring to end Kejriwal's life. Attacks have been attempted on him one after the other. In October (last year), an attack was made on Kejriwal. Upon investigation by us, it was found that the attackers

were BJP workers, but police took no action," Atishi alleged.

"We have written to the EC demanding that Kejriwal's security be restored. We do not trust the Delhi Police as it is under Amit Shah's control," she added.

The AAP leaders alleged that resorting to "dirty politics" ahead of the Delhi polls, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has conspired to get Kejriwal's security removed. "We write to you

with utmost urgency and grave concern regarding the security arrangements of Arvind Kejriwal, ex-chief minister of Delhi and the national convener of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), who has been consistently facing grave threats to his life and deliberate lapses in his security detail.

"These lapses are not isolated incidents but appear to be part of a larger, orchestrated pattern designed to jeopardise his safety," the letter written by the AAP leaders to the EC read.

It alleged that on different occasions over the last three months, multiple targeted attacks on Kejriwal, including incidents of physical assault and stone pelting during a political rally, were attempted, exacerbating their concerns.

The letter complained that police "simply acted as mute spectators" and did not make an attempt to protect Kejriwal.

Shah to hold public meetings, roadshow in Delhi today

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah is set to hold public meetings and a roadshow in the national capital on Saturday, January 25, ahead of Delhi Assembly elections in the first week of February next month.

Shah's schedule includes two public meetings and a roadshow across key locations in the city -- a first such public engagement considering the elections for the 70-member Delhi Assembly on February 5.

The two public meetings are expected to be held in



Rajouri Garden and Trinagar Assembly constituencies while the roadshow is to be held in the Adarsh Nagar area.

The first public meeting will take place in the Rajouri Garden Assembly constituency in the afternoon, where Shah will ad-

dress residents and party workers, focusing on key issues and development plans.

Following this, the Minister will participate in a roadshow in the Adarsh Nagar Assembly constituency, which will traverse areas from Keval Park to Ramlila Maidan. The roadshow is expected to draw significant public participation, reflecting Shah's ongoing outreach efforts.

The day will conclude with a second public meeting at DDA Park in Netaji Subhash Palace, within the Trinagar Assembly constituency, scheduled for

the evening. This event will serve as another platform for Shah to connect with the public and discuss future initiatives for Delhiites if the Bharatiya Janata Party comes into power after the Assembly polls.

Delhi has a total of 70 assembly constituencies -- 58 general seats and 12 constituencies reserved for scheduled castes (SC).

The voting will take place in a single phase across 70 constituencies on February 5 and the counting of votes will be conducted on February 8. The term of the Delhi legislative assembly ends on February 23, 2025.

BJP questions Kejriwal's need for Z-plus security

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A day after Punjab Police personnel deployed in the security of AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal were withdrawn, the BJP on Friday asked why the former Delhi chief minister needed Z-plus security. Union minister and BJP leader Ravneet Singh Bittu asked at a press conference why a person whose party's woman MP was assaulted at his residence required Z-plus security.

Earlier in the day, Kejriwal

alleged that "pure politics" was behind the move to remove the Punjab Police personnel from his security detail.

AAP has alleged a BJP "conspiracy" in the matter and demanded that the Election Commission (EC) restore the Punjab Police personnel in Kejriwal's security detail.

Bittu also hit out at Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann for his stance on Punjabi and Sikh pride and alleged the "misuse" of Z-plus security by AAP MP

Raghav Chadha. No immediate reaction was available from Chadha or AAP over Bittu's allegations.

Bittu accused AAP leaders of creating "pre-election conspiracies", suggesting they might stage an attack on themselves and blame it on the BJP, a tactic he alleged was common with its politics.

Elections to the 70-member Delhi Assembly will be held on February 5 and the votes counted on February 8.

Thakur accuses AAP for promoting disrespect towards women

TIKAM SHARMA
NEW DELHI

Former Union Minister and Member of Parliament from Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh, Anurag Thakur, addressed public gatherings in Mongolpuri and Dwarka constituencies. During his speeches, Thakur criticized the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and its leader, Arvind Kejriwal, accus-



ing them of fostering an anti-women environment in Delhi. Thakur stated, "Under the governance of AAP and Arvind Kejriwal, atrocities and disrespect towards women have become routine in Delhi. Insulting women has become synonymous with Kejriwal's leadership. There have been countless incidents that show their disregard for women's dignity. For instance, Kejriwal

invited MP Swati Maliwal to his residence and allegedly had her assaulted, followed by inappropriate remarks from his party members. Kejriwal even removed the photo of Atishi Marlena, his party leader and Delhi Chief Ministerial candidate, from campaign posters and sidelined her during the election campaign, proving his intent to suppress women's voices."

Modi, Kejriwal two sides of the same coin: Owaisi

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

AIMIM President Asaduddin Owaisi on Thursday said there was not much difference between AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal and Prime Minister Narendra Modi and that they were cut from the same cloth.

"Modi and Kejriwal are like brothers, two sides of the same coin. Both have emerged from the RSS ideology one from its 'shakha'



and the other from its institutions," he said, while

campaigning for Shifa-ur-Rehman, the party's candidate from the Okhla constituency.

Owaisi also carried out a walk in Shaheen Bagh and urged the public to vote for the "kite," his party's symbol, in February 5 Delhi polls.

The All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen has fielded two candidates Tahir Hussain from Mustafabad and Shifa-ur-Rehman from Okhla.

DALIT VOTES MAY SPLIT BETWEEN AAP, BJP, CONG

AAP faces disillusionment over unmet promises on manual scavenging and municipal labor issues.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

As the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) battles to protect its main turf, the Dalit voters of Delhi are in focus in the upcoming Assembly polls in the capital, with both the Congress and BJP challenging the ruling party, leading to the possibility of a split in the Dalit votes between the three parties, experts say. Kejriwal, whose AAP is eyeing a third straight term in power in Delhi, has enjoyed the support of the Dalit voters in the past, even as the experts say that some disillusionment has crept in. On the other hand, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has come up with a slew of promises for the Dalits and is holding

DALIT VOTER SHIFT

- The BJP is actively appealing to Dalit voters with promises such as educational scholarships and stipends for skill development to gain their backing.
- Experts suggest that Dalit votes, once loyal to AAP, may now be divided among AAP, BJP, and Congress, with AAP likely losing some support.
- Despite dissatisfaction, AAP's educational initiatives, like the Dr. Ambedkar Samman Scholarship, still resonate with some Dalit voters.
- Congress is making a late push to attract Dalit votes, but experts believe it may be too late to rival the efforts of AAP and BJP.



extensive reach-out programmes in Dalit-majority constituencies.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah's remarks in the Rajya Sabha on BR Ambedkar, which had triggered a sharp attack from opposition parties, including the AAP and Congress, added fuel to the war of narratives ahead of the February 5 polls. However, the BJP has countered it aggressively.

In the 2020 Delhi polls, the AAP won all 12 seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and a large chunk of Dalit votes, which helped the party secure its second term in the capital.

This time, however, the votes may split three-way, the experts say.

"While Dalit voters have a presence in all constituen-

cies, there are at least 30-35 seats in Delhi where they can sway the election results. The AAP is likely to lose some support and the Dalit votes are likely to be split among the three major parties," independent political analyst and founder and director of Subaltern Media Foundation Kush Ambedkarwadi said.

"The two photos that Kejriwal has in his office are of B R Ambedkar and Bhagat Singh, because Dalits are in large numbers in Delhi as well as Punjab. The AAP's election symbol -- broom -- also resonates with the Dalit voters and they can feel a connection. A huge chunk of Dalit votes had gone to the party. But today, the Dalit community is not as happy with Kejriwal because there

has not been much change in their lives," Ambedkarwadi told PTL.

"The Dalit community, which has been supporting the AAP, is unhappy this time. Like the Valmiki community, it thought that the AAP has broom as its symbol, so it will work for them. However, one of the main concerns of the Valmiki community is the contractual labour in the municipal corporation. Nothing has been done about it," he said.

"Tall promises were made that people will not have to go down sewage drains to clean those anymore and there will be no manual scavenging. But that has not happened either," Ambedkarwadi said.

"A lot of votes of the Ravidassia community and the

Jatavs have shifted from the BSP and gone to the AAP. But all prominent AAP leaders from these communities have quit the party," he added.

According to data compiled by Subaltern Media Foundation, there are around 1.23 crore Dalit voters in Delhi. The Chamar community, which includes Jatavs, has more than 24 lakh members and presence in all Delhi districts. The number of Valmikis is more than 12 lakh, while the other major Dalit groups include Mallahs, who are over two lakh in numbers, more than 4.82 lakh Khatiks and over 4.18 lakh Kolis.

Other prominent Dalit caste groups include Chohra, Bazigar, Banjara, Dhobi, Julaha, Madari, Pasi, Sapera and Nat.

Former Delhi minister Rajendra Pal Gautam, who was one of the prominent Dalit faces of the AAP till he quit the party and joined the Congress last year, also said the ruling party has not fulfilled its core promises to the community.

"There is a reason why Dalits are in focus this time. The upper-caste voters are mostly supporting the BJP. Among the OBCs, there are some groups that are with the BJP. Dalit votes may, however, split three-way between the BJP, AAP and Congress," Gautam told PTL.

SC appoints SIT to probe illegal compensation in NOIDA

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Dissatisfied with a UP government-appointed panel probing the issue of illegal compensation to land owners paid by NOIDA officials, the Supreme Court has appointed an SIT to look into it.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh ruled while hearing the anticipatory bail pleas of the legal advisor and one of the law officers of NOIDA who were accused of corruption.

It said the allegations related to the release of huge amounts of compensation in favour of some landowners, who were allegedly not entitled to seek such a higher compensation for their acquired land.

The top court constituted the special investigation team (SIT) comprising IPS officer and Additional General of Police, Lucknow zone S B Shiradkar, Inspector General CBCID Modak Rajesh D Rao and Hemant Kutiyaal, Commandant of UP Special Range Security Battalion.

"The special investigation team shall, inter alia, look into the issues (i) whether the quantum of compensation paid to the land owners was higher than they are entitled to in terms of the judgments passed by the courts from time to time; (ii) if so, who were the officers/officials responsible for such exorbitant



payment; (iii) whether there was any collusion or connivance between the beneficiaries and officers/officials of NOIDA; and (iv) whether the overall functioning of NOIDA lacks transparency, fairness and commitment to the cause of public interest," it said on January 23.

Directing the SIT to file its report in a sealed cover within two months, the bench said the team was free to look into any other allied issue during the investigation.

The bench however protected the beneficiaries, farmers and landowners, who were paid the extra compensation from any coercive or penal action without its permission.

It observed on September 14, 2023, when the matter was heard, it was learnt that the FIR in the case was not a solitary instance of alleged excess payment of compensation to the land owners but there were numerous instances of such payments, prima facie, for extraneous considerations and on quid pro quo basis.

"It was consequently desired that an independent agency should hold a deeper probe into the functioning of NOIDA as a statutory authority," the bench noted.

On October 5, 2023, the state government informed the top court that it had constituted a fact-finding committee comprising three officers, including the additional director general of police, Meerut Zone, to examine the cases where NOIDA might have paid illegal compensation in collusion and connivance with the officers of the authority and the beneficiaries.

It said, "Keeping in view the limited mandate given to that committee and the manner in which the proceedings were conducted, we were not satisfied with its outcome, especially when it was brought to our notice on November 22, 2023 that under the garb of investigation, the committee was trying to question the grant of higher compensation to the landowners under the court orders."

The bench went on, "It was

PARADE INTERACTION



Republic Day Parade participants perform during an interaction with Prime Minister Narendra Modi (Unseen), in New Delhi on Friday. ANI

Delhi's maximum temp settles at 23.7°C with moderate AQI

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi recorded a maximum temperature of 23.7 degrees Celsius with moderate air quality on Friday, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. The 24-hour average Air Quality Index (AQI) was recorded in the moderate category at 199, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

An AQI between zero and 50 is considered "good", 51 and 100 "satisfactory", 101 and 200 "moderate", 201 and 300 "poor", 301 and 400 "very poor", and 401 and 500 "severe".

Meanwhile, the minimum temperature stood at 9.8 degrees Celsius, 2.3 degrees above average, with humidity levels fluctuating between 90 and 58 percent during the day, the IMD said.



The weather department has forecast clear skies for Saturday with predominant surface winds expected from the northwest direction.

The wind speed is likely to be less than 8 kmph during the morning hours with shallow fog or mist expected during the early morning, it said.

Wind speed is expected to gradually increase to 12 to 14 kmph by the afternoon, again

from the northwest direction, it added.

By evening and night, the speed will decrease to less than 10 kmph, and smog or mist is likely to develop, the IMD said.

The maximum and minimum temperatures for Saturday are expected to settle around 22 degrees Celsius and 8 degrees Celsius, respectively.

Court exempts Kejriwal, Sisodia from appearing in excise case during campaigning



TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Friday exempted former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal and AAP leaders Manish Sisodia and Durgesh Pathak from personally appearing in an excise case as they were campaigning for upcoming assembly elections. Special judge Kaveri Baweja allowed the reprieve after the three AAP leaders said they were unable to personally appear in court as they were "actively engaged" in campaigning for the elections.

"In view of the above said submissions, personal appearance of the applicants are exempted for today only through

counsel... The case is adjourned to February 3, 2025," the judge said.

The money laundering case stems from a CBI case lodged after Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena recommended a probe into the alleged irregularities in the implementation of the excise policy.

According to the CBI and the ED, irregularities were committed while modifying the excise policy and undue favours were extended to the license holders.

The Delhi government implemented the policy on November 17, 2021, and scrapped it by the end of September 2022 amid allegations of corruption.

Delhi Police nabs man in Rs 15 cr Covid-19 vaccine scam

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Delhi Police has arrested a man who had been absconding for nearly three years in a Rs 15 crore fraud case, an



official said on Friday. The accused, Prafulla Kumar Nayak, who impersonated an officer from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, played a key role in duping victims by promising work orders related to Covid-19 vaccine transpor-

tation during the pandemic, the EOW statement read.

The case originated in 2022 following a complaint by one Sunil Kaushik, who alleged that he was defrauded of Rs 4 crore under the pretext of securing government contracts for vaccine

transportation.

"Four additional complaints revealed a similar modus operandi, with the accused collectively duping victims of over Rs 15 crore," Additional Commissioner of Police (EOW) Amrutha Guguloth said in the state-

ment.

Investigations revealed that in May 2021, the accused lured victims by arranging meetings within the premises of Nirman Bhawan, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's headquarters.

R-Day: 70 paramilitary companies, 15k cops to be deployed

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Over 70 companies of paramilitary forces and more than 15,000 police personnel are set to be deployed across the capital for Republic Day celebrations, an official said on Friday.

The city will be monitored by drones and CCTV surveillance and cyber-specialist officers will be deployed to oversee operations, a senior police officer said.

"We have already installed multi-layered security arrangements. We have six layers of checking and frisking arrangements. Apart from this, we will have multi-layered barricading. We have



several thousand CCTV cameras installed in the New Delhi district, including those with Facial Recognition Systems (FRS)," the officer said. Moving vehicles with FRS system will also be deployed, he said.

The officer said the cameras are linked to a database to identify criminals imme-

diately. "Delhi Police is well prepared to tackle any kind of situation," he said.

The officer further said that police teams are conducting mock drills with multiple security agencies. Over 70 companies of paramilitary forces and more than 15,000 police personnel will be deployed in the national capital

to ensure robust security arrangements.

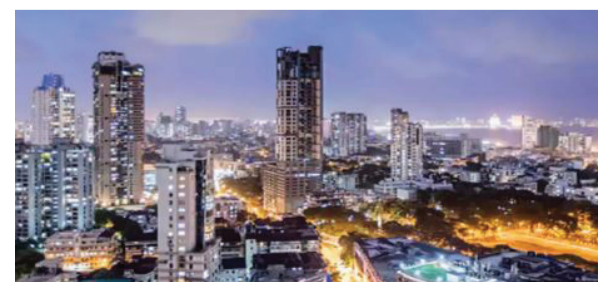
The DCPs of all districts are properly briefed about the security arrangements. Police officers would remain on high alert and promptly report any suspicious activity immediately, he said.

Another officer said approximately 4,000 rooftop security points have been identified in New Delhi, North, and Central districts as part of the security measures. Attendees of the Republic Day parade will receive security stickers, and about 500 high-resolution Artificial Intelligence-enabled cameras with FRS are being installed along the route and nearby areas.

Mumbai 5th, Delhi 8th in Asia-Pacific's top cities for cross-border investment

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Mumbai ranks fifth and New Delhi eighth among the top 10 most preferred markets in the Asia Pacific region for cross-border investment, according to CBRE. Real estate consultant CBRE India on Friday released the findings of its 2025 Asia-Pacific investor Intentions Survey, highlighting the improvement in net buying intention across markets in Asia Pacific, with over half of respondents indicating their preference to buy more real estate in 2025.



"Mumbai and New Delhi rank among the top 10 most preferred markets for cross-border investment in the APAC region. Mumbai ranked 5th after Tokyo, Sydney, Singapore and Ho Chi Minh City, while New Delhi was tied for the 8th spot along Seoul, Osaka and

Hanoi," the consultant said. The survey further noted that investor sentiment in India is driven by asset classes, including office, residential, industrial & data centres.

Total equity investment in Indian real estate recorded an all-time high of USD 11.4

billion in 2024, increased by 54 per cent year-on-year.

Anshuman Magazine, Chairman & CEO - India, South-East Asia, Middle East & Africa, CBRE, said, "Investment in India's real estate market reached a record high in 2024."

"While the landscape was primarily dominated by domestic investors, foreign equity investments and a significant resurgence of capital deployment across asset classes by overseas investors stand as a testament to India's growing prominence as a global real estate destination," he said.

INTENTION IS TO BRING NATURAL GAS, ATF UNDER GST: HARDEEP PURI

Puri exclaimed sooner than later (it will happen).

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Puri on Friday said that there is a growing consensus to bring natural gas under the ambit of GST, but stopped short of hinting at a timeline.

"LPG gas is already 100 per cent saturated," he said, referring to LPG gas connections and the success of PM Ujjwala scheme.

On the matter of GST on LPG, the government maintained that it was under the GST since the be-

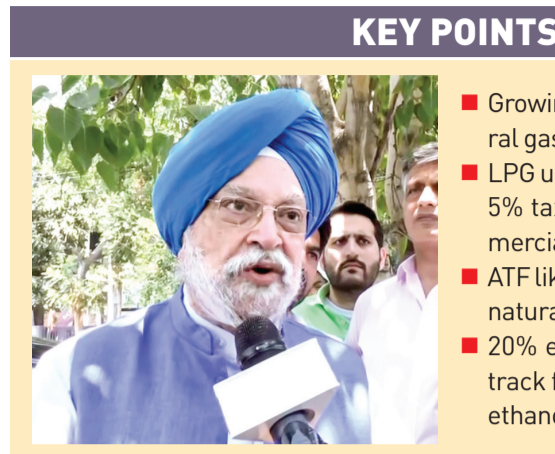
ginning.

"LPG is under the ambit of GST since the beginning," Petroleum and Natural Gas Secretary Pankaj Jain said, who was also present during the press conference.

Commercial LPG cylinder attracts 18 per cent GST and domestic attracts 5 per cent.

Ujjwala gas currently sells at Rs 503 per unit, and non-Ujjwala at Rs 803 per unit in Delhi. The minister, responding to a reporter's question, asserted that aviation turbine fuel will also be taken up for consideration under the GST.

"Our sense out of the last



KEY POINTS

- Growing consensus to include natural gas under GST, timeline unclear.
- LPG under GST since inception, with 5% tax on domestic, 18% on commercial.
- ATF likely to be included in GST soon; natural gas also under discussion.
- 20% ethanol blending in petrol on track for completion next month; no ethanol blending in diesel planned.

GST meeting was that ATF (aviation turbine fuel) is likely to come on soon under GST but bringing Natural gas is also on the cards,"

the minister said.

"There were a large number of states which earlier had reservations like Gujarat, Maharashtra, AP,

but they are now more or less seeing the benefits of that. I don't want to put a timeline, because its not my field. I am the line ministry,

and the taxation issue falls under the finance ministry and GST council," said the minister. "If you ask me, I would say sooner than later

from time to time, have opposed this idea. Petroleum products are currently not part of the GST framework. Moving on to biofuel

"Our sense out of the last GST meeting was that ATF (aviation turbine fuel) is likely to come on soon under GST but bringing Natural gas is also on the cards," the minister said.

The government has been ambitious of attaining 20 per cent ethanol-blended petrol by 2024-25 financial year and 30 per cent by 2029-30. The government has advanced the target of E20 fuel from 2030 to 2025.

E20 blending in petrol was introduced by the Centre to reduce the country's oil import cost, energy security, lower carbon emissions and better air quality.

India, however, has no plans to mandate the blending of ethanol with diesel. The issue of blending ethanol with diesel is still at an experimental stage.

Sensex down 10,000 points from its peak last Sept

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Indian stock indices declined during Friday's session and logged weekly losses, with multiple sectoral indices slumping sharply.

Auto, media, pharma, PSU Bank, realty, healthcare, oil and gas, were some of them, NSE data showed.

Sensex closed the day at 76,190.46 points, down 329.92 points or 0.43 per cent, while Nifty closed at 23,092.20 points, down 113.15 points or 0.49 per cent. Sensex now remains

around 10,000 points lower than its all-time high of 85,978 points in September last. Sensex has so far slumped 3 per cent this New Year.

Indian markets are witnessing volatility amid uncertainty over US President Donald Trump's policies. Investors anticipate potential disruptions to global trade during Trump presidency.

Weak domestic economic growth, selling by foreign portfolio investors, have also been reflecting on the stock markets.

In 2024, Sensex and Nifty

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

"The Q3 results of IT companies and the management commentary indicating improving prospects for the sector suggest that the sector is a safe bet now," said Vijayakumar.

Jio launches free-for-life sound-pay feature

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

In a bold move that underscores Jio's commitment to empowering every Indian, the company on Friday announced a revolutionary new feature for its JioBharat device - a free, industry-first JioSoundPay dedicated to 5 crore small-scale merchants across the nation.

This groundbreaking innovation JioSoundPay transforms the merchant experience by providing instant, multilingual audio confirmations for every UPI payment, enabling seamless and efficient business operations for even the smallest kirana stores, vegetable vendors, and roadside eateries. Existing small and micro merchants pay around Rs 125 a month for a sound box. Now, with JioSoundPay being provided FREE, JioBharat users will save Rs 1,500 annually, according to a statement by the company. JioBharat phone, that was launched over a year ago, is the world's most affordable 4G phone available at only Rs 699.

DAVOS 2025 Efforts to boost confidence in India's water sector at WEF, says CR Patil

Union Minister for Jal Shakti, CR Patil, emphasized India's progress in tackling its water challenges at the 2025 World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos. In his address, Patil underscored the success of government initiatives in water conservation and irrigation, which have not only alleviated previous concerns regarding water scarcity but also positioned India as a promising investment destination in the sector.

Patil remarked that over the past decade, significant strides have been made in addressing water-related issues through numerous government-led projects. The positive outcomes of these initiatives are transforming India's image as a country grappling with water shortages to one that is on the path to achieving water security. The Union Minister highlighted that the substantial progress in water management and irrigation systems presents a significant opportunity for foreign investors, urging them to look at India as

an attractive investment hub.

"The progress we have made in the past ten years is immense," Patil said, "and there is an opportunity for substantial investments in India's water sector. With our ongoing efforts, global investors can now confidently view India as a land of possibilities in the water and irrigation space."

Patil's remarks come at a crucial time when the Indian government is intensifying its focus on water management. The Ministry of Jal Shakti, through its Department of Water Resources, River Development, and Ganga Rejuvenation, is relentlessly working to ensure the availability of sufficient water resources for the country. From river rejuvenation projects to the enhancement of irrigation networks, India is aiming to provide sustainable solutions to its growing water needs.

The announcement from Patil was complemented by discussions about India's broader economic growth at

WEF. At the event, it was also revealed that India, alongside eight other participating states, secured major investment proposals in Davos, underscoring the country's growing appeal to global investors. Notably, Union Minister for Food Processing Industries, Chirag Paswan, shared that the Belgian beverage giant AB InBev had committed to investing USD 250 million in India's beverage industry over the next two to three years.

States like Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, and other Southern Indian states were particularly active in attracting investments during the WEF conference. These states showcased their diverse industrial strengths and presented themselves as key investment destinations for global corporations. The collective presence of Union Ministers and Chief Ministers from various states at WEF highlighted a unified effort to project India's growth story and potential to the world.

Govt's subsidy burden likely to exceed budget estimates: Report

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The subsidy burden of the government is expected to rise to approximately Rs 4.1-4.2 lakh crore in the financial year 2024-25 (FY25) more than the budget estimates, according to a report by the Bank of Baroda.

The report highlighted that this increase is driven pri-

marily by higher expenses on food and fertilizer subsidies, which are expected to exceed the budgeted allocation.

It said, "overall subsidy burden is expected to rise to approx. Rs 4.1-4.2 lakh crore in FY25. From that level, the burden is expected to come down to approx. Rs 4 lakh crore in the next financial year".

The government had ini-

tially set a budget estimate (BE) of Rs 3.8 lakh crore for major subsidies, including food, fertilizer, and petroleum, for FY25.

However, the report indicates that this allocation is likely to be surpassed by around 10 per cent, following a rise in the minimum support price (MSP) for Rabi crops for the marketing season 2025-26.

Bhaane Group, DPIIT collaborate

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Bhaane Group, a subsidiary of Shahi Exports Pvt Ltd, the largest manufacturer of apparel, has signed a MoU with the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).

According to DPIIT, Anand Ahuja, CEO and Co-Founder of Bhaane Group, and Dr Sumeet K Jarangal, IAS, Director of DPIIT, formalised the partnership by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

This collaboration aims to foster relationships with cross-border startups, along with bolstering the manufacturing capabilities in the country. Bhaane Group has been a strategic partner to several leading international brands like Nike and Converse, amongst others.

It has seamlessly created an Indianised experience for these brands, leveraging their expertise and understanding of the local markets. This partnership positions Bhaane Group to play an important role in helping Indian startups scale globally.

STARTUP CORNER



It will facilitate them to create a holistic understanding of the workings of foreign markets, along with guidance on operational knowledge throughout the startup lifecycle.

Anand Ahuja, CEO and Co-Founder of Bhaane Group said, "India's entrepreneurial journey has been very interesting to witness. Global brands are eyeing investing in Indian startups, as it is one of the leading players in the South Asian market."

He added, "DPIIT's mission with Start Up India aligns with our outlook to foster innovation and global competitiveness among Indian startups. By joining hands with the government, we are poised to create a conducive atmosphere for Indian startups to compete in global markets."

Sonam A Kapoor, Co-Founder of Bhaane Group said, "India has been growing as a manufacturing leader and through this col-



laboration, we're excited to support new brands emerging from our country and help them with the expertise and access that Bhaane Group brings."

She added, "This partnership with DPIIT helps us empower the next generation of Indian startups and breakthrough brands as they take on the global market. Together, we can showcase India's manufacturing innovation and design leadership to the world."

Sumeet K Jarangal, Director, DPIIT said, "The recently signed MoU serves a larger purpose in the ever-growing entrepreneurial spirit and our vision to fortify India's manufacturing landscape. By helping startups connect with industry leaders like Bhaane Group, we focus on promoting innovation, strengthening international dynamics, and helping Indian startups thrive on global soil."

Sanjiv, Joint Secretary,

DPIIT said, "By facilitating connections between startups and established players like Bhaane Group, we foster a mutually beneficial environment where innovation flourishes and Indian businesses achieve global success."

This unique partnership will prepare Indian startups for a new chapter in India's entrepreneurial journey. Bhaane Group and DPIIT desire to provide Indian entrepreneurs with exposure to international markets and bring these markets' attention to the growing entrepreneurial ecosystem in India.

The organisation's expansive portfolio is a testament to localising global experiences, adhering to the 'glocal' approach towards building international ties. Its cross-industry experiences, with DPIIT's vision to encourage innovation in India's expanding startup arena, will help in strengthening global collaborations.

Taural India signs MoU with Maharashtra government

In another significant development at the WEF, Taural India, a world-class aluminium foundry, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Maharashtra Government to expand its manufacturing operations in Supa, Maharashtra. This deal, which was presided over by Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, signifies a major leap forward for the state's industrial ambitions.

The expansion of Taural India's manufacturing facility in Supa is poised to bolster the region's industrial capabilities, with an investment of INR 500 Crore aimed at scaling up production. Bharat Gite, Managing Director and CEO of Taural India, emphasized that this move is aligned with the company's vision of decentralizing in-

dustries and empowering Tier II and III regions.

"This MoU represents a turning point for Taural India, as we expand our operations to meet growing demand across multiple sectors, including energy, aerospace, defence, and healthcare," Gite said. "Our commitment to decentralization aims to bring economic prosperity to regions beyond India's major urban centers."

The new facility, set to be four times the size of Taural India's current plant, will focus on reducing import dependence by localizing production of critical components. This expansion will not only contribute to the government's "Make in India" initiative but will also create over 1,200 local jobs, thereby strengthening Maharashtra's position as an industrial powerhouse.

Shallu Jindal's impactful presence

Shallu Jindal, Chairperson of the Jindal Foundation and Chancellor of OP Jindal University, also made her mark at the WEF, spotlighting the Foundation's impactful social initiatives. Jindal spoke at two key sessions, emphasizing the importance of skill development and empowering marginalized communities.

In her session titled "From Skill Gaps to Skill Gains," Jindal shared insights into the successful collaborations between the Jindal Foundation and the Government of India to address skill gaps and enhance employability, especially in underserved communities. The session highlighted the Foundation's work in bridging educational disparities and preparing individuals for the job market.

Further, in the "Generational Wealth" session, organized by the Women Inspiring Network, Jindal discussed how the Foundation's programs empower individuals, particularly women and farmers, to create sustainable economic opportunities within their communi-



ties. Through initiatives focused on community health, women's empowerment, rural infrastructure, and quality education, the Jindal Foundation is playing a pivotal role in fostering inclusive growth.

The Jindal Foundation's efforts have impacted over 14.3 million people across India, addressing vital areas such as healthcare, nutrition, sanitation, and rural development. Jindal's participation at WEF reflects the Foundation's unwavering commitment to social change and its role in shaping India's future through sustainable development.

'Time for Indian investors, startups to shine at WEF': Archana Jahagirdar

At the same forum, Archana Jahagirdar, Managing Partner at Rukam Capital, shared her views on India's flourishing startup ecosystem. Jahagirdar noted that the country's entrepreneurial landscape is expanding rapidly, with over 100 unicorns, and argued that it is high time that Indian investors and startups are recognized on the global stage.

"We have more than 100 unicorns in India," she pointed out, "and while older startups are already making waves at global forums like Davos, it's now time for Indian investors and startups to also step into the spotlight."

Her statement reflects the growing confidence within India's entrepreneurial community, which is increasingly seen as a key player in shaping the global economic future. Jahagirdar's words resonate with the broader narrative being discussed at WEF, where India's innovation-driven growth is in focus.

The India Pavilion at WEF, which has become a hub of activity, features a diverse array of states such as Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, and Telangana. These states are vying for investment in sectors such as technology, healthcare, manufacturing, and green energy. Jahagirdar's comments underscore the opportunity for India's startups and investors to leverage such global platforms to further cement their positions in the global economy.

The Indian delegation at WEF includes five Union Ministers, three state Chief Ministers, and a host of business leaders, all working together to promote India's economic potential. This collective approach highlights the country's political stability and the alignment between various levels of government and the private sector in driving growth and attracting foreign investments.



NEED TO ADDRESS JUDICIAL DELAYS IN INDIA: CHALLENGES AND REFORMS

The Preamble of the Indian Constitution provides for social, economic, and political justice which is effectuated through various constitutional articles.

OPINION

ABHINAV MEHROTRA &
AMIT UPADHYAY



The legal maxim of “Justice delayed is justice denied” which means justice is not served if there is a delay in resolving a case specifically fits the situation of the judiciary in India. Recently, the Supreme Court had expressed “shock” to learn that a murder case accused’s bail application was pending before the Allahabad High Court for the last four years. Such is the situation that the Indian judiciary currently faces, which impedes the timely delivery of justice. Such inefficiency and consequent judicial delay due to procedural complexities and a lack of technological integration incur substantial economic costs affecting litigants adversely. Thus, addressing these issues requires a comprehensive understanding of the constitutional mandate for speedy trials and the systemic challenges that undermine judicial efficiency including identifying challenges in providing speedy trials and legal aid,

and discussing proposed reforms to mitigate these issues from a constitutional perspective.

The Preamble of the Indian Constitution provides for social, economic, and political justice which is effectuated through various constitutional articles. Article 14, which deals with equality before the law and equal protection of the law; Article 21, which protects life and personal liberty; and Article 323A which provides for the establishment of an administrative tribunal. Among these provisions, the right to a speedy trial is implicitly included within the ambit of the right to a fair trial, which forms part of the right to life and liberty guaranteed by Article 21. The judiciary is designed to be an independent organ, crucial for maintaining the rule of law and ensuring impartiality in legal proceedings.

The Indian Constitution places significant emphasis on the right to speedy justice. However, the prevalent

culture of adjournments in Indian courts has resulted in delayed and prolonged trials, thereby creating substantial challenges in delivering efficient legal aid. The Indian judicial system is plagued by inefficiencies stemming from the high volume of cases filed daily and the significant number of vacancies in the lower judiciary. Addressing these inefficiencies requires the recruitment of additional judicial personnel and the optimal allocation of resources to manage caseloads more effectively. Various other institutional and legal complexities and a lack of technological integration also contribute to judicial delays, causing immense loss of productivity and rising litigation costs.

The Law Commission of India, in its 77th report, had observed that “Long delay in the disposal of cases has resulted in huge arrears and a heavy backlog of pending files in various courts in the country. A bare glance at the statements of the various types of cases pending in different courts and the duration for which those cases have been pending is enough to show the enormity of the problem”.

In this background, the essence of access to justice could be understood to include four main facets that constitute the essence of access to justice including but not limited to the need for an adjudicatory mechanism; the mechanism must be conveniently accessible in terms of justice; the process of adjudication must be speedy, and the process of adjudication must be affordable to the disputants. These aspects were also emphasized in the case of Hussainara Khatoun v.



The right to a speedy trial is recognized internationally as a fundamental human right enshrined in international human rights law. In Europe, the right to a speedy trial has been recognized by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in the case of Delcourt v. Belgium, wherein it opined that access to justice was a valuable human and fundamental right which parallels Article 21 of the Indian Constitution.

State of Bihar, where the Hon’ble Supreme Court of India had declared that speedy trial is an enshrined part of Article 21. It also pointed out that Article 39 A, which guarantees free legal aid and equal justice to all citizens, is an inalienable part of ensuring speedy justice. This article was added to the Constitution through the Constitution (Forty-Second Amendment) Act 1976. Despite the existing le-

gal framework, the issue of judicial delays, primarily caused by unwarranted adjournments, remains a persistent challenge. These delays not only lead to substantial economic losses but also hinder access to justice. Adopting modern technologies, increased use of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, simplifying legal procedures, and implementing Active Case Management (ACM), where judges take a proac-

tive role in managing cases by organizing pre-trial conferences and setting deadlines, will help reduce adjournments and improve the speed and quality of legal processes in ensuring access to justice.

The right to a speedy trial is recognized internationally as a fundamental human right enshrined in international human rights law. In Europe, the right to a speedy trial has been recognized by the European

Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in the case of Delcourt v. Belgium, wherein it opined that access to justice was a valuable human and fundamental right which parallels Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. This right underscores the importance of timely adjudication as a critical component of the broader framework of justice.

In the Indian context, future litigation policies must integrate the advancements

established during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as e-courts and online dispute resolution (ODR), to streamline dispute resolution mechanisms, as the computerization of courts has helped in reducing the “Backlog of Cases” in the past. However, mere computerization of court would not serve any further purpose in the present times, and there exists a need for electronic courts to facilitate the speedy disposal of cases. Additionally, there is an urgent need to incentivize the prosecutors and government officials who handle cases to prevent delays in hearings, impacting the applicants who have to testify repeatedly before the court. The applicants experience social and economic issues in appearing before the judges repeatedly, violating the constitutional rights of speedy trial under Article 21.

Ultimately, upholding the right to a speedy trial is integral to the broader protection of the right to life and personal liberty envisioned by the framers of the Constitution. Only by safeguarding this right can the justice system effectively fulfil its role as a protector of individual rights and liberties, thereby fostering public confidence in the rule of law.

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Legally defensible but politically indefensible

First high-profile FIR lodged under Section 152, formerly law of sedition.

OPINION

SEEMA SINDHU



An FIR has been lodged against Rahul Gandhi in Guwahati by a private person under section 152 and 197 of Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) for a part of his speech “The BJP and the RSS have captured very single institution of

our country. We are now fighting the BJP, RSS and the Indian state itself”. BJP was prompt to call his words coming from George Soros playbook. Section 152 pertains to Acts endangering sovereignty, unity and integrity of India and section 197 Imputations, assertions prejudicial to national integrity. Both the sections are cognizable and non-bailable – meaning the accused can be arrested without a warrant and can’t be given bail by police as matter of right – it’s the discretion of the court.

Section 152 BNS is corresponding section of sec-

tion 124A (popularly law of sedition) IPC which has been repealed by BNS now. This is perhaps the first high-profile FIR under section 152 which is a whittled and more defined version of its predecessor section 124A IPC, after the BNS coming into effect. Undoubtedly the speech doesn’t attract the section when heard in its entirety, but the part “against the Indian State itself” is enough to procedurally harass Rahul Gandhi. First let’s see the law and then the politics around it.

Sedition IPC and Section 152 BNS: In 2022 the Supreme Court of India had suspended the trial of cases under Section 124A IPC taking cognizance of its misuse given its broad ambit and directed the government to reconsider this law. The context to it is important – there had been rise in registration of sedition cases during



2010 and 2021. Further conviction rate is as low as 33 percent – indicating the falsity of cases.

History: Interestingly section 124A was not a part of the original draft IPC 1860 which came into effect in 1862; and was incorporated in 1870 – triggered by the seeds sown by “the first battle of Independence 1857”. Bal Gangadhar Tilak was infamously convicted for his speeches under this

law. Till 1973, sedition was non-cognizable and was made cognizable by Indira Gandhi govt just before the Emergency; meaning thereby that during British era, while a person could not be arrested without a warrant, he could be arrested without warrant in Independent India and it remains so till date.

The speech and the politics: While Gandhi’s speech in its entirety

Sedition IPC and Section 152 BNS: In 2022 the Supreme Court of India had suspended the trial of cases under Section 124A IPC taking cognizance of its misuse given its broad ambit and directed the government to reconsider this law. The context to it is important – there had been rise in registration of sedition cases during 2010 and 2021. Further conviction rate is as low as 33 percent – indicating the falsity of cases.

doesn’t fall foul in the section he is charged of, he has certainly made a self goal by not being politically correct in using the phrase “against the Indian state”. He being a legislator is assumed to be careful with words. One can defend him LEGALLY by contextualizing his speech with instances of Allahabad High Court Justice Shekhar Yadav’s speech, Madhya Pradesh High Court Justice Rohit Arya’s open allegiance while holding office and Additional Solicitor General SV Raju’s oral submission

in the Supreme Court that there’s something fishy about the ED’s affidavit as it was submitted without his vetting; but yet the use of that particular phrase is indefensible POLITICALLY. He made his speech in haste perhaps. By this time, he must have learned the language and politics of masses. Further, it is not correct to paint every institution and every institutional functionary with the same brush. It gives his fight the impression of being against the “Indian state” ALSO besides against the

BJP. When he casts aspersions on addition of one crore voters in Maharashtra between Lok Sabha elections and assembly elections, there should be something verifiable to it, without which it sends impression of pessimism and self denial. Politics is a lot about perception. Today he is being seen as against the “Indian state”, against unity in relation to his caste census plank and regressive politics in relation to reservation.

The Writer is Delhi-based lawyer. On X @SeemaSindhu

CITIZENSHIP NOT THE ONLY SCARE FOR PRETERM BABIES IN US

As President Trump's executive order on U.S. citizenship takes effect, preterm births among NRI expectant mothers are rising significantly.



A photo of a NICU, illustrating the specialized care required for preterm infants. Freepik



Preterm birth is a leading cause of neonatal death and long-term health issues like respiratory distress syndrome and cerebral palsy. Freepik

ANJALI SINGH
NEW DELHI

Recent developments in U.S. immigration policy have led to significant concerns among expectant parents, particularly within the Indian community residing in the United States. On January 20, 2025, President Donald Trump issued an executive order aiming to end automatic citizenship for children born in the U.S. to non-permanent residents. This policy was set to take effect on February 20, 2025. In response, there has been a notable increase in requests for preterm caesarean section (C-section) deliveries among Indian women in the U.S., especially in states like New Jersey. These expectant mothers are seeking to ensure their children are born before the policy's implementation date to secure U.S. citizenship for them.

However, medical professionals have expressed concerns about the health implications of elective preterm deliveries. Preterm births can pose significant health risks for newborns, including respiratory issues, developmental delays, and increased susceptibility to infections. Obstetricians are advising against sched-

uling early deliveries solely for the purpose of securing citizenship, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing the health and well-being of both mother and child.

It's important to note that on January 23, 2025, a federal judge in Seattle temporarily blocked President Trump's executive order, citing potential violations of the 14th Amendment's citizenship clause. This ruling prevents the policy's enforcement for 14 days while further legal arguments are considered. The Justice Department has indicated plans to appeal the decision.

Given the evolving legal situation and the health risks associated with preterm deliveries, expectant parents are encouraged to consult with their healthcare providers and stay informed about the latest developments in immigration policy.

WHAT IS A PRETERM BIRTH?

About 1 out of every 10 births in the U.S. is premature. A baby born before 37 weeks of pregnancy is considered a premature or preterm baby. The earlier the birth, the greater the

possibility of serious health risks to the baby. These risks include breathing problems and trouble maintaining temperature. Preterm infants may need special care in a NICU.

A preterm baby may have underdeveloped organs like the brain, lungs, and liver. They may have trouble staying warm or feeding and may be at risk for developmental delays later in life.

As per the World Health Organization, prematurity is the leading cause of death in children under the age of 5 years around the world. In low-income settings, half of the babies born at or below 32 weeks (2 months early) die due to a lack of feasible, cost-effective care such as warmth, breastfeeding support, and basic care for infections and breathing difficulties.

Babies may be born preterm because of spontaneous preterm labor or because there is a medical indication to plan an induction of labor or caesarean birth early.

HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF PRETERM BIRTH FOR THE BABY

"As gynecologists, we always try to prevent a premature delivery unless it is absolutely essential for



Representative image of official documents or forms related to immigration policies, representing the bureaucratic aspect of immigration. Freepik

the health of the mother or baby. Preterm delivery can have significant short-term and long-term consequences for the baby," says Dr. Astha Dayal, Director - Obstetrics and Gynaecology, CK Birla Hospital, Gurugram.

In some cases, preterm delivery may be medically indicated, such as in pre-eclampsia or high blood pressure of the mother during pregnancy, placental abruption—a condition where the placenta separates from the uterus, depriving the baby of oxygen and nutrients. It can also happen in cases of fetal distress where the baby is not receiving enough oxygen and nutrients, requiring immediate delivery. Sometimes, in cases of twins or multiple pregnancies, the risk of preterm delivery may increase.

"For most other conditions, we try to prolong pregnancy at least up to 37 weeks," says Dr. Dayal.

"Preterm babies, born before 37 weeks of gestation, are at risk of various health challenges due to their underdeveloped organs and systems. The severity of these risks depends on how early the baby is born, with extremely preterm infants (born before 28 weeks) facing the highest risks," says Dr. Abhishek Chopra, Consultant Pediatrician and Neonatologist at Cloudnine Group of Hospitals, New Delhi Punjabi Bagh.

"Preterm and low birth weight babies are at a higher risk of SIDS, especially in the first year of life. Safe sleep practices, such as sleeping on their back and using a firm mattress, are crucial," adds Dr. Chopra.

Preterm babies, born before 37 weeks of gestation, are at a higher risk for various health complications. These risks can be categorized into

short-term and long-term complications.

SHORT-TERM COMPLICATIONS:

- **Respiratory Distress Syndrome (RDS):** Underdeveloped lungs can lead to breathing difficulties, requiring oxygen therapy in the neonatal ICU or even mechanical ventilation.

- **Feeding problems:** Preterm babies may have difficulty sucking, swallowing, and digesting milk, leading to nutritional deficiencies.

- **Hypoglycemia or low blood sugar:** This can occur due to immature liver function and inadequate glucose stores.

- **Hypothermia:** Preterm babies may struggle to regulate their body temperature, leading to hypothermia.

- **Infections:** Preterm babies are more susceptible to infections, such as sepsis, pneumonia, and meningitis.

These complications may be managed by good neonatal care, but long-term complications are not always predictable and manageable. These include:

- **Neurodevelopmental delays:** Preterm babies are at a higher risk for cognitive, motor, and behavioral delays.

- **Cerebral palsy:** Preterm babies are more likely to develop cerebral palsy, which affects movement, balance, and coordination.

- **Vision and Hearing Impairments:** Preterm infants face a higher risk of issues like retinopathy of prematurity and hearing loss.

- **Chronic Lung Disease:** Preterm babies are more prone to chronic lung conditions, resulting in recurring respiratory challenges.

- **Increased Risk of Adult Diseases:** Conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases are



A premature baby in an infant incubator. Freepik



A photograph from an awareness campaign about preterm birth, highlighting public health efforts. today.wayne.edu

more prevalent in individuals born preterm.

CARING FOR A PRETERM BABY

- **Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU):** Preterm babies require specialized care in NICUs equipped with advanced technology and expert teams.

- **Developmental Follow-ups:** Regular check-ups are essential to monitor growth and promptly address any complications.

- **Parental Support:** Counseling and education empower parents to navigate the challenges of caring for a preterm baby.

Advances in neonatal care have improved outcomes for preterm infants, but early interventions remain crucial to reduce long-term risks.

MANAGING PRETERM BIRTH

Preventive Measures and Care:

- Rest, reduced stress, and avoiding heavy lifting.
- Healthy diet and abstaining from smoking or alcohol.

- Regular prenatal check-ups to monitor health and detect early signs of complications.

- **Medical Interventions:**

- Progesterone Supplements: Reduce the risk of preterm labor.

- Cervical Cerclage: Recommended for shortened cervical length.

- Corticosteroids: Aid in lung maturation when preterm labor is imminent.

RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH PRETERM BIRTH

For Mothers:

- Increased risk of high blood pressure, postpartum hemorrhage, and cardiovascular diseases.

For Babies:

- Respiratory and digestive issues, developmental delays, vision and hearing problems, and long-term chronic conditions.

SAFETY AND MONITORING DURING PREGNANCY

- Frequent check-ups, including ultrasounds and

cervical length monitoring, are essential.

- Early detection and management of complications significantly improve outcomes.

EMERGENCY PROTOCOLS

- **Immediate Response:** Neonatal resuscitation, maternal stabilization, and prompt medical intervention.

- **Post-Birth Care:** Support for feeding, breathing, and temperature regulation in a NICU.

SUPPORT SERVICES FOR PARENTS

- Emotional and psychological counseling.

- Peer support groups and guidance on newborn care.

- Financial assistance, if necessary.

DELIVERY PLANNING

- Choose a facility with a Level III/IV NICU.

- Collaborate with healthcare providers to create a birth plan tailored to the baby's level of prematurity.

POST-BIRTH CARE FOR PRETERM BABIES

- **In the NICU:** Monitor feeding, temperature, and respiratory needs.

- **Parental Role:** Provide skin-to-skin contact and adhere to NICU protocols to prevent infections.

- **After Discharge:** Regular follow-ups with pediatric specialists to track growth and address developmental concerns.

Preterm birth requires a comprehensive approach involving medical expertise, parental involvement, and continuous monitoring to ensure the best outcomes for both mother and baby.

OVERVIEW OF PRETERM DELIVERY
● Definition: Birth before 37 weeks of gestation.
● Categories by Gestational Age:
○ Extremely Preterm: <28 weeks
○ Very Preterm: 28–32 weeks
○ Moderate Preterm: 32–37 weeks
Pros and Cons of Preterm Delivery
Pros:
● Medical Necessity: In cases like severe preeclampsia or fetal distress, preterm delivery can save lives.
Cons:
● Health Complications: Preterm birth is a leading cause of neonatal death and long-term health issues like respiratory distress syndrome and cerebral palsy.
● Developmental Challenges: Higher risk of diseases in adulthood, including type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular conditions.
WHEN IS PRETERM DELIVERY NECESSARY?
Conditions Requiring Preterm Birth:
● Severe preeclampsia
● Fetal growth restriction
● Placental abruption
Avoiding Elective Preterm Delivery:
Elective preterm delivery should be avoided unless medically necessary, as full-term pregnancies (39–40 weeks) yield better health outcomes for both mother and child.

SUPREME COURT: PLAINT WITH MULTIPLE RELIEFS CANNOT BE REJECTED JUST BECAUSE SOME RELIEFS ARE BARRED UNDER ORDER VII RULE 11 OF CPC

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Central Bank Of India And Anr. Versus Smt. Prabha Jain And Ors observed that when a Plaintiff includes multiple reliefs, it cannot be rejected solely because one of the reliefs is being barred by law, as long as the other reliefs remain valid.

The court stated that the plaintiff cannot be partially rejected under Order VII Rule 11 of Civil Procedure Code, CPC.

The court in the case observed that, 'If the civil court is of the view that one relief (say relief A) is not barred by law but is of the view that Relief B is barred by law, the civil court must not make any observations to the effect that relief B is barred by law and must leave that issue undecided in an Order VII, Rule 11 application. Therefore, this being because if the civil court cannot reject a plaintiff partially, then by the same logic, it ought not to make any adverse observations against relief B.'

The bench comprising of Justice JB Pardiwala and



Justice R Mahadevan was hearing the present matter.

The bench in the case was hearing a case under the SARFAESI Act in which the plaintiff sought three reliefs in a suit filed before the Civil Court. Thus, two of the reliefs, concerning ownership and title over the suit property used as collateral for a bank-sanctioned loan, were not barred by law, and the Civil Court had jurisdiction to decide on them therefore, the third relief, which pertained to the restoration of possession under Section

17 of the SARFAESI Act, was barred by law, as such an application must be filed before the Debt Recovery Tribunal, DRT, not the Civil Court.

The court in the case stated that while the Civil Court's jurisdiction could not be invoked to grant the third relief, the same would not prevent the Civil Court from addressing the first two reliefs. In other words, the plaintiff cannot be rejected under Order VII Rule 11(d) of the Civil Procedure Code, CPC merely because the third relief is

barred by law, as long as the other reliefs remain within the court's jurisdiction for adjudication.

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case observed that, 'Even if one relief survives, the plaintiff cannot be rejected under Order VII, Rule 11 of the Code of Civil Procedure, CPC. In the case on hand, the first and second reliefs as prayed for are clearly not barred by Section 34 of the SARFAESI ACT and are within the civil court's jurisdiction.'

Supreme Court reserves treasurer post for women in Bengaluru Advocates' Association; suggests 30% women reservation in General Council

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Kavitha H.C. Versus The State Of Karnataka And Ors and connected cases observed and has directed that the post of Treasurer be exclusively earmarked for women candidates.

The court in the case stated that the High-Powered Committee and the Chief Returning Officer may consider desirability of reserving at least 30% of other Governing Council posts for women lawyers, to ensure their adequate representation.

The bench comprising of Justice Surya Kant and Justice N Kotiswar Singh was hearing the present matter.

The bench in the case passed the order wherein the court noted that the concerned Regulations do not expressly bar reservation of posts for women lawyers.

The court invoked its powers under Article 142 of Constitution of India and has issued directions similar to those passed in the case of Delhi High Court and District Bar Association.



The court in its order stated that:

'This court deem it appropriate to invoke our powers under Article 142 of Constitution of India and direct as follows -

1.The post of Treasurer shall be exclusively earmarked for women candidates.

2.For this purpose, the High Powered Committee and the Chief Returning Officer shall extend the date for inviting nominations and if so required, the date of election can also be deferred for a few days. However, such a decision shall be to the entire discretion of the HPC and the CRO.

3.The High-Powered Com-

mittee and the Chief Returning Officer may also consider desirability of ensuring adequate representation to the women advocates in the Governing Council of Advocates' Association Bengaluru to ensure that at least 30% elected members of GC are women candidates of 10 years or above practice.'

The counsel, Senior Advocate Lakshmy Iyengar, appearing for the petitioner beseeched the Court to issue a clarification, as in the case of Delhi Bar Associations, that the age criteria (which requires 10 yrs or more experience) would not be considered. Pursuant to this, thus, the bench said that the directions passed in Delhi

Bar Associations' case shall apply mutatis mutandis to the case of Advocates' Association Bengaluru, AAB.

The instant petitions were filed after the Karnataka High Court, though supportive of reservation for women lawyers in the AAB, took a view that only the Supreme Court could pass the relevant order. Thus, the term Advocates' Association Bengaluru, AAB's Governing Council came to an end on December 19, 2024 and it remained unrepresented during today's proceedings.

Last Year, the court in the case directed for the reservation of 3 posts for women lawyers in the (then upcoming) Delhi High Court Bar Association elections.

The court also directed that in District Bar Associations, the post of Treasurer plus 30% of other Executive Committee posts shall stand reserved for women lawyers (which includes those already reserved for women). Recently, the application of this order was extended to Delhi's NGT Bar Association, Tax Bar Association and Sales Tax Bar Association.

SUPREME COURT ASKS SIT TO PROBE: DID NOIDA AUTHORITIES PAY EXCESS COMPENSATION TO LANDOWNERS? WHETHER NOIDA LACKS TRANSPARENCY?

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Virendra Singh Nagar v. State of Uttar Pradesh and another constituted a Special Investigation Team, SIT to investigate whether the officers of the New Okhla Industrial Development Authority, NOIDA paid excess land acquisition compensation to certain land owners.

The court in the case asked the SIT to examine "whether the overall functioning of NOIDA lacks transparency, fairness and commitment to the cause of public interest."

The bench comprising of Justice Surya Kant and Justice NK Singh was hearing the present matter.

The bench in the case passed the order wherein the court was hearing the petition filed by a Law Adviser and Legal Officer of New Okhla Industrial Development Authority, NOIDA seeking anticipatory bail in a corruption case which was registered over the allegation that huge amount of compensation was released in favour of some land owners over and above their legal entitlement.

In September 2023, the court noticed that it was not a solitary instance as there were several other cases where the compensation released, prima facie, appeared to be exorbitant, for extraneous considerations and on quid pro quo basis. Thus, a Fact



Finding Committee was constituted.

The court recorded dissatisfaction with the func-

tioning of the Committee as it started investigating cases where compensation was enhanced by judicial

orders.

The Court in the case suggested that a Special Investigation Team is to be

constituted, which consist of IPS officer from the UP Cadre but not belonging to UP.

In October 2024, Garima Prashad, the Additional Advocate General, handed over a list of names of officers who can be in the SIT.

The Court constituted the SIT with the following members:

Shri S.B. Shiradkar, IPS, Additional General of, IPS, Additional Director General of Police, Zone Lucknow.

Shri Modak Rajesh D.Rao, IPS, I.G., CBCID,

Shri Hemant Kutiyaal, IPS, presently posted as Commandant, Uttar Pradesh, Special Range Security Battalion, Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P.

Mandate of the SIT

The court directed that

the Special Investigation Team shall, inter alia, look into the issues:

1.Whether the quantum of compensation paid to the land owners was higher than they are entitled to in terms of the judgments passed by the courts from time to time;

2.If so, who were the officers or officials responsible for such exorbitant payment;

3.whether there was any collusion or connivance between the beneficiaries and officers or officials of New Okhla Industrial Development Authority, NOIDA; and

4.whether the overall functioning of New Okhla Industrial Development Authority, NOIDA lacks transparency, fairness and

commitment to the cause of public interest.

The SIT will be free to look into any other allied issue that may arise for its consideration during the course of investigation.

The Court ordered that the SIT should submit a report to the Court within two months.

The court noted, with regards to the bail application of the Legal Officer noted that he has already been granted interim protection and that he has joined the investigation.

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case clarified that no coercive action needs to be taken against landowners or farmers without the prior permission of the Court.

Fake lawyer's issue: SC says verification of advocates must be expedited, seeks BCI report in 8 weeks

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Bar Council Of India Versus Poonam Ashok Goud observed and has expressed serious concern over the delay caused in the verification of advocates' law degrees and enrolment by the Bar Councils.

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

The bench in the case was hearing the Bar Council Of India, BCI. The bench of Chief Justice of India, CJI Sanjiv Khanna, while referring to the long pending degree verification procedure opined:

'It being a very serious thing. The verification

drive must be expedited. There has to be a timeline for this.'

The counsel, Senior Advocate R Balasubramanian appearing for the Bar Council Of India,

BCI informed the bench that the verification process has to be carried out state-wise hence it is taking time.

The bench, while considering the same directed the Bar Council of India BCI to file an updated status report in 8 weeks.

In April 2023, the bench comprising of then- Chief Justice of India, CJI Justice DY Chandrachud, Justice PS Narasimha, and Justice JB Pardiwala directed the constitution of a High-Powered Committee to oversee the verification of advocates' degree certificates.

Centre notifies appointment of 5 judges to High Courts of Rajasthan, Allahabad and Bombay

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Central Government has notified the appointment of 5 judges to Rajasthan High Court, Allahabad High Court and Bombay High Court.

Three judicial officers appointed as judges of Rajasthan High Court:

Chandra Shekhar Sharma, Pramil Kumar Mathur and Chandra Prakash Shrimali

Advocate Praveen Kumar Giri has been elevated as the judge of Allahabad High Court.

Advocate Pravin Sheshrao Patil has been appointed as the Additional Judge to the Bombay High Court.

Open AI: Delhi High Court lacks jurisdiction to hear copyright suit

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Open AI, backed by Microsoft and creator of ChatGPT, challenged Delhi High Court's jurisdiction in a copyright lawsuit by ANI. Open AI argues it lacks an Indian presence and cannot delete ANI's data from training modules due to US legal obligations. The court will hear the case on January 28, 2025.



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 Parateek Arora @ Parateek Juneja Versus. State Of Punjab observed and has imposed the 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 petition filed for 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 appli-



cation was filed by the accused.

The High Court in the case noted that despite the First Information Report, FIR being registered against the accused on June 25, 2023, no action had been taken for more than a year against the accused.

Further, the High Court directed the police to file a status report of the investigation by the next hearing.

The petitioner withdrew the application again, when the matter was listed again.

The Supreme Court bench observed that the petitioner was trying to take undue ad-

vantage of the law.

The bench imposed a cost of Two Lakhs on the accused and has directed the Police Commissioner of Amritsar to arrest the petitioner within 3 days.

The court observed 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. Thus, the 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

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

with costs for an amount of Rs.2,00,000/ (Rupees Two Lakhs) and the cost need 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.'

TOP OF THE DAY

CHINA TO CLOSE 3 MILLION FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS

BEIJING: Nearly 3 million restaurants, cafes, and other food service establishments in China have closed in the past year, according to Radio Free Asia (RFA). A significant number of these closures have been due to bankruptcies, with even some of the most popular restaurant chains shutting down hundreds of their locations to cut costs. In early December, Zhenghao Da Da, a leading Taiwanese chicken chain, went viral on Weibo after announcing it would close all of its stores in China, starting with its flagship location at Shanghai's New World City Plaza mall, RFA reported.

INDIAN NATIONAL FOUND DEAD IN NEPAL

KATHMANDU: An Indian national was found dead in a waiting shelter in Nepal's Bara district, a police official said on Friday. Rudra Giri, 42, from Maharashtra, was found dead in the public waiting shelter located on a hill near the Churiyamai Temple in Simara sub-metropolitan city on Thursday, the official said. However, the cause of the death was yet to be ascertained, the official said.

CHINA WELCOMES FOREIGN SECY MISRI'S VISIT

BEIJING: China on Friday welcomed Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri's visit this weekend and sounded positive about its outcome, saying the development followed a series of interactions between top leaders and officials from both countries after over four years of stalled ties over the Ladakh military standoff. "We welcome Foreign Secretary Shri Vikram Misri's travel to China for the meeting of the Foreign Secretary-Vice Minister mechanism between China and India," Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Mao Ning told a media briefing here. Mao said that last October, President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi reached important common understandings on improving and growing bilateral relations during their meeting on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Kazan.

10 CHINESE AIRCRAFT SPOTTED: TAIWAN

TAIPEI: Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence (MND) has detected 10 Chinese aircraft and 7 naval vessels around the island as of 6 am (UTC+8) on Friday. Among them, 9 aircraft crossed the median line and entered Taiwan's southwestern Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ). Sharing a post on X, MND wrote, "10 PLA aircraft and 7 PLAN vessels operating around Taiwan were detected up until 6 a.m. (UTC+8) today. 9 of the aircraft crossed the median line and entered Taiwan's southwestern ADIZ. We have monitored the situation and responded accordingly."

ISRAELI ARMY WITHDRAWAL FROM LEBANON WILL LAST BEYOND 60 DAYS

The deal's text says that the withdrawal process "should not exceed 60 days."

AGENCIES
TEL AVIV

The Israeli army's withdrawal from southern Lebanon will last beyond 60 days because the ceasefire agreement has not yet been fully enforced by Lebanon, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said on Friday. In the first public confirmation of such a delay, following weeks of speculation, Netanyahu's office says in a statement that "the IDF's withdrawal process is conditional on the Lebanese Army deploying in southern Lebanon and fully and effectively enforcing the agreement, while Hezbollah withdraws beyond the Litani."

Netanyahu says that since Lebanon "has not yet fully enforced" its obligations under the ceasefire, "the phased withdrawal process will continue, in full coordination with the United States." The original 60-day deadline was slated for Sunday, January 26.

The prime minister says that the terms of the deal were worded "with the

THE DELAY



A car drives past damaged buildings in Naqoura, near the border with Israel, southern Lebanon, January 23, 2025. File Photo

- The Israeli army's withdrawal from southern Lebanon will extend beyond the initial 60-day deadline.
- Delay attributed to Lebanon not fully enforcing the ceasefire agreement.
- Netanyahu states the IDF withdrawal is conditional on:
 - Lebanese Army deploying in southern Lebanon.
 - Hezbollah retreating beyond the Litani River.
- Original deadline was January 26, but the process will continue in coordination with the U.S.
- The ceasefire agreement allowed for extensions beyond 60 days.
- IDF remains in eastern sector villages; Lebanese Army deployed in western sector.
- Israeli military preparing for possible renewed hostilities with Hezbollah.
- Hezbollah has warned against IDF staying beyond the deadline.

understanding that the withdrawal process may continue beyond 60 days. The deal's text says that the withdrawal process "should not exceed 60 days." The IDF is currently deployed to several villages in south-

ern Lebanon, mostly in the eastern sector. The Lebanese Armed Forces have deployed to villages in the western sector in recent weeks as the IDF has withdrawn.

The Israeli military is pre-

paring for the possibility of renewed hostilities with Hezbollah. The Iran-backed terror group warned yesterday that it would not accept the IDF staying in southern Lebanon beyond the 60 day limit.

Families of hostages urge full implementation of release deal as tensions rise in Israel

AGENCIES
TEL AVIV

Tensions are rising in Israel as the names of four hostages, set to be released on Saturday as part of the second phase of the hostage release agreement, are expected to be revealed tonight.

In the meantime, representatives from the Hostages and Missing Families Forum are holding a press conference in Tel Aviv's Hostages Square, urging Prime Minister Netanyahu to ensure the full implementation of the agreement until the last hostage is returned.

Ayelet Samerano, mother of Yonatan Samerano, 21, who was kidnapped from the Nova Music Festival on October 7, 2023, and has since been held in Gaza, spoke at the press conference about the ongoing struggle.



"We started Sunday morning with news about Oron Shaul. After more than 10 years, Oron's mother closes a circle. That same Sunday, while we're processing this incredible closure, Romi, Emily, and Doron returned -- those moments when they run to their mothers are what I and other families have been dreaming and imagining for 16 months," she shared.

"I call from here to the Prime Minister and negotiating team -- you're doing excellent work -- but please, do whatever is necessary to bring everyone back, to the last hostage. We ask you to ensure phase two of the deal is agreed upon before finishing the current phase. We cannot continue living in uncertainty. All hostages must return, and none of them has time left," Samerano implored.

Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorists killed after 4-hour shootout

AGENCIES
JERUSALEM

Two Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorists responsible for deadly shooting attack were killed during an ongoing counterterror operation in Burqin, near Jenin, the Israel Defense Forces said on Thursday morning.

Muhammad Nazal and Katiba Shelbi were killed during a four-hour exchange of gunfire after barricading themselves inside a building.

Nazal and Shelbi were involved in a Jan. 6 shooting attack near Kedumim in which a police officer and two retired teachers were killed. Hamas initially claimed responsibility for that attack.

The IDF said additional suspects who linked to the shooting spree were also detained for questioning.

Residents leave homes in Jenin as Israeli West Bank raid continues

AGENCIES
TEL AVIV

Hundreds of civilians began leaving their homes in the Israeli-occupied West Bank on Thursday as Israeli forces continued military action around the city of Jenin, according to Palestinian officials.

"Hundreds of camp residents have begun leaving after the Israeli army, using loudspeakers on drones and military vehicles, ordered them to evacuate the camp," Jenin Governor Kamal Abu al-Rub told the AFP news agency, referring to a refugee camp adjacent to the city.

"There are dozens of camp residents who have begun to leave," Jenin resident Salim Saadi told AFP. "The army is in front of my house. They could enter at any moment."

ISRAEL PURPOSE IN WEST BANK

Earlier this week, Israel launched a raid in the Jenin area, which it says is a hotbed of Iranian-supported Palestinian militant activity. The operation started days into a ceasefire in its war with Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the West Bank operation, codenamed "Iron Wall," aimed to "eradi-



A view of the southern part of the Israeli-occupied West Bank, and the concrete barrier wall separating Israel and the West Bank, as seen from near Kibbutz Lahav in southern Israel, January 23, 2025. Agency

cate terrorism" in the area, especially in the refugee camp neighboring Jenin.

Now in its fourth day, the military operation has so far claimed the lives of at least 12 Palestinians and injured 40 more, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry, which doesn't distinguish between civilians and militants in its figures.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said on Thursday that its troops had killed two members of the Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad overnight, accusing them of involvement in a bus attack on January 6 that killed three Israelis and injured six more.

However, the al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, said the two men were members of Hamas, which has also claimed re-

sponsibility for the bus attack.

"After an exchange of fire, they were eliminated," read an IDF statement, adding that one Israeli soldier was also wounded. But they insisted they had not asked residents to evacuate the area.

ISRAEL: NO EVACUATION ORDER

"We emphasize that, in order to maintain the safety of residents in the area, the IDF is enabling any resident who chooses to exit from the area to do so via secure and organized routes," an IDF statement to AFP read.

Hundreds of people left their homes in the camp, dragging suitcases or carrying plastic bags of their belongings after they said they heard messages to evacuate.

Saudi: \$600 billion package with US

AGENCIES
DAVOS

Saudi Economy Minister Faisal Alibrahim said on Friday that the \$600 billion of expanded investment and trade with the United States mentioned by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman includes investments as well as procurement from the public and private sectors.

The state news agency said on Thursday that the crown prince had affirmed the kingdom's intention to broaden its investments and trade with the United States over the next four years in the amount of \$600 billion and potentially beyond that.

Saudi Arabia's Minister of Economy and Planning revealed that the kingdom has agreed on a \$600 billion package with the United States, encompassing investments and procurement. This deal highlights deepening economic ties between the two nations and reflects Saudi Arabia's ongoing efforts to diversify its economy beyond oil dependence under Vision 2030.



Saudi Arabia's Minister of Economy and Planning Faisal Alibrahim attends the 55th annual World Economic Forum (WEF) meeting in Davos, Switzerland, January 24, 2025. Agency

The package includes significant investments in sectors such as renewable energy, technology, and infrastructure. These sectors are pivotal to Saudi Arabia's strategic goals, particu-

larly in transitioning to a knowledge-based economy and developing its industrial base. Additionally, the procurement component of the agreement focuses on defense, advanced technologies, and critical supply chains, ensuring mutual benefits for both Saudi Arabia and the U.S.

The minister emphasized that the agreement aligns with Saudi Arabia's global partnership approach, aiming to leverage expertise and technology from leading nations to foster local growth. The U.S., in turn, views this package as an opportunity to strengthen its geopolitical and economic ties with the Gulf region, particularly at a time when global energy markets are undergoing significant shifts. While specifics on timelines and project details are yet to be disclosed, this package underscores the importance of bilateral economic cooperation.

UNHRC praises human rights situation in Kazakhstan

AGENCIES
ASTANA

The Fourth Report of Kazakhstan on the fulfilment of human rights obligations and recommendations of the previous review was considered during the 48th session of the Working Group of the United Nations Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review, the Embassy of Kazakhstan noted.

The delegation of the Republic of Kazakhstan consisted of senior officials of nine main state bodies that directly implement state policy and monitor the fulfilment of the state's human rights obligations, as well as members of the Majilis of the

Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

As per the Embassy of Kazakhstan, more than 100 UN Member States delegations participated in the review. It demonstrated a genuine interest in an open and constructive dialogue with the country. The event was held in the format of an interactive discussion, during which UN Member States raised questions, and made comments and recommendations for further improvement of the country's human rights system. Kazakhstan's official delegation, led by Minister of Justice Yerlan Sarsenbayev, addressed the UN Human Rights Council on a wide range

of issues, focusing on the comprehensive reforms undertaken by President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, in the field of human rights and the rule of law, key legal initiatives on the elimination of torture and ill-treatment, peaceful assembly and freedom of association, ensuring the work of mass media and expanding the rights of journalists, combating human trafficking and domestic violence, the Embassy observed.

In addition, the members of the delegation provided comprehensive information to questions raised by UN Member States, enriching the dialogue and sharing good prac-

tices on human rights issues.

In his address to the Council, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan Roman Vassilenko shared the country's experience in cooperating with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council and UN treaty bodies. In particular, attention was drawn to the inter-agency mechanism established by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan to consider inquiries from UN special rapporteurs and treaty bodies on individual communications, the Embassy noted.

Hungary, Israel slam ICC over warrants for Israeli leaders

AGENCIES
TEL AVIV

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar slammed the International Criminal Court during a joint media appearance in Budapest with his Hungarian counterpart, Peter Szerto on Thursday.

"The politically corrupt International Criminal Court in The Hague has chosen, in an unprecedented manner, to act against a democratic state that is the most attacked and threatened in the world," said Sa'ar. "This is an attack on Israel's right to defend itself."

Szerto backed Israel's po-

sition against the ICC's issuance of arrest warrants targeting Israeli leaders, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Galant.

The meeting touched on the specific case of Omri Miran, an Israeli-Hungarian citizen held hostage in Gaza, whose release is expected in the second phase of a ceasefire with Hamas. Saar thanked Szerto for Hungary's support in securing Miran's release.

Miran, now 47, was taken captive on October 7 from Kibbutz Nahal Oz.

7 Nepal nationals killed in Jalgaon train accident

AGENCIES
KATHMANDU

Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Friday confirmed seven Nepali nationals among the 12 killed in the Jalgaon train accident in Maharashtra.

Issuing a press release, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed the death of 3 females and 4 males in the train mishap of Wednesday evening.

Majority of the deceased are from Nepal's Achham District (4) who are identified as Himu Nandaram Bishwokarma (11), Nandaram Padma Bishwokarma (44), Maisara Kami Bishwokarma (42) and Kama Kami (60). Kamala Nabin Bhandari (43) and Lachiram Pasi (40) from Kailali and Radheshyam Radh (32) from Banke are confirmed amongst the casualties.

Some passengers of the Pushpak Express--which was bound for Mumbai from Lucknow--jumped off the train after an alarm chain-pulling incident.

'Big worry for India as Bangladesh army surrenders before Pakistan'

AGENCIES
DHAKA

In a major development that will undoubtedly further deteriorate the already strained India-Bangladesh relations, Dhaka's Muhammad Yunus-led interim government has thrown open its door for Pakistan, expanding trade as well as military cooperation with Islamabad.

The rapid policy shift in

Bangladesh has stunned experts, who are shocked by how Bangladesh and Pakistan, once bitter enemies, have rapidly moved closer on several fronts, almost immediately after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina regime in August last year.

Top military officials from Pakistan and Bangladesh exchanged reciprocal visits to the each other's respective countries within a span of



Bangladesh is attempting to increase affinity with Pakistan. File Photo

less than a week, with a six-member Bangladeshi del-

egation led by Bangladesh Army's principal staff officer

(PSO) of Armed Forces Division, Lt General SM Kamrul Hassan, embarking on a 4-day visit to Pakistan from January 13-18, where they reportedly met Islamabad's top military leadership in Rawalpindi, including Pakistan Army chief General Asim Munir.

Barely a week later, a delegation of senior officials of the Pakistan Army and Inter-Services Intelligence

(ISI)-- Islamabad's infamous spy agency-- arrived in Dhaka on a four-day visit on January 21. The four-member delegation, reportedly headed by ISI chief Lt Gen Muhammad Asim Malik, also includes Major General Alam Amir Awan, and Major General Shahid Amir Afsar-- ISI's chief of analysis who previously served as Pakistan's defence attache in Beijing.

THE TYPHOON



A lorry overturned on the northbound A19 during strong winds in County Durham, England. SOURCE: OWEN HUMPHREYS

Russia repelled massive Ukrainian drone attack on 13 regions

AGENCIES
MOSCOW

Russia announced on Friday that its air defenses destroyed 121 Ukrainian drones across 13 regions in a significant escalation of the drone warfare between the two nations. According to the Russian Ministry of Defense, the drones targeted key locations, but were intercepted before causing major damage. The attacks spanned a wide area, underscoring the increasing use of drones in the ongoing conflict.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanyin confirmed that air defenses intercepted four drones targeting the



A fire burns following reports of an air attack across the country, in Bryansk, Bryansk Region, Russia in this still images obtained from social media video released January 24, 2025. Agency

capital, preventing any serious impact. However, the attacks temporarily disrupted civilian life, leading to the brief closure of major airports in Moscow, including Sheremetyevo, Domodedovo, and Vnukovo. Flight schedules were disrupted as

authorities ensured the airspace was clear. Operations resumed after safety measures were implemented.

Ukraine, for its part, stated that Russia conducted its own overnight drone attack, targeting Ukrainian infrastructure.

US lawmakers push bill to revoke China's trade privileges

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

A bipartisan pair of US House lawmakers have introduced a bill aimed at revoking China's Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) status.

The legislation introduced on Thursday builds on prior Republican efforts to repeal Beijing's preferential trade status, reflecting ongoing concerns over China's trade practices, The Hill reported.

The bill seeks to address criticisms of China's trade policies and aims to impose more economic costs on China.

ever serve as both Director of the CIA and Director of National Intelligence, the White House stated. As DNI director, Ratcliffe led a shift in the US Intelligence Community's priorities to gain a decisive strategic advantage over the Peoples Republic of China and provided oversight of numerous operations to remove designated terrorist leaders from the battlefield. Director Ratcliffe also made the historic decision to elevate space to a priority intelligence domain by adding the US Space Force as the 18th member of the US Intelligence Community.

US Senate confirms John Ratcliffe as CIA Director

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

John Ratcliffe has been confirmed to lead the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) after the Senate confirmed his appointment. Notably, this is the second major appointment under the second Trump administration after Marco Rubio was appointed the US Secretary of State, earlier this week. Confirming the news, the White House shared a post on X and wrote, «@JohnRatcliffe's confirmation as Director of the CIA marks a significant step in advancing

President Trump's vision to restore America's strength on the world stage.»

A total of 74 senators voted in favour of Ratcliffe, while 25 voted against him. One senator did not cast a vote. To confirm the nomination, only a simple majority was needed, but the result witnessed a good difference of 49 votes.

This vote took place during the first session of the 119th Congress. Notably, John Ratcliffe previously served as the Director of National Intelligence from May 2020 until January 2021, making him the first person to

JUDGE BLOCKS TRUMP'S EXECUTIVE ORDER STOPPING BIRTHRIGHT CITIZENSHIP

The Judge granted an emergency request to halt the executive order for next 14 days while the legal challenge continues.

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

A federal judge ruled Thursday that President Donald Trump's executive order to end birthright citizenship is "blatantly unconstitutional" and issued a temporary restraining order to block the policy from taking effect, CNN reported. Judge John Coughenour, a Ronald Reagan appointee based in Seattle, granted an emergency request from Washington State Attorney General Nick Brown and three other Democratic-led states to halt the executive order for the next 14 days while the legal challenge continues. "I have been on the bench for over four decades. I can't remember another case whether the question presented was as clear," Coughenour said. "Where were the lawyers" when the decision to sign the executive order was made, the judge asked. He said that it "boggled" his mind that a member of the bar would claim the order was constitutional. Notably, the Democratic-led states are seeking a temporary restraining order, as they argue that Trump's executive order is a blatant violation of the Constitution's 14th Amendment, which guarantees citizenship to all children born on US soil and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, as reported by CNN. Lane Polozola, an attorney representing the state

HIGHLY UNCONSTITUTIONAL



Washington Attorney General Nick Brown during a press meet in US. Agency

- A federal judge ruled Trump's executive order ending birthright citizenship "blatantly unconstitutional."
- Temporary restraining order issued to block the policy for 14 days.
- Judge John Coughenour criticized the executive order, questioning its legal basis.
- Democratic-led states argue the order violates the 14th Amendment.
- States claim the policy harms newborns and burdens state programs.
- Trump administration argues "subject to the jurisdiction thereof" excludes children of undocumented or non-permanent residents.
- DOJ attorney Brett Shumate requested more time for briefing, warning against "snap judgment."

of Washington, told the judge that "births cannot be paused" while the court reviews the case. "Babies are being born today here, and in the plaintiff states and around the country, with a cloud cast over their citizenship," Polozola said. He warned that children who are denied citizenship under Trump's executive order would face "long-term substantial negative impacts." Polozola further argued that the Trump administration had not only ignored these potential harms in its filings but that the harm

"appears to be the purpose" of the order itself. In addition to the impact on individuals, Washington and other states argue that ending birthright citizenship would place a financial and logistical burden on state programs, as these children would no longer be eligible for federal benefits that they would typically receive as US citizens, as reported by CNN. In defence, the Trump administration argues that the clause "subject to the jurisdiction thereof" allows the president to exclude children of undocumented immigrants, as

well as children of parents who are legally present but lack permanent status. Justice Department attorney Brett Shumate urged the judge to hold off on issuing an emergency order blocking the policy until there was more briefing on the policy. "I understand your concerns," Shumate said, but he urged the court against making "a snap judgment on the merits." Shumate noted that the other cases challenging the executive order were moving on a slower timeline and argued that "imminent harm" was threatening the states.

'Canada is not for sale'

AGENCIES
TORONTO

The weeks since Liam Mooney and Emma Cochrane dreamt up a viral hat meant to fend off any notion that Canada will be taken over by the U.S. has been more of a crash course in manufacturing than in politics.

The pair of Ottawa-based marketers behind the "Canada is not for sale" hats made famous by Ontario Premier Doug Ford last week say they've realized how difficult it is to produce a ball cap fully made in Canada.

"Imagine you're a snake and you're trying to consume a giant bowling ball. That's what we've been



Hats with slogan Canada is not for sale is getting viral these days. Agency

experiencing here," said Mooney, co-founder of business consultancy Jackpine Dynamic Branding. Over the last few weeks, the duo approached several players in the apparel sector to help them and mostly heard the same refrain: they don't manufacture hats fully in Canada because the cost is so high and the demand

isn't there. Mooney and Cochrane have since found some hats completely made in the country but haven't settled on a long-term solution, so they are mostly relying on ball caps imported from Vietnam, Bangladesh and China and toques from the U.S., which then get embroidered in Canada.

The difficulty in making apparel or accessories completely in Canada stems from years of blows to the country's textile industry, which lost much of the clothing manufacturing capacity it developed in the 19th century as industrialists migrated to Canada and took advantage of the introduction of the sewing machine.

"They started the apparel industry in Canada in large cities, so Toronto, Montreal, Winnipeg ... but what happened by the 1980s was these industries started to go overseas," said Henry Navarro Delgado, an associate professor of fashion at Toronto Metropolitan University.

TRUMP 2.0 BEGINS; A WAVE OF HIS EXECUTIVE ORDERS LEAVES THE WORLD IN WONDER

This week, Donald Trump was inaugurated for a second term as President of the US. The ceremony saw the attendance of numerous international leaders, technology executives, and celebrities, including India's external affairs minister. Due to adverse weather conditions, the event was held indoors at the US Capitol, marking the first indoor inauguration since Ronald Reagan's in 1985. Following the ceremony, Trump delivered an extensive and unconventional speech that emphasized his domestic priorities and related foreign policy. He announced a significant decision to secure the Southern borders to address illegal immigration from Mexico and also stated that the US had entrusted the management of the Panama Canal to Panama, not to China, which provoked strong re-

actions from Panama and other countries. Trump also took the opportunity to criticize the previous administration, proclaiming that a «golden era» for the US began with his inauguration. His demeanor and remarks indicated a readiness to swiftly implement critical decisions, which he did the very next day. Contrary to expectations for a more measured approach, Trump reignited debates with announcements such as the withdrawal of the US from the Paris Agreement and the World Health Organization.

As expected though, he has enacted a series of executive orders aimed at overturning the policies established by the Biden administration while advancing his own agenda. In his address itself, he proclaimed a National Emergency Declaration

WORLD RECAP

ANSHU JOSHI



concerning the Southern Border. This declaration was made to tackle what he characterizes as a crisis at the US-Mexico border, which facilitates military deployment and emphasizes the enforcement of immigration laws. He has also directed that Drug Cartels be classified as Terrorist Organizations, a measure that aims to bolster law enforcement's capacity to tackle drug trafficking. This was a commitment he made during his electoral campaign, so the decision did not come as a surprise to anyone. Nevertheless, his other orders have caused considerable concern among many nations as

well as organisations. Trump declared the US' exit from WHO, expressing dissatisfaction with its management of international health emergencies and perceived partiality towards the US. This decision has sparked concerns regarding the potential impact on global health collaboration and the ability to effectively address future pandemics. Trump has also enacted an executive order that formally commenced the US withdrawal from Paris agreement. He condemned the accord for placing disproportionate economic strains on the US and sought to reduce financial commitments to

overseas climate projects. However, this decision will undoubtedly influence global cooperation and collaboration aimed at achieving the prioritized goal of mitigating climate change. As indicated by Rubio last week, Trump has also declared a cessation of foreign aid, implementing a 90-day pause on US foreign aid programs for evaluation, which has raised concerns among international partners and humanitarian organisations that depend on American support. Additionally, he has issued a significant order that reverses many policies concerning immigration, climate change, and racial equity that were put in place by the previous administration. He has also proposed the termination of Birthright Citizenship, aiming to remove the automatic citizenship granted

to children born in the US to undocumented immigrants, a move likely to encounter legal challenges due to its potential violation of the 14th Amendment. Furthermore, he has reinstated capital punishment at the federal level, instructing the Attorney General to seek death penalties for serious offenses. The suspension of refugee admissions has also been announced, temporarily blocking the entry of refugees into the US. The enforcement of the TikTok ban has also been postponed by Trump, who signed an order granting a 75-day grace period for the app's parent company to pursue divestiture, thereby temporarily suspending the federal prohibition on the application. Additionally, Trump granted pardons to around 1,500 individuals connected to the Janu-

ary 6 Capitol riots, leaving many in shock. Furthermore, Trump has enacted an executive order that officially recognizes only male and female genders within federal policies and programs, reversing earlier policies that acknowledged a broader range of gender identities. Easing the concerns regarding his critical stance on the H-1B visa program, Trump conveyed his endorsement of the program during a news conference at the White House this week. He underscored the significance of attracting talented individuals to the US, pointing out the high demand for skilled professionals across multiple industries, particularly in technology. Trump also made remarks concerning the neutrality of the South China Sea and the resolu-

tion of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. He has cautioned Putin to either bring the war to a close or face potential sanctions from the US. It will be intriguing to observe Putin's reaction, especially since he previously congratulated Trump on his electoral victory. I hope Trump remains committed to his promises of fostering global peace and stability and helping in putting an end to conflicts, as he pledged during his campaign. My perspective on him is nuanced rather than binary; I view him through a grey lens. It is important to remember that at his core, he is a businessman. Therefore, despite some concerning decisions, I maintain a sense of optimism that the US will strive towards the Indian principle of 'Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah' during Trump's administration.

REVIEW: RAMAYANA: THE LEGEND OF PRINCE RAMA *****

RAMAYANA: THE LEGEND OF PRINCE RAMA



PRAVEEN NAGDA

Ramayana is the classic story we all have grown up with, hearing it from our parents, grandparents, teachers, and several theatrical and cinematic presentations. Cinema, particularly animation, is probably the most dramatic way to tell this thousands-year-old story. In this 4K release, and the first time in the theatres in India, Ramayana: The Legend of Prince Rama comes as a re-mastered version and is available in English, Hindi, Tamil, and Telugu. Interestingly, it's a 30-year-old Indo-Japanese co-production is now being released in theatres. The film was produced by Yugo Sako in 1992 and was premiered in IFFI 1993.

Directed by the legendary Ram Mohan, also known as the father of Indian animation, along with Koichi Sasaki the film is a superb experience of watching a well-made animation film. The film has excellent animation in several sequences in terms of movement, and expression of characters individually or as a mob.

Unlike live-action films where visuals create a realistic association, in animation the sound or voice delivery plays a great role along with the comic visuals combined with special effects.

Narration through the film and dialogues from all characters are as impactful as ever coming from noted

artists like Yudhvir Dahiya, M.V. Satyanarayana, Sonal Kaushal, Nikhil Kapoor, and Cyrus Broacha among others.

What's interesting to note is that this film combines the animation styles of both India and Japan beautifully. On one hand, you will see master-crafted characters, nature, and animals and you will relate with being Indian. On another hand, you will see demons in bat forms and dinosaur-like, and the battleships have a fantastic Japanese touch to them.

The film with the music by Vanraj Bhatia has many beautifully sung numbers including pure Sanskrit shlokas, and Avadhi recitations apart from Hindi. The music binds the visuals and dialogues very well and creates a beautiful wave of emotions many times in many sequences in the film.

The animated characters are very lively, their expressions are noteworthy, the use of colours is vibrant, and the presentation is vivid standing the test of time offering a big screen experience. The film is distributed across India by Geek Pictures India, AA Films, and Excel Entertainment.

It's good to watch with family this weekend to experience the grand old tale of Ramayana again.

Praveen Nagda is Festival Director of KidzCINEMA and CultureCinema Film Festivals

RAKESH ROSHAN SAD ON HIS FATHER'S NEGLECTED LEGACY



TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Actor-filmmaker Rakesh Roshan says docu-series "The Roshans" was fuelled by his desire to highlight the achievements of his father, late composer Roshan Lal Nagrath, after he noticed that these songs were missing from many music compilations.

"The Roshans, currently streaming on Netflix, celebrates the enduring legacy of composer Roshan, who worked with iconic singers like Mohammad Rafi, Mukesh, and Talat Mahmood. The series also highlights the contributions of his family members -- his sons, Rakesh and Rajesh, and his grandson, Hrithik -- to the film industry.

It was seven years ago when Rakesh found an old transistor, which had old songs of many renowned musicians.

"There were 5,000 to 10,000 songs, songs of all music directors and actors. I thought of listening to my father's songs but I couldn't find any of him. I

was amazed that there were names of all the music directors but not of my father.

"I felt very sad that he had done such great work (but it was missing...). I was feeling restless and disturbed," the filmmaker told PTI in an interview.

Later, he met Shashi Ranjan, the director of the docu-series, at an event.

"He was singing my father's old songs, and I was surprised that he knew songs of my father. I told him, 'Why don't you make a documentary on him?' But he suggested that we make a documentary series on all the other three Roshans -- Rajesh, Hrithik and myself. So it becomes a wholesome package for the audience to learn about our contribution to the film industry," he said.

Unlike his musician father, who died in 1967, Rakesh started his journey in Indian cinema as an assistant director and later made his debut as an actor in the 1970 film "Ghar Ghar Ki Kahani".

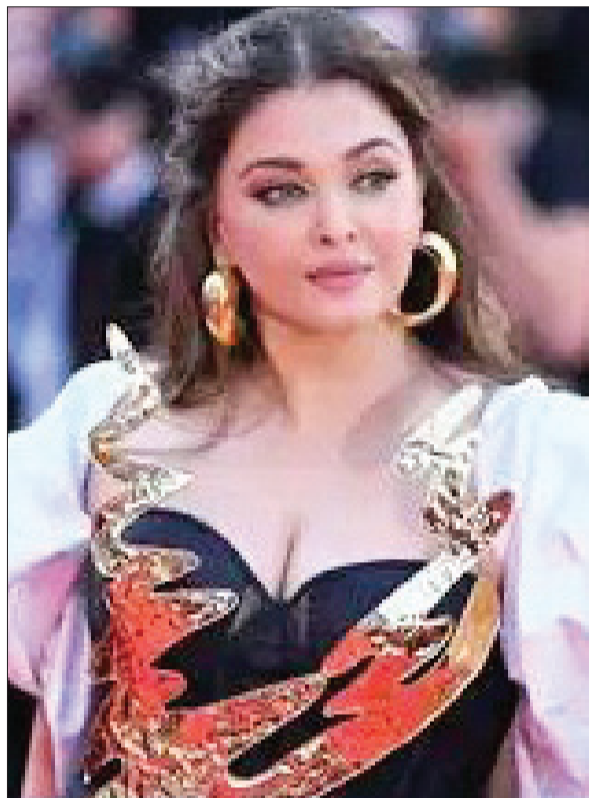
"Back then, I didn't know what was happening around me.

PICTURE PERFECT

Bollywood Actress Bhumi Pednekar in her latest photoshoot in black revealing dress in Mumbai. Source: Instagram



ALL MAY NOT BE WELL, YET SEPARATION NOT ON AISHWARYA'S AGENDA



RASHEED KIDWAI

Bollywood rumour mills continue to churn a heavy dose on Aishwarya Rai and Abhishek Bachchan ties in the wake of Instagram posts. Ash's Instagram posts these days have a lot of pictures with her mother Brinda Rai and daughter Aradhya. One picture has Aishwarya bowing in front of a picture of her father.

Pics of Amitabh and Abhishek feature with Aradhya only, and none of mother-in-law Jaya Bachchan or sister-in-law Shweta Bachchan Nanda.

Family sources said Aishwarya is likely to follow the footsteps of some leading Bollywood actresses. For instance, what Babita did in the Kapoor family and Karishma and Kareena; make a career for herself and at the appropriate time introduce Aradhya

into films. At this stage, it is clear whether the grandparents i.e. Amitabh and Jaya Bachchan are excited about Aradhya, currently barely 14, taking up the family profession of acting.

Babita, married to Randhir Kapoor often lived in separate homes for several years, even though they are still legally married and had no intention of divorcing. The couple is said to have reunited in 2007.

Friends of Bachchans say Ash-Abhi who were living in another house behind Jalsa in Mumbai are no longer there. If these insiders are to be believed, Ashwariya left the house with Aradhya and moved in with her mother Brinda Rai. Whether this is a temporary arrangement or longer plan is a matter of intense speculation.

In the absence of any denial or confirmation, sources in Bollywood claim that Ash-Abhi relationship is facing some hiccups. There is talk of constant interference in Ash-Abhi marriage by some female protagonists that borders on bullying, humiliation and intimidation. On a wider canvas, influential Bollywood characters are supposedly stoking fire and taking sides. Name of a superstar's wife who had been suspecting her husband of having affairs with two most popular actresses, is cited as a spoiler.

Apparently, fertility issues, or a quest for a male child is reportedly adding to the stress. Once again, there is stoic silence from all concerned.

In July 2024, when Abhishek Bachchan had 'liked' an Instagram post about divorce, Bollywood and Delhi social, political circles had gone into a tizzy,



speculating if everything between Bachchan junior and Aishwarya Rai were not fine. However, informed sources insist that separation is not on Aishwarya's agenda. The highly accomplished actress that she is, Aishwarya is understandably very close to her own family and any amount of one-upmanship has not impacted her.

It is worth noting that both Jaya Bachchan, nee Bhaduri and Ashwariya Rai had a flourishing acting career when marriage drastically altered their lives. It is therefore sad that societal pressure and other factors have brought them to a comparable experience.

Bachchan's daughter Shweta had moved to Mumbai years ago and is reportedly living in Prateeksha with her children.

BRAIN PICKING

“

I used to trust people easily, but now I'm a little careful because some experiences have taught me to not trust anyone blindly.

”

– SHRADDHA KAPOOR
(Indian Actress)



SUNNY DEOL'S ACTION THRILLER 'JAAT' SET TO RELEASE IN APRIL



TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Bollywood's action star Sunny Deol is all set to make a grand comeback on the big screen in the upcoming action thriller 'Jaat', directed by Gopichand Malineni.

The highly anticipated film will hit theatres worldwide on April 10 and promises to be a visual feast for fans of high-octane action. The film will be available in Hindi, Telugu, and Tamil.

Sunny Deol, known for his intense action roles, will be seen in a gritty new avatar, taking on his enemies with unmatched intensity.

In the film's teaser, unveiled in December 2024, fans got a glimpse of the actor wielding a bazooka, hinting at the explosive action sequences that await.

The film is expected to showcase thrilling stunts and jaw-dropping action scenes, with Deol leading the charge in a style only he can bring to the screen.

Gopichand Malineni and Sunny Deol took to social media to share the exciting news about the release of 'Jaat'.

"#JAAT GRAND RELEASE WORLDWIDE ON APRIL 10th In Hindi, Telugu & Tamil MASS FEAST

GUARANTEED Directed by @dongopichand Produced by @MythriOfficial & @peoplemediafactory A @musicthaman Mass Beat," the actor wrote on his social media handle.

'Jaat' boasts an ensemble cast with Sunny Deol leading the charge alongside Randeep Hooda, Vineet Kumar Singh, and Regina Cassandra in key roles.

The film is set to showcase a gripping story packed with drama, while the action sequences promise to keep audiences on the edge of their seats.

The teaser, which runs for just over a minute, includes intense moments such as characters being crushed by dumbbells, flying police officers, and dramatic confrontations.

Sunny Deol's character is introduced as a menacing figure, initially seen chained up, before unleashing his fury on his enemies.

It appears that Deol's character is ready to bring the action in full force, this time wielding a large fan to take down his opponents, adding a unique twist to his usual action arsenal.

Randeep Hooda is expected to play the antagonist, raising the stakes for the protagonist in this action-packed drama.

MOLLYWOOD ROCKED BY ANOTHER CONTROVERSY



TDG NETWORK
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A case has been registered against director B Unnikrishnan following a complaint by producer and actress Sandra Thomas.

According to Thomas's statement, Unnikrishnan allegedly insulted her in public, which led to legal action. The actress claims that the director took punitive measures against her, effectively sidelining her from the industry.

The complaint also points to an incident where Thomas gave a statement before the Hema Committee, which focuses on the working conditions of women in the Malayalam film industry.

The statement allegedly led to her being ostracized by Unnikrishnan, with the

director taking actions that hindered her career.

In addition to B Unnikrishnan, producer Anto Joseph has also been named as a second accused in the case.

The Kerala Police have confirmed the registration of the case and are currently investigating the matter. The issue brings attention to ongoing concerns regarding gender dynamics and the treatment of women in the Malayalam film industry, which has been under scrutiny for some time.

In a related development, Malayalam actor Unni Mukundan, famed for his role in 'Marco', has announced his resignation as the treasurer of the Association of Malayalam Movie Artists (AMMA).

FILM 'MICKEY 17' STARRING ROBERT PATTINSON GETS A NEW TRAILER

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

The much-awaited trailer for 'Mickey 17', directed by Oscar-winning filmmaker Bong Joon-ho, has been released, giving fans a hint at the thrilling sci-fi adventure.

The film stars Robert Pattinson in the lead role, alongside Steven Yeun, Mark Ruffalo, Toni Collette, and Naomi Ackie.

The trailer shows Mickey Barnes, played by Pattinson, who applies for a mysterious job without reading the fine print. The position is that of an "expendable," a role that demands the ultimate sacrifice--dying repeatedly to help save humanity.

The movie is based on Edward Ashton's 2022 novel Mickey 7. The book has been



adapted for the big screen by Bong Joon-ho, the acclaimed director of Parasite.

Meanwhile, Robert Pattinson recently shared that he began to worry about cinema after the COVID-19

pandemic and the strikes, as people started saying that cinema is dying.

"The last few years for the film industry, starting with Covid and then the strikes, everyone was constantly

saying cinema is dying. And quite convincingly," said Pattinson, adding, "I was literally almost turned off. It actually started to get a little worrying," according to The Hollywood Reporter.

CAN CLOSURES BE CALM AND GOODBYES BE GOOD?



NAMRATA KOHLI

WOMAN WISE

You have ended a chapter in your life. It could have been personal or professional. What you said in the end, those last few words, will make all the difference. Did you burn all bridges or create one?

Endings are never easy but you can still part with grace. In the world of literature, see how Frodo's Farewell in *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien is filled with gratitude and hope—“You cannot always be torn in two. You will have to be one and whole, for many years.

You have so much to enjoy and to be, and to do.” Or take a look at Steve Jobs' simple yet impactful resignation letter in 2011—“I have always said that if there ever came a day when I could no longer meet my duties and expectations as Apple's CEO, I would be the first to let you know. Unfortunately, that day has come.”

Have you ever wondered how people “part on a good note” like how Sussanne and Hrithik have divorced each other and yet continue to holiday with each other in Goa and remain cordial and civil. Can closures be decent? Can goodbyes ever be good? Can we actually part with grace? The answer is Yes and it totally depends on what we say in the end.

If anyone, it's for us women to understand how to approach closure and goodbyes gracefully, as we can become volatile, let our heart rule our head and emotions blur our words. Holding on to something that's no longer working—be it a job, relationship, or expectation—can hinder growth. Goodbyes



don't have to be confrontational or dramatic. We must learn to say Goodbye

without guilt. Women often feel pressured to nurture relationships at all costs. Understand

that prioritizing your mental and emotional well-being isn't selfish—it's essential. Not every goodbye is your fault. Sometimes, things end because they're meant to. Focus on lessons learned instead of obsessing over what you could have done differently. Not all goodbyes will feel “perfect.” Accept imperfect endings. Allow yourself to move forward even if things didn't end the way you hoped.

Honest, compassionate communication helps both parties part ways with dignity. We need to honour our emotions—

it's okay to feel sadness, anger, or relief. Trust your intuition and the decisions you've made, even if the path ahead feels uncertain. Endings often lead to beginnings that align better with your values and goals. And sometimes, saying goodbye can create space for new opportunities, relationships, and personal growth. Focus on what you're gaining by moving forward rather than what you're losing.

Recently a business partnership of mine came to an end and my investor told me that “Let's take a break until I find a capable team to implement our ideas.” That day I learnt that closures can be done nicely. I may have lost a business partner but I almost gained a friend and in my eyes, my respect for him grew even more.

Leaving the door open is the best way to part. After saying goodbye, give yourself space to process the change and move forward. Reflect on the lessons learned and embrace the oppor-

tunities that lie ahead.

Ending chapters in life, relationships, or projects can be done gracefully and thoughtfully to avoid leaving a bitter taste. It requires one to be straightforward but kind in communication. Avoid blame or harsh language, and focus on “I” statements to express your feelings. Example: “I've cherished this journey, but I feel it's time for me to move on to new challenges.”

Focus on the positive legacy and frame the ending as a transition rather than a termination. Highlight the good memories, growth, or achievements made during the chapter. Example: “What we've built together is something I'll always cherish, and I hope it continues to inspire us both.”

Goodbyes don't have to be bitter—they can be a celebration of what was shared and a hopeful step toward new beginnings. When approached with kindness, gratitude, and understanding, they become less about loss and more about growth.

Rising Thyroid Issues in Pregnant Women: Experts Urge Early Diagnosis and Care



DR HASEENA KABBER

Thyroid Problems Rising in Pregnant Women and women in reproductive age group of 25 to 45 years

Thyroid disorder is the most common endocrine disorder detected in pregnant women constituting 2.5% of all pregnancies and demands timely intervention

Gurgaon: Thyroid disorders including hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism, are becoming a common occurrence during pregnancy, and can impact both the mother and baby's health. Early diagnosis and treatment are crucial to ensuring a healthy pregnancy and minimizing risks for both the mother and the baby. Expert advises women to focus on prenatal care for a smooth pregnancy journey. Hence, pregnant women should stay vigilant when



it comes to their and the baby's health.

Just like gestational diabetes and hypertension, even thyroid problems are giving a tough time to women during pregnancy. The thyroid gland plays an important role in regulating metabolism, energy levels, and various bodily functions. “During pregnancy, thyroid dysfunctions such as hypothyroidism (underactive thyroid) (incidence 2.5% of all pregnancies) and hyperthyroidism (overactive thyroid) (incidence around 0.1 to 0.2 % of all pregnancies) are detected in women. The symptoms are fatigue, weight gain or

loss, swelling, and mood changes that can impact the woman's well-being. Thyroid problems are rampant due to autoimmune disorders, iodine deficiency, or pre-existing thyroid issues. Monthly, 2 to 3 % pregnant women aged 25 to 45 years are detected with thyroid problems and need timely treatment for successful pregnancy outcomes. Women should go for regular follow-ups without missing them,” said Dr. Sonal Singhal, Consultant - Obstetrician & Gynaecologist, Motherhood Hospital, Gurgaon.

Dr Sonal Singhal added, “If left untreated, thyroid

problems can lead to complications such as preterm birth, low birth weight, or developmental delays in the baby. Early detection through regular screenings and blood tests, along with appropriate medication can help pregnant women to manage thyroid problems. A balanced diet rich in iodine and regular prenatal visits are vital for prevention. Pregnant women must follow the guidelines given by the expert and go for regular thyroid screening. Taking these proactive steps can help safeguard a healthy pregnancy and reduce the chances of long-term complications.”

Essential Lifestyle Practices Women Should Embrace

JEEVIKA SHARMA

Leading a healthy and fulfilling lifestyle involves more than just diet and exercise. For women, balancing physical, mental, and emotional well-being is key to living a vibrant life. Below are some essential lifestyle practices women should incorporate into their daily lives to enhance their health, happiness, and overall quality of life.

1. PRIORITIZE PHYSICAL HEALTH

Regular Exercise: Engage in at least 30 minutes of physical activity daily. This could include walking, yoga, strength training, or dancing.

Balanced Diet: Incorporate whole grains, lean proteins, healthy fats, and plenty of fruits and vegetables. Avoid excessive sugar and processed foods.

Routine Health Check-ups: Regular screenings like mammograms, pap smears, and bone density tests are essential for early detection of potential health issues.

2. EMBRACE MENTAL WELLNESS

Mindfulness Practices: Meditation, journaling, and deep breathing exercises can reduce stress and improve mental clarity.

Seek Support: Don't hesitate to talk to a therapist or counselor when facing emotional challenges.

Learn Continuously: Reading, taking up new hobbies, or pursuing education stimulates the brain and fosters personal growth.

3. FOSTER STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

Build a Supportive Network: Surround yourself with people who uplift and support you, whether family, friends, or mentors.

Quality Over Quantity: Focus on nurturing a few deep and meaningful connections rather than spreading yourself too thin.

Communicate Effectively: Learn to express your needs and boundaries while being a good listener.

4. CULTIVATE FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

Budgeting and Saving: Keep track of expenses, set aside savings, and plan for long-term financial goals.



Invest in Yourself: Develop new skills, pursue certifications, or take courses to enhance your career prospects.

Emergency Fund: Always have a backup plan for unexpected expenses.

5. MAINTAIN WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Set Boundaries: Avoid burnout by setting clear boundaries between work and personal time.

Prioritize Self-Care: Dedicate time to activities that rejuvenate you, such as reading, gardening, or spa treatments.

Learn to Delegate: Don't be afraid to ask for help or delegate tasks to avoid overwhelming yourself.



6. FOCUS ON REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Stay Informed: Educate yourself about menstrual health, contraception, and fertility.

Healthy Relationships: Foster open communication with partners about expectations and health concerns.

Consult Professionals: Regular visits to a gynecologist can address concerns and ensure overall well-being.

7. PURSUE PERSONAL PASSIONS

Find a Creative Outlet: Whether it's painting, writing, or photography, pursuing a passion can bring joy and fulfillment.

Volunteer: Giving back to the community not only helps others but also provides a sense of purpose.

Travel and Explore: Embrace new experiences and cultures to broaden your perspective.

8. DEVELOP A POSITIVE MINDSET

Practice Gratitude: Reflect on the good in your life to cultivate a sense of appreciation.

Set Realistic Goals: Break down long-term ambitions into achievable steps.

Celebrate Achievements: Acknowledge both big and small successes to build self-confidence.

9. STAY CONNECTED TO NATURE

Outdoor Activities: Spend time in green spaces for physical activity and mental rejuvenation.

Eco-Friendly Choices: Adopt sustainable habits like reducing waste, recycling, and conserving energy.

The Vitamin C: Glow-boosting trends in Skin Care and its importance

DR VIBHA BANSAL

Vitamin C has become a star element in skincare, praised for its glowing and skin-enhancing qualities, says Dr Nilofar Diwan, consultant dermatologist at Shalby Hospital Ahmedabad. Known technically as ascorbic acid, this potent antioxidant neutralizes free radicals, therefore protecting the skin from environmental damage caused by pollution and UV radiation.

One of the primary reasons for Vitamin C's popularity is its ability to stimulate collagen production, which improves skin elasticity and reduces the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. It also reduces melanin synthesis, thus treating dark spots,



uneven skin tone, and hyperpigmentation, so brightening the complexion.

Including vitamin C in your skincare regimen will show clear benefits. Usually combined with complementing components like vitamin E and hyaluronic acid for maximum efficiency, it is found in serums, lotions, and

moisturizers. Dermatologists advise morning Vitamin C to be used to guard your skin all day, followed by sunscreen for further UV rays protection.

Make sure a product you choose has a stable form of vitamin C—such as magnesium ascorbyl phosphate or L-ascorbic acid—at a 10–20% concentration. To keep it potent,

keep it cold and dark.

Although topical vitamin C is usually safe, those with sensitive skin should start at smaller amounts to avoid aggravation. Always advised for tailored counsel is seeing a dermatologist. At Shalby Hospital, we stress tailored attention and scientifically supported treatments to give you beautiful, healthy skin.

NAVIGATING GRACEFULLY THROUGH THE NEW YEAR



BILL SIMO

As we find ourselves approaching the end of January in this new year, it seems a good time to consider how we are going to sail smoothly along on our journey. Navigating our way through, requires us to take command; to be the captain of our own ship. Before embarking on a voyage, a captain will assemble all the charts of the ocean and steady the compass on the course he wants to take. There are many things to consider for our voyage, but spiritually speaking, there are three important aspects to put in place; our values, purpose, and vision of the future.

Values: What do we value

most in our spiritual life and progress? What virtues and principles do we want to make sure we continue to employ, practise, and grow? For example, we may realise we need to pay more attention to the time we spend in meditation, and the quality of that meditation experience.

Purpose: What are our intentions for the year, on the spiritual level? If we take time to sit quietly and cast our mind back to January 2024, and as a detached observer look at the timeline of the whole year, we will see the ups and downs, the strengths we employed, the virtues we developed, and which ones need more improvement. We will also see clearly what we want to leave behind, as those things did not serve us well. Then, with an eye to the year ahead, consider which virtues and qualities we want to develop further; for example, perhaps we realise we need more tolerance in our relationships. We should choose only one or two, or maybe three, virtues and qualities, otherwise there will be too much going on and we will



Values, purpose, and a vision for the future are essential if we want to be a better person at the end of the new year.

lose focus.

Vision: Then we can jump forward in our mind's eye to 31 December 2025 and visualise ourselves in the stage of having

achieved great success in our development, grown to become the embodiment of a virtue we set out to imbibe. The important thing is to have focus, intention,

and a vision of who I will be when I reach those spiritual goals.

There are a couple of tools to help us navigate the way forward, gracefully.

The Stoics were a group of Greek philosophers who believed that being virtuous was the key to a well-lived life. One of the tools they used was 'negative

visualisation'. Although the term is 'negative', it is in fact an extremely positive exercise, especially in two ways: i) It requires us to visualise our coming task, any task or project, and imagine what might be the challenges that could appear. Then we can discern what we need to develop to face those challenges; ii) We immediately begin to appreciate and have gratitude for the present time, because those challenges do not need to be faced right now. So, gratitude is increased, detachment is developed, and while still having determination to achieve the goals, we remain aware that things may not work out exactly as we imagine.

The second tool to help us navigate is simplification. We all need energy. The more we have, the better our mind and brain work, the more energetic and resourceful we become. To save energy it is better to look at possible areas of wastage; time spent on devices, wasteful conversations, most importantly, wasteful thinking and wasteful inner dialogues.

We need to make sure that we are more present and connected to our stated intentions, values, and vision. We need to make sure we do not spend time deviating from the goal we set for ourselves.

Finally, and very importantly, harmonious relationships are vital to graceful navigation. The art of interacting with others with more wisdom, more understanding, and more harmony requires many virtues and qualities that we need to develop. The need to be more flexible, for example, and have more humility; letting go of stubbornness, stopping holding on to my opinions and the ideas I have of how things should be done. Life is all about relationships – those with self, others, nature, and the relationship with the Divine. Attention to all of these relationships, and a pure desire for them to be harmonious, will be one of the keys to navigating our way, gracefully, through 2025.

Bill Simo is a coach and trainer, and teaches Rajyoga with the Brahma Kumaris, based in Madrid, Spain.

Harmonising our nature with that of others



B.K. SURYA

A key requisite for having harmonious relationships is to adjust our nature to that of others. If there is a big difference in the natural inclination of two people and they make no effort to get along with each other, there is likely to be discontent and even a rupture in the relationship.

Having cordial relationships is easy when we are willing to accommodate others. But if we expect others to adapt to our ways, then it becomes difficult. Having an easygoing nature helps foster goodwill and amity. One who is easygoing can adjust without difficulty to different people and situations. Since they are not ob-

durate, they are able to change their way of thinking when required. An easy temperament also makes it easy to deal with problems, as there is acceptance of the situation, which allows for a calm exploration of possible solutions, rather than unnecessary resistance that brings anxiety, stress, or fear. Coping with and overcoming physical ailments also become easy when we take them in our stride instead of complaining or worrying about them. And last but not the least, our relationships become sweet. Being easy, which sounds like a simple and unremarkable thing to do, brings all these benefits.

On the other hand, if we are inflexible, we will frequently have friction or conflict with others, and there will be little peace, happiness, love, or respect in our life. The root cause of such rigidity is ego. There is a spiritual technique for becoming free from ego, and that is to maintain our self-respect. When we have spiritual self-respect, that is, we are aware of the fact that we are souls, the children of God, and that purity, peace, love, and strength are our innate qualities, then



Harmony in a team ensures success in tasks due to mutual understanding and cooperation.

When we have spiritual self-respect, that is, we are aware of the fact that we are souls, the children of God, and that purity, peace, love, and strength are our innate qualities, then we act on the basis of these virtues.

we act on the basis of these virtues. Our elevated awareness leaves no scope for ego to colour our thoughts, attitude, and behaviour. When the majority of people in a group or community pay attention to maintaining their self-respect – with practice it becomes natural – then their relationships are harmonious. If they func-

tion as a team, their tasks are accomplished easily, because there is mutual understanding, cooperation, and a joyful and enthusiastic involvement in the work.

Maintaining our self-respect also keeps us unaffected by the negative vibrations around us. How does that happen? When we have an elevated consciousness, our perspective too is on a similar plane and we do not pay attention to or get involved in petty matters. This keeps the mind free from negative influences. Such detachment may sometimes seem like indifference to some, but it is necessary for making prudent choices. A lofty point of view allows us to see the larger picture and make judicious decisions about where to get involved and to what extent. In a group, this not only spares us avoidable trouble but also gives others the space they need to be themselves. One who thus acts wisely wins the trust of others and becomes a cohesive force in a group.

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

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

The sun's light creates a shadow when blocked. In the same way, a shadow in me is caused by something blocking my inner light. Shadows in the soul are created by buried traumas or negative experiences. I may not be aware of how this darkness influences me or dictates my reactions. In order to see it clearly I must face the shadow. Only then can I be free from its control. Today let me face the shadow to shed light on it and free myself from its invisible control.

Manifesting the higher self

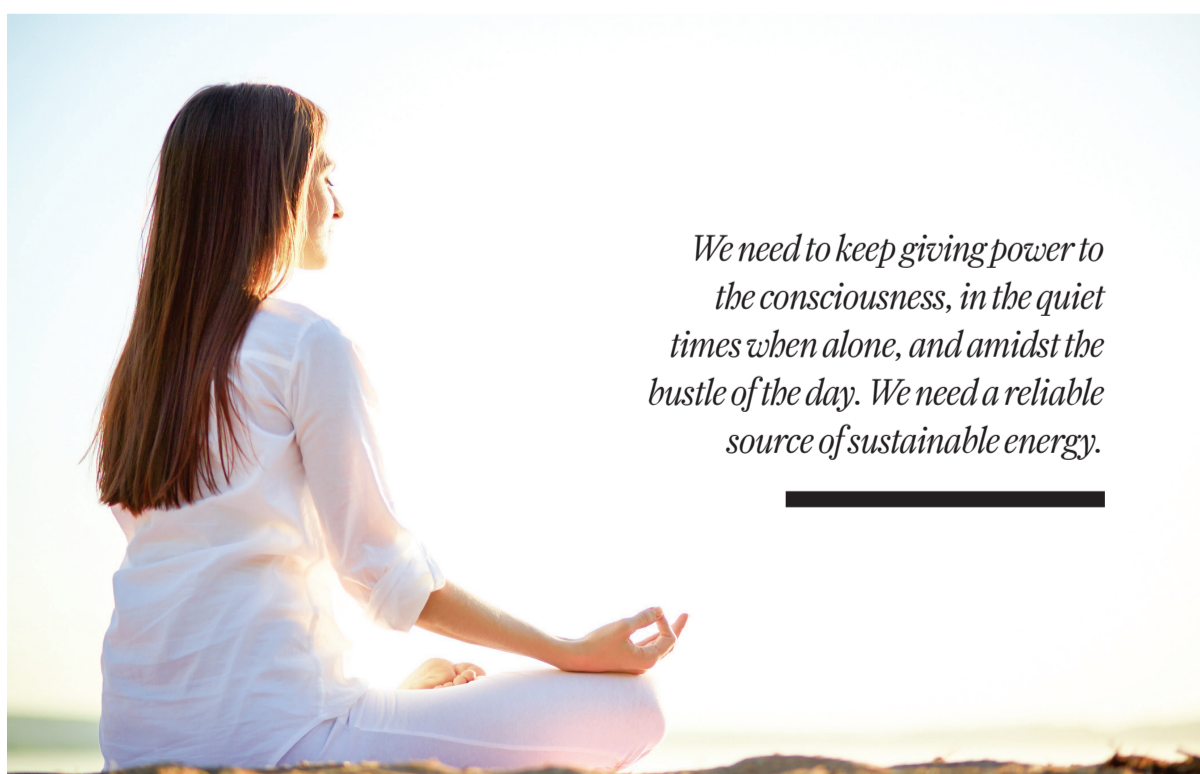


INDU GUILLIANI

When we consider the purpose of embarking on a spiritual path, and the application of spiritual principles in our lives, we see that our aim is to manifest our perfect or original self. Visualisation and meditation are powerful practices that are essential components of the journey. We need to keep the image of our aim in front of us, and we need power to keep working towards that, through many different forms of challenge. Both vi-

sualisation and meditation require an inner 'seeing', the ability of the soul to reflect and 'see' where it wants to go and what it wants to be. However, because we are spiritual beings living in a physical body, we are much more accustomed to seeing or taking notice of that which is physical. What we see every day with our physical eyes has the potential to cause us sorrow and create waste, negative, and disheartening thoughts that can cloud the image we are holding of our aim.

The secret of manifesting what we want to be lies in our state of mind. When we meditate and visualise, it is the state of mind that influences the direction of our thoughts. Rajyoga meditation teaches this on a very deep level. When we use the sentence beginning, "I am ..." how we end that sentence determines our reality. The quality of our thought has to



The secret of manifesting what we want to be lies in our state of mind.

be very high, very elevated. The most elevated thought is "I am a soul, not the body".

Any action based on that elevated thought will bring powerful results. Starting

each day with that thought, and the positive and powerful feelings that thought gen-

erates, will form the basis of the day to come. But to sustain those kinds of thoughts,

We need to keep giving power to the consciousness, in the quiet times when alone, and amidst the bustle of the day. We need a reliable source of sustainable energy.

of our spiritual identity, of being a being of peace, we need to keep giving power to the consciousness, in the quiet times when alone, and amidst the bustle of the day. We need a reliable source of sustainable energy. That reliable source, call it what you will, the Divine, the Supreme Being, the Light, or God, is something we must create a living relationship with.

There will be times when this connection with the Supreme Being seems difficult to sustain. That will be because the quality of our thinking has dropped and we may be feeling down, and hopeless. There are three things that will help us regain our natural, peaceful state of consciousness.

1. Faith – the manifestation of faith is absolutely necessary. Faith in what? That I am a soul, a spiritual child of the Supreme Soul, and because of this I cannot fail.

2. Courage – anything less than courage is hopelessness. I can do anything when I have the Supreme Power with me. I am not alone. I am victorious and will achieve what I want to achieve.

3. Honesty – I must be completely honest with myself. Shining a light on the things that need working on, and humbly accepting the talents and skills I have been given for my role in the world.

One more ingredient is needed when manifesting a new reality. If I am sure that the manifestation is for the greater good, and not for selfish purposes, then it will work. As I enter into deep silence in the connection with the Supreme, a silence with no negative thoughts, then sooner or later, the higher self will manifest itself.

Indu Guilliani is the Coordinator of the Brahma Kumaris centre in Leicester, UK.

DJOKOVIC QUILTS MID-MATCH; ZVEREV REACHES AUSTRALIAN OPEN FINAL

AGENCIES
MELBOURNE

Spectators booed an injured Novak Djokovic as he left the court in Rod Laver Arena after quitting one set into his Australian Open semifinal against Alexander Zverev on Friday.

Dealing with what he said was a torn muscle, Djokovic lost the opening set 7-6 (5) when he put a forehand volley into the net, then began shaking his head and immediately walked over to tell Zverev the match was over. The 37-year-old Djokovic packed up his equipment and walked off toward the locker room, pausing to respond to the jeers by giving two thumbs-up.

At his news conference, Djokovic said the pain in his taped left leg was "getting worse and worse." He hurt it during his quarterfinal victory over Carlos Alcaraz on Tuesday night.

"I knew," Djokovic said, "even if I won the first set, it was going to be a huge uphill battle for me."

He was bidding for an 11th championship at the Australian Open and record 25th Grand Slam title overall. Instead, it will be No. 1 seed and defending champion Jannik Sinner facing No. 2 Alexander Zverev in Sunday's final.

Zverev is 0-2 in major finals; this will be his first at Melbourne Park.

"Everything can happen," said Sinner, who is on a 20-match unbeaten run. "He's an incredible player."

For Djokovic, this is the



Novak Djokovic of Serbia gestures as he leaves Rod Laver Arena after retiring in his semifinal match against Alexander Zverev of Germany at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Friday, Jan. 24, 2025. AP

second time in the past four major tournaments he was unable to finish because of an injury: He withdrew from last year's French Open before the quarterfinals because he tore the meniscus in his right knee during a match.

Djokovic underwent surgery in Paris and, less than two months later, reached the final at Wimbledon, then won a gold medal for Serbia at the Paris Olympics.

Zverev, a 27-year-old German, lost finals in five sets at the 2020 U.S. Open and 2024 French Open.

"My goal is still to compete

with the big guys and to compete for these kind of tournaments and try to win them," Zverev said. "For that, I need to get better. I need to improve on the court. I need to improve physically."

During his on-court interview, Zverev pleaded with the fans not to give Djokovic a hard time.

"I know that everybody paid for tickets and everybody wants to see hopefully a great five-set match," he said. "But you've got to understand — Novak Djokovic is somebody that has given this sport, for the past 20 years, absolutely

everything of his life."

The only set of Djokovic vs. Zverev lasted 1 hour, 21 minutes and included 19 points that lasted nine strokes or more apiece. The first four games alone lasted 31 minutes, slowed both by the lengthy baseline exchanges and Djokovic's deliberate

pace between points, taking the 25-second serve clock down to — and occasionally slightly beyond — the full allotment. The match was grueling — and would have been even without dealing with a leg problem that initially became an issue late in the first

set against Alcaraz.

"I didn't hit the ball (from after the) Alcaraz match until like an hour before today's match," Djokovic said.

"I did everything I possibly can to basically manage the muscle tear that I had. Medications and, I guess, the (tape) and the physio work helped to some extent today," he added. "But towards the end of that first set, I just started feeling more and more pain and it was too much for me to handle. Unfortunately ending, but I tried." Zverev said he could sense "some dents" on the other side of the net in the tiebreaker and noticed that Djokovic was struggling "maybe a bit more." Two years ago at Melbourne Park, Djokovic hurt his left hamstring but still managed to depart with the trophy. Against Alcaraz, he was down a set against someone who is 16 years his junior but won.

This time, Djokovic could not pull off a similar escape.

And afterward, there was a lot Djokovic was unsure about.

Might this have been his last appearance at Melbourne Park?

"There is a chance. Who knows?" Djokovic replied. "I'll just have to see how the season goes. I want to keep going." He said it's too soon to know how long he might be sidelined. He said he isn't sure yet what will happen to his coaching arrangement with former on-court rival Andy Murray. What Djokovic did make clear: His focus and goals will not waver.

Jannik Sinner tops Ben Shelton to return to Australian Open final

AGENCIES
MELBOURNE

Defending champion Jannik Sinner continued his sizzling Australian Open run with a 7-6 (2) 6-2 6-2 victory over American 21st seed Ben Shelton on Friday to reach a second straight final at Melbourne Park and book a meeting with Alexander Zverev.

Sinner's victory made the 23-year-old the youngest man to make multiple finals at the Australian Open since Jim Courier in 1992-93 and kept alive his dream of becoming the first Italian to lift three Grand Slam singles trophies.

"I'm happy to be back in the final again," said Sinner, who had to overcome cramp in the third set.

"Sundays are special days in tournaments and I'm hoping I can enjoy it."

Sinner entered the match on Rod Laver Arena having won four of his five meetings with left-hander Shelton but found himself in trouble early on as a thunderous forehand winner handed the American a break, which he followed up with a tight hold.

The top seed shrugged off a tentative start to draw level at 2-2 and attacked Shelton's powerful serve at every opportunity, but a lapse on his own delivery in the 11th game left him in a spot of bother again before he saved two set points.

Shelton bounced his racket off the court after going behind 4-0 in the ensuing tiebreak as his accuracy



cruelly deserted him and Sinner gleefully accepted the first set when his frustrated opponent sent a forehand wide.

"It was a very tough first set but crucial," said Sinner.

"He wasn't serving at his best, not where he wanted to. We both returned better than we served. First sets can often give you confidence and it was tense. I'm happy how I handled it."

"I'm happy to be back in the final here."

After a breathless start to the second set, Sinner released the handbrake to win the opening four games without response and soon left a dejected Shelton in the rear view mirror to double his advantage in the match.

Sinner felt a problem in his left leg during a tense third set and had it worked on by the trainer after breaking to go 3-2 up, be-

fore some huge winners took him to the finish line and back-to-back major finals after his triumphant U.S. Open run.

"There was a lot of tension today. I was slightly cramping. He was suffering on his legs too so I tried to move him around," added Sinner. "These matches can go long. Playing three sets for 2-1/2 hours is a long time, so I'm happy to finish it in three, I'm happy to be back in the final again."

Second seed Zverev reached his first Australian Open final and third at the majors after 24-times Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic retired due to a left thigh injury after losing the opening set 7-6 (5).

"We've had some tough matches in the past," Sinner said of Zverev, who leads their head-to-head record 4-2.

Jadeja scalps 12 as Saurashtra trounce Pant's Delhi by 10 wickets

AGENCIES
RAJKOT

Ravindra Jadeja was unplayable on a spinners' paradise and added another seven to his first innings five-for as Saurashtra all but ensured Delhi's exit from Ranji Trophy with a 10-wicket victory inside two days in Group D, here Friday. While the famed Indian batters were huge flops across games, all-rounder Jadeja showed why he is still menacing on tracks that offer significant help.

The hosts pounded Delhi by dismissing them for a mere 94 in 25.2 overs in their second innings. This was after Saurashtra did well enough to score 271. The 83-run first innings lead on a difficult track proved to be decisive. Saurashtra scored the required 12 runs in just 3.1 overs. The match lasted little over 150 overs across two days.

After six rounds, Saurashtra (18 points) are back in the hunt to qualify for the knock-out stages from group D along with Tamil Nadu (19 from 5 games), who are in good position to



win outright against Chandigarh (18 points from 5 games).

Delhi with 14 points have one home game left against Railways and even a seven-point win might not be enough if Saurashtra or Chandigarh manage outright wins in their last games.

The Rishabh Pant fans were left high and dry as he got out for 17 in the second essay after scoring 1. In the first innings, he had holed out in the deep trying to slog-sweep left-arm spinner Dharmendra Jadeja.

In the second innings, the more famous Jadeja, Ravindra, brought him forward and extra bounce had him

edge to Sheldon Jackson in the first slip.

Saurashtra skipper Jaydev Unadkat had said before the game that they will prepare rank turner and go for seven points in their bid to make it to knock-out stage.

Save skipper Ayush Badoni (44), who once again looked good and Pant, who tried to counter attack briefly, none of the Delhi batters had an inkling which of Jadeja's deliveries would turn and which ones would go straight.

Some of them tried to sweep without much success while others were not assured of their footwork.

The difference was in class of spin attack.

Shardul Thakur rescues Mumbai team against J&K

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

A resolute Shardul Thakur played the rescue act to perfection for the star-studded but misfiring Mumbai, as his second first-class hundred brought the Ranji Trophy defending champions back from the brink in their Elite Group A clash against Jammu and Kashmir here on Friday.

Having conceded a huge 86-run lead in the first innings, Mumbai were left tottering at 101/7 in the second innings when Thakur and Tanush Kotian put on a robust 173-run unbeaten stand for the eighth wicket to turn the tables on J&K.

Mumbai reached 274/7 at stumps on Day Two, ahead by 188 runs with Thakur batting on 113 (119 balls, 13 fours) and Kotian on 58 not out off 119 balls with six fours.

Thakur battled cramps on multiple occasions and made the most of a reprieve, offering yet another reminder of his gritty character. Meanwhile, the young Kotian once again



showcased his credentials as a promising player at the highest level with another valuable knock.

Mumbai had squandered an ideal start after Rohit Sharma (28) and Yashasvi Jaiswal (26) put on 54 for the opening wicket at a brisk rate.

The Indian Test openers, pairing up for the first time in Ranji Trophy, looked to take on the Jammu and Kashmir bowlers and got some success too.

While Rohit hit a trademark six over deep square leg and lofted two more deliveries for a similar result, Jaiswal, who looked to come down the wicket, also played positively during his

brief stay.

Jammu and Kashmir's athleticism on the field and persistence from their bowlers overshadowed some howlers from the umpires — Shreyas Iyer (17) was caught behind off Nazir but was not given out by the umpire S Ravi, while Ajinkya Rahane (16) had to be called back from the pavilion.

Rahane was caught behind by Kanhaiya Wadhawan off Umar Nazir, and the Mumbai skipper had made his way back to the stands while new batter Thakur walked out to the field when on-field umpires S Ravi and Navdeep Singh Sidhu adjudged the delivery to be a front-foot no-ball.

Ranji Trophy: Rohit shines briefly, falls for 28

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

He pulled Umar Nazir for a trademark six, effortlessly lofted Quaid Nabi and Yudhvir Singh for a couple of more hits over the ropes to give a glimpse of his absolute best. But eventually, a fifty on Ranji comeback was not meant to be for India captain Rohit Sharma who fell for 28 here on Friday.

Playing his first game for Mumbai in domestic red-ball cricket in nearly a decade, Rohit's first day on the field was a disaster with the 37-year-old falling for a 19-ball 3 in the opening hour of the Ranji Trophy clash against Jammu Kashmir.

But on Friday, Rohit gave a far better account of himself to notch up a fluent 28, his best in first-class cricket since a 52 in the second innings of the Bengaluru Test against New Zealand last year.

It indeed has been that long for Rohit, who has since scored 0, 8, 11, 11, 3, 6, 3 and 9 in subsequent outings against New Zealand and Australia.



Back then in mid-October, India were cemented on top of the World Test Championship points table and the house was in complete order for the national side.

But it all came crumbling down following defeats to New Zealand and Australia which forced Indian superstars to play domestic cricket.

On Friday, he looked for a big one but it wasn't to happen. Rohit's knock of 28 was mixed with hits and misses in the initial stages, which all began with a tough dropped chance by Nazir in the fourth over when he could not grab a return catch on his follow through.

Rohit immediately responded with a pull shot for a six over the square leg.

India storms into Super Six of U-19 Women's T20 World Cup 2025

SUNIL YASH KALRA
NEW DELHI

The Indian U-19 women's team has delivered an exceptional performance in the ICC U-19 Women's T20 World Cup 2025, finishing at the top of Group A. On Thursday, India secured their place in the Super Six by defeating Sri Lanka by 60 runs. Opening batter G Trisha played a crucial knock of 49 runs, hitting five bound-

aries and a six in her 44-ball innings. In challenging conditions, India posted a competitive total of 118/9.

Fast bowlers VJ Jositha and Shabnam Shakil shone with the new ball, picking up four wickets in the first four overs to dismantle the Sri Lankan top order. Sri Lanka struggled against India's disciplined bowling attack, managing only 58 runs in their 20 overs. Vaishnavi Sharma and Ayushi Shukla

delivered economical spells, while Parunika Sisodia and Mithila Vinod also contributed with crucial overs.

India advanced to the Super Six after winning all three group-stage matches. They had defeated the West Indies by 9 wickets and Malaysia by 10 wickets to maintain an unbeaten streak.

India's Group Stage Results:

1. India vs West Indies U-19 Women - Won by 9 wickets

2. India vs Malaysia U-19 Women - Won by 10 wickets

3. India vs Sri Lanka U-19 Women - Won by 60 runs

In the Super Six, India will face Bangladesh on January 26 and Scotland on January 28. Other teams qualifying for the Super Six include cricketing powerhouses like Australia, England, and South Africa. With India's current form and exceptional performances, fans are hopeful for a historic title win.

Karnataka dominates Punjab with Smaran's double ton

AGENCIES
BENGALURU

Punjab skipper Shubman Gill endured a tough day as Karnataka posted a mammoth 475, built around Ravichandran Smaran's maiden first-class double ton that put the hosts firmly in the driver's seat in their Elite Group C Ranji Trophy match here Friday.

After a poor show with the bat on the opening day, it was another difficult day for Gill on the field as his bowlers failed to apply pressure on the opposition.

Resuming on 199 for 4, overnight batter Smaran dominated proceedings with a superb 277-ball 203, almost single-handedly taking Punjab to the huge total.

Smaran's knock was the highlight of the day, with the next best score being Abhinav Manohar's 34. Smaran anchored the innings as other batters chipped in with useful contributions before Karnataka were bowled out in 122.1 overs.

In their second innings, Punjab were 24 for 2 in 13 overs, and were trailing by 396 runs, with Gill holding

the fort at 7 not out from 36 balls, and Jassinder Singh at the crease on zero.

Haryana's Anuj Thakral shines with 6/31 against Bengal-At Kalyani, Anuj Thakral's brilliant spell of 6/31 helped Haryana dismiss Bengal for 124. The hosts, playing their must-win game, thus conceded a crucial 33-run first innings lead.

Haryana, who were dismissed for 157 in their first innings, reached 158 for 2 at stumps on Day 2, taking a 191-run overall lead. Himanshu Rana (46) and

Nishant Sindhu (26) were at the crease at the close of play.

Ton-up Abhishek and Aryan put UP in control in Patna, Uttar Pradesh took control with a commanding 417 for 2 on Day 2, having gained a 169-run first-innings lead over Bihar.

Abhishek Goswami was the star, falling just short of a double ton with a blistering 198 off 206 balls, including 29 fours and three sixes.

At stumps, Aryan Juyal remained unbeaten on 103, with Karan Sharma (37) giving him company.