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## PM TEARS INTO KEJRIWAL OVER 'SHEESHMAHAL'

■ The Prime Minister said, "Modi never built a home for himself but has built more than 4 crore houses for the poor".

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday took a veiled dig at the Aam Admi Party (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal and said, "Mai bhi koi sheeshmahal bana sakta tha", apparently referring to the official bungalow of the former Delhi chief minister.

The Prime Minister targeted Kejriwal for allegedly constructing an opulent residence for himself as CM.

"The country knows it well that Modi never built a home for himself but has built more than 4 crore houses for the poor... 'Mai bhi koi sheeshmahal bana sakta...' (I could have also built a palace for myself). I urge all of you, whenever you interact and meet with slum dwellers, to ensure to tell them on my behalf that they will definitely get pucca houses, if not today, then tomorrow," the PM said.

The Prime Minister said that development of cities would play an important role in realising the goals of

Viksit Bharat. "Today the whole country is engaged in building a 'developed India'. We are working with the resolve that every citizen of the country should have a permanent house in a 'developed India'. Delhi has a very big role in this resolution, hence the BJP-led central government started a campaign to build permanent houses in place of slums," he said.

"Our cities play a very important role in developing India. People from far-off places come here with their dreams and spend their lives honestly in fulfilling those dreams. Therefore, the BJP government at the Centre is engaged in providing quality of life to every family living in the cities," he added.

The PM said that 2025 will be the year of strengthening India's position in the world and making it a premium manufacturing hub.

"Today, India has become a symbol of political and economic stability. This role of India will strengthen even more" ■ P3



PM Modi hands over a symbolic key to a beneficiary during a public meeting to inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of multiple development projects, in New Delhi on Friday. (ANI Photo)

### AAP an 'aapda', says PM Modi

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has slammed the AAP as an "aapda" (crisis) for Delhi, saying this "aapda" has taken the national capital in its grip in the past 10 years.

Addressing people after launching a slew of infrastructure projects in the national capital, including in housing and education sectors, he hit out at the city government led by AAP and said the situation in the national capital would worsen if its reign continued. On the one hand, the Centre is making a lot of efforts; on the other, the Union Territory government stands for brazen lies, he said, accusing ■ P3

### 'People call it blessings': Kejriwal

NEW DELHI: Hitting back at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Aapda' (crisis) at the Aam Aadmi Party-led Delhi government, party's national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Friday highlighted his government's works in the national capital and said that people consider this as a 'Aas- ■ P3

## India protests China's 'counties' that include parts of Ladakh

Raises Brahmaputra dam plan

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

India has lodged a strong protest with China over the establishment of two new 'counties' in the region that includes the region under the Union Territory of Ladakh, and asserted that New Delhi has never accepted the "illegal occupation" of Beijing, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Friday.

"We have seen the announcement pertaining to the establishment of two new counties in Hotan Prefecture of China. Parts of the jurisdiction of these so-called counties fall in India's Union Territory of Ladakh. We have never accepted the illegal Chinese occupation of Indian territory in this

Creation of new counties will not affect India's stance on sovereignty over the area, nor will it legitimise China's illegal and forcible occupation - Ministry of External Affairs

area," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a press conference.

He further emphasised that the creation of new counties will not affect India's stance on sovereignty over the area, nor will it legitimize "China's illegal and forcible occupation."

"The creation of new counties will neither have a bearing on India's long-

standing and consistent position regarding our sovereignty over the area nor lend legitimacy to China's illegal and forcible occupation of the same. We have lodged a solemn protest with the Chinese side through diplomatic channels," he added.

Last week, Chinese media Xinhua reported that the government of northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region announced the establishment of two new counties in the region: He'an County and Hekang County.

The establishment of the counties, both administered by Hotan Prefecture, has been approved by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council. The county seat of He'an is Hongliu Township, while the county seat of Hekang is Xeyidula Township, the report added. ■ P3

## Data protection law: Draft rules out finally

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology on Friday notified the draft rules for the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDP) and invited stakeholders to share feedback/comments on the rules.

In his post the Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology, Ashwini Vaishnaw posted, "Draft DPDP rules are open for consultation. Seeking your views."

The DPDP act aims to strengthen the legal framework for the protection of digital personal data by providing necessary details and an actionable framework, according to a statement by the ministry. The rules will be taken into



consideration after February 18, 2025.

"Draft of rules proposed to be made by the Central Government in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-sections (1) and (2) of section 40 of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (22 of 2023), on or after the date of coming into force of the Act, are hereby published for the information ■ P3

## SKM rejects Centre's agri marketing policy

**NEERAJ MOHAN**  
CHANDIGARH

The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) has launched a scathing attack on the National Policy Framework on Agricultural Marketing (NPFAM) introduced by the Union government and terming it "more dangerous" than the three farm laws repealed by the previous regime.

SKM, the umbrella body of around 40 farmer organisations, warned that if implemented, the

NPFAM will weaken the federal structure by minimizing the rights of state governments and endanger the livelihoods of farmers, agricultural labourers and small traders.

As per statement by the SKM, the NPFAM proposes to bring about a major change in India's agricultural marketing system. It aims to establish a 'Unified National Market (UNM)' which will be linked to a 'Value Chain Centric Infrastructure (VCCI)' thereby al-

lowing corporate agribusiness to enter India's agricultural ecosystem. The policy aims to digitally connect over 7,000 regulated agricultural markets and 22,931 rural purchase centre, which is close to the value chain model of the World Bank and International Financial Capital (IFC).

According to SKM, the framework prioritizing corporate interests while marginalising small farmers and small producers. Advanced ■ P3

## Punjab asks district admin to meet Dallewal

**TARUNI GANDHI**  
CHANDIGARH

Concerned about the deteriorating health of farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, the Punjab government directed the district administration to meet with Dallewal at the protest site near the Khanauri border, Dhahi Gujran. The team included SSP Patiala Dr. Nanak Singh, Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Isha Singal, and SDM Patran Ashok Kumar.

On Friday, a high-level medical team constituted

by the Punjab government also examined Dallewal's health, collected blood samples, and urged him to seek immediate medical treatment. The team reiterated their appeal for proper medical care, emphasizing the critical nature of his health condition.

The farmer leader, currently on a hunger strike, and his supporters, however, declined the administration's offer of assistance. The Punjab government has already deployed a medical team from Rajindra Medical ■ P3



Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge during an 'Akhand Path' organised in memory of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, in New Delhi on Friday. Former Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari is also seen. ANI

## HMPV outbreak: Health Services chief says no need to be alarmed

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

Amid concerns over the outbreak of the HMPV (Human Metapneumovirus) in China, Dr Atul Goel, Director-General of Health Services, reassured the public that there is nothing to be alarmed about the present situation, urging people to take general precautions. Speaking to the media, Dr Goel emphasized that hospitals are well-prepared for the seasonal surge in respiratory infections.

"Metapneumovirus is like any other respiratory virus that causes common cold, and in very old and very young it could cause

flu-like symptoms. We have analysed the data of the respiratory outbreaks within the country, there is no such substantial increase in 2024 data. In any case during winter, there is an outbreak of respiratory infections and our hospitals are fully prepared for that with the necessary supplies and beds," he said.

"I want to request the public to take general precautions, which means, those who have cough and cold should prevent coming in contact with other people to prevent the spread and take normal medicines prescribed for cold and fever..

Metapneumovirus is like any other respiratory virus that causes common cold, and in very old and very young it could cause flu-like symptoms.

Otherwise, nothing to be alarmed about the present situation," Dr Goel added.

Meanwhile, the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) under the Union Health Ministry is closely monitoring respiratory and seasonal influenza cases in

the country.

"We will continue to monitor the situation closely, validate information and update accordingly," official Sources said. This development follows recent reports of an outbreak of Human Metapneumovirus in China. "The data from December 16-22, indicates a recent rise in acute respiratory infections, including seasonal influenza, rhinovirus, respiratory syncytial virus and human metapneumovirus, however, the overall scale and intensity of respiratory infectious diseases in China this year is lower than last year.



# FORMER CONGRESS MLA SURENDRA PANWAR ACQUITTED IN MONEY-LAUNDERING CASE

Arrest in money laundering case declared illegal by Supreme Court, ED's appeal rejected

NEERAJ MOHAN  
CHANDIGARH

In a major relief to the former Haryana Congress MLA Surendra Panwar the Supreme Court has upheld the decision of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, in which Panwar's arrest in a money laundering case was declared illegal.

Rejecting the special leave petition (SLP) filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), the court clarified that the High Court's decision was based only on the legality of the arrest and it would not affect the merits of the case.

Panwar was arrested by the ED on July 20 last year on charges of illegal mining and money laundering. He alleged that after the arrest, he was kept for continuous interrogation for 15 hours. However, the High Court rejected his arrest on 23 September 2024 and Panwar was released on September 25, ahead of voting of Haryana Assembly Elections which he contested on Congress ticket from Sonapat assembly constituency. Later the ED challenged the High Court's decision in the Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, ED lawyer Zohab Hussain argued in the

## RELIEF, FINALLY

- The Supreme Court upheld the High Court's decision declaring former Haryana MLA Surendra Panwar's arrest in a money laundering case illegal, stating it won't impact the case's merits.
- Panwar, arrested by the ED on July 20, 2024, was released on September 25 after the High Court deemed his 15-hour interrogation unlawful and inhuman.
- The ED's defense of a dinner break during questioning was rejected by the Supreme Court, which slammed the prolonged interrogation as violating human dignity.
- The High Court highlighted that "illegal mining" isn't a scheduled offense under the PMLA, undermining the ED's Rs 400-500 crore slush fund allegations.



Supreme Court that the High Court wrongly recorded that Panwar was questioned continuously for 14 hours and 40 minutes, claiming that Panwar was given a dinner break at night and the agency took care of human rights in the interrogation. However, the Supreme Court rejected this argument of the ED and called the long interrogation

inhuman.

Dismissing the Enforcement Directorate (ED)'s plea against the High Court order, the Bench held, "We are not inclined to interfere with the finding of the high court that the arrest of the respondent was illegal." The High Court's findings, it said, were only for deciding whether Panwar's arrest was illegal.

"These findings will not affect the merits of the pending complaint under Section 44 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002," said the Bench in its order on December 2.

The court said the ED's approach in conducting the probe was a "shocking state of affairs" where a person was virtually forced to make

a statement. ED's counsel Zohab Hussain said the high court had erred in its finding that Panwar was continuously quizzed for 14.40 hours, pointing to a dinner break during the interrogation. The lawyer said ED in a 2024 circular asked its officials to maintain certain standards of interrogations and to ensure people were not interrogated during late night and in early hours of the day.

On September 29, 2024, the High Court said primarily, as per the grounds of arrest, the allegation(s) against the petitioner pertained to illegal mining or supplying the illegally mined material. Therefore, it said, the foundation of the case was illegal mining whereas the rest of the allegations in all the nine FIRs were peripheral, relating to illegal mining. "Of course, 'illegal mining' is an offence under Section 21 of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act), but neither 'illegal mining' nor the MMDR Act has been included under the schedule attached with the PMLA. In other words, 'illegal mining' is not a scheduled offence under the PMLA.

# A year in office: Bhajan Lal tops BJP's review of CMs

AJIT MAINDOLA  
NEW DELHI

The first year of the CM Bhajan Lal Sharma has been quite successful despite the challenges he faced. Based on his performance and key decisions, Bhajan Lal Sharma has outshone the Chief Ministers of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh in the first year.

A year ago, the BJP high command had made a bold move by appointing entirely new faces as Chief Ministers in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh. This decision sparked mixed reactions across the country. However, the most surprising choice came from Rajasthan, where the BJP selected Bhajan Lal Sharma, a first-time MLA who rose from ordinary party worker to Chief Minister.

In contrast, Mohan Yadav in Madhya Pradesh and Vishnu Deo Sai in Chhattisgarh had prior government experience—Yadav had served as a minister in Madhya Pradesh, while Vishnu Dev had been a central minister.

Bhajan Lal Sharma, however, was the first Chief Minister in recent history to be appointed directly from the party organization. After one year, the BJP high command conducted a review of the work of these three Chief



Ministers.

According to sources, Rajasthan CM Bhajan Lal Sharma's performance has been more effective compared to his counterparts. While both the CMs in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh worked hard, Sharma stood out by effectively tackling challenges without prior experience, proving himself to be a strong leader. The BJP high command had made a bold decision to give fresh faces the opportunity to lead in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh, rather than reappoint veteran leaders like Vasundhara Raje, Shivraj Singh Chauhan, and Raman Singh.

The Sangh supported this move entirely, backing Bhajan Lal Sharma, Mohan Yadav, and Vishnu Dev Sai. This support led veteran leaders in these states to quickly accept the new decisions. Former Madhya Pradesh

CM Shivraj Singh Chauhan took on a new role as the Union Agriculture Minister in Delhi, while Raman Singh in Chhattisgarh accepted the position of Speaker. In Rajasthan, former CM Vasundhara Raje was offered a position in Delhi but chose not to contest the Lok Sabha elections, remaining as the National Vice President in the party organization.

The murmurs began after the Lok Sabha results, as the party fell short of the expected number of seats in the state, leading to various speculations. One such rumor suggested that Vasundhara Raje might be made the national president. However, victories in Maharashtra and Haryana shifted the narrative. In Rajasthan, the party performed exceptionally well in the by-elections, which proved to be a turning point for CM Bhajan Lal Sharma.

# Rahul hits out at Centre over arrest of two student leaders in MP

ANAND SINGH  
NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday hit out at the Central government for arresting two students planning to protest against the Madhya Pradesh Public Service Commission (MPPSC) demanding reforms to ensure more transparency in the recruitment process saying the BJP is trying to cut the thumb of the students and ruining their future.

He also said that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in Madhya Pradesh has broken the trust of students and stifled their voices.

In a post on X, formerly Twitter, Rahul Gandhi, who is also the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha said, "The BJP is giving Eklavya-like treatment to students by cutting their thumb and ruining their future."

The Lok Sabha MP from Uttar Pradesh's Rae Bareilly slammed the government and said, "Failure in filling government vacancies is the biggest injustice. First, no opportunity to fill vacant posts comes up. If the vacancies are announced then examinations are not conducted on time or papers get leaked. If the students raise their voice then they are suppressed in a cruel manner."

Citing the examples, the Congress leader said that after the recent incidents in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, now two students have been sent to jail for raising their voices for questioning the process of examination. "This was done after Chief Minister (Mohan Yadav) himself assuring students of justice after meeting them," he alleged.

Rahul Gandhi said, "BJP government has broken the trust of students and strangled the democratic system." The Congress leader assured that the grand old party will stay with students in their fight for justice and their rights. "We would not

allow the BJP to stifle the voice of students and youths for their rights," he vowed.

His remarks came after two students in Madhya Pradesh were arrested and sent to jail for planning to protest against the alleged irregularity in the MPPSC examination.

The two students of the National Educated Youth Union (NEYU) were sent to jail for planning to stage a protest outside the MPPSC office.

Last week, over 2,000 students staged a protest outside the MPPSC office demanding reforms to ensure more transparency in the recruitment process.

# Congress slams BJP over GST decline, calls for GST 2.0

ANAND SINGH  
NEW DELHI

Congress on Friday criticised the BJP-led Central government for the decline in GST collections, terming it a significant concern. The party called for implementing GST 2.0, as proposed in its 2024 manifesto, alongside income support for the poor and tax relief for the middle class.

In a statement, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said, "The latest data from December 2024 shows that GST collection receipts increased at the second slowest pace in three and a half years this past month. Net GST collections, after adjusting for refunds, slumped

*Highlighting GDP growth slowing to 5.4% in Q2 FY25 and stagnant rural wages, Jairam Ramesh said India is trapped in a cycle of "low consumption, low investment, low growth, and low wages."*

to 3.3% growth—the lowest in FY25. This is concerning news on several fronts."

Ramesh pointed out that GST collections grew by

only 8.6% in the first three quarters of FY25, compared to the 11% growth factored into budget estimates. He cautioned against using this shortfall as a pretext to cut welfare programs like MGNREGA.

December's moderation in collections includes a 45.3% rise in refunds. While some are legitimate, Ramesh alleged widespread fraud due to GST system loopholes, citing Rs. 35,132 crore in identified fraud with a recovery rate of just 12%. Highlighting GDP growth slowing to 5.4% in Q2 FY25 and stagnant rural wages, Ramesh said India is trapped in a cycle of "low consumption, low investment, low growth, and low wages."

# 2002 Ranjit Singh murder case: SC issues notice to Ram Rahim, 4 others

SAMBHAV SHARMA  
NEW DELHI

In a recent development in 2002 Ranjit Singh Murder Case, the Supreme Court on Friday has issued notice to the Dera Sacha Sauda head, Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh and four others.

The top court bench led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna has issued notices to Ram Rahim along with other accused Avtar Singh, Krishna Lal, Jasbir Singh, and Saabdel Singh.

The SC issued notices in response to a petition filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

The CBI has challenged in the Supreme Court, the Punjab and Haryana High Court's May 2024 order acquitting Ram Rahim.

The SC bench led by CJI transferred the case to a bench led by Justice M Bela Trivedi.

CJI Sanjiv Khanna: Since the bench of Justice Bela Trivedi had already issued notices in a victim's petition, it would also hear the CBI's appeal.

Ranjit Singh, the then manager of the Dera Sacha Sauda was killed in July, 2002. The CBI court convicted all the five accused including Ram Rahim and sentenced them to life imprisonment.



## Festivities on

The festivities for Maha Kumbh 2025 have already begun with the devotees participating in morning Ganga 'aartis'. The 'aartis' are not only limited to the renowned ghats of Prayagraj but can be witnessed all across the flood plains of the Sangam. Women participated in a special Ganga Aarti at the Triveni Sangam in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj earlier. The ritual also served as a rehearsal for the upcoming Kumbh Mela.

"Today a special aarti was performed. It was a rehearsal for the Kumbh Mela. The boys will perform Triveni Aarti and the girls will perform the Ganga Aarti. We hope that these children performing the Aarti are motivated by everyone... We want to give a message that there are no limitations in Sanatana Dharma," Pradeep Pandey, Prayagraj Teerth Purohit, told ANI.

The Maha Kumbh is being celebrated after 12 years and a huge turnout of devotees is expected in Prayagraj from January 13 to February 26.

# 'MMS' political manoeuvring secured N-deal

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Economist Montek Singh Ahluwalia on Friday spoke of the efforts former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh took to convince the opposition parties during his second term for the Indo-US nuclear deal.

Ahluwalia, former Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission of India, said that Dr Singh had to confide with then-President APJ Abdul Kalam, asking him to have a conversation with then-Samajwadi Party (SP)



Montek Singh Ahluwalia

chief Mulayam Singh who was opposing the nuclear deal with the left parties.

The left parties had taken a vote of confidence and

wanted to vote the government out of power. Ahluwalia said, "Manmohan Singh had to undertake the Indo-US nuclear deal while going against the opposition from within his party, strong opposition from the left. He had to do a lot of political manoeuvring since the left had a vote of confidence and they wanted to vote the government out of power. He was able to avoid the problem because he brought in President APJ Abdul Kalam to persuade Mulayam Singh as a scientist.

Mulayam Singh agreed after talking to President Kalam and ended up supporting the government," Ahluwalia told ANI in an exclusive interview.

Ahluwalia said that for Manmohan Singh, India's forward movement could only happen if the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) restrictions were lifted and that was possible because of the relationship the former Prime Minister shared with then-US President George Bush, which ensured the removal of the NSG restrictions.

# Ajay Bhalla's appointment as Guv reflects Centre's seriousness for Manipur: CM Biren

TDG NETWORK  
IMPHAL

Manipur CM N Biren Singh on Friday welcomed the appointment of Ajay Kumar Bhalla as the 19th Governor, saying that Bhalla's appointment reflects the central government's seriousness in resolving Manipur's issues. Speaking to media, CM Biren Singh said, "Appointing one of the most intelligent and competent persons as the governor of Manipur during this time shows serious concern of the central govt in resolving Manipur issues. I

know Ajay Kumar Bhalla, he is well-experienced and held many important positions in the central govt, mainly the Home Department. He knows about the Manipur issue very well." "I extend my heartfelt best wishes for his successful tenure and look forward to working together towards a peaceful and prosperous Manipur under his leadership," he added in a post on X. Former Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla was sworn in as the 19th Governor of Manipur on Friday. The oath-taking ceremony

was held at the Raj Bhawan in Imphal. The ceremony was attended by Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh, his council of ministers and high-ranking government and police officials. Bhalla succeeds Lakshman Prasad Acharya, who had assumed office as the Governor of Manipur on July 31 last year. Born on November 26, 1960, Bhalla is a retired IAS officer from the Assam-Meghalaya cadre, having joined the civil services in 1984. He served as the Union Home Secretary from August 23, 2019, to August 22, 2024.

# Preparing cadets for Viksit Bharat: DG of NCC

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Director General of the National Cadet Corps (NCC), Lieutenant General Gurbirpal Singh, on Friday said that the main focus for the NCC Republic Day Camp 2025 is to prepare cadets for "Viksit Bharat."

The NCC DG emphasised the importance of training cadets to understand their responsibilities towards the country and how a disciplined workforce of cadets could contribute to the nation's growth and stated that there was a 20

per cent change in the syllabus to align with their view." "Our main focus is on how to prepare the NCC cadets for Viksit Bharat... How to prepare NCC cadets for Viksit Bharat, how to develop them during training, how cadets can understand their responsibility towards the country, and how one disciplined workforce of the cadets can help for Viksit Bharat... We have changed the syllabus by 20 per cent from next year so that the cadets can meet future challenges better," Lieutenant General Singh said.

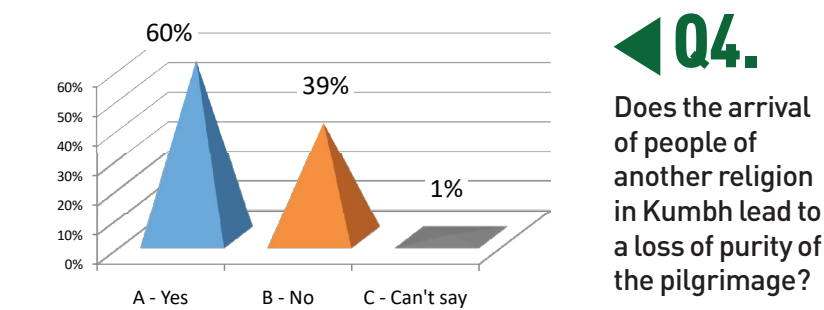
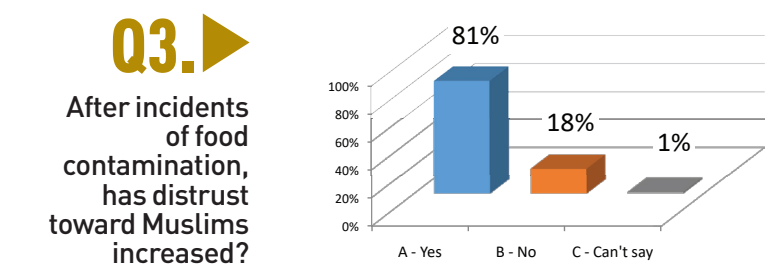
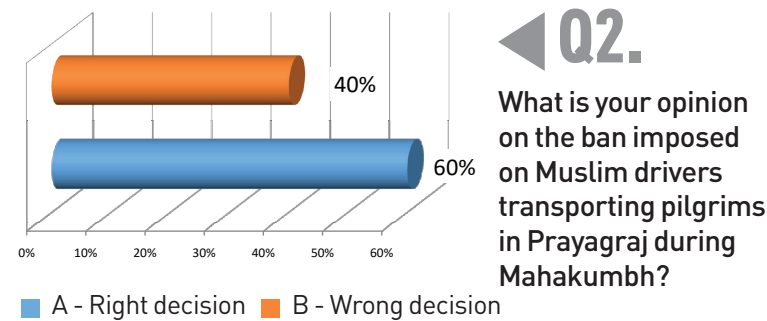
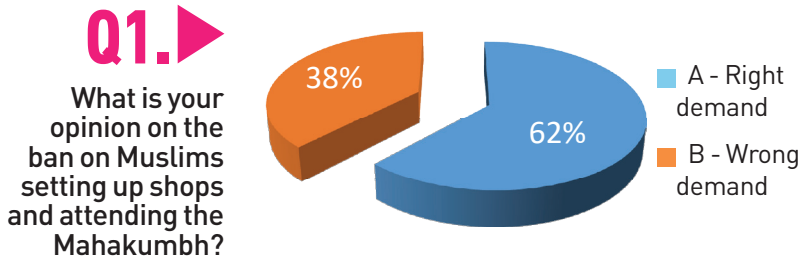


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## DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON MUSLIM BAN IN MAHAKUMBH

**62% believe that it is right to ban Muslims from attending Mahakumbh.**

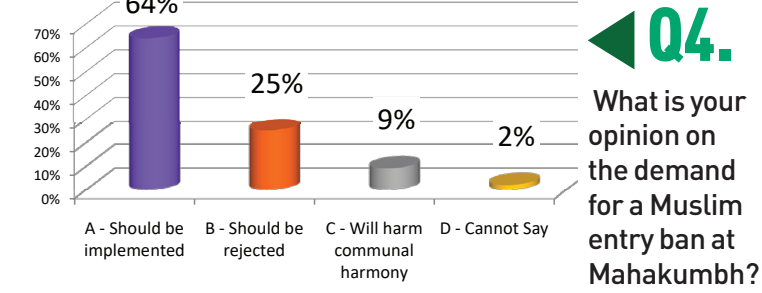
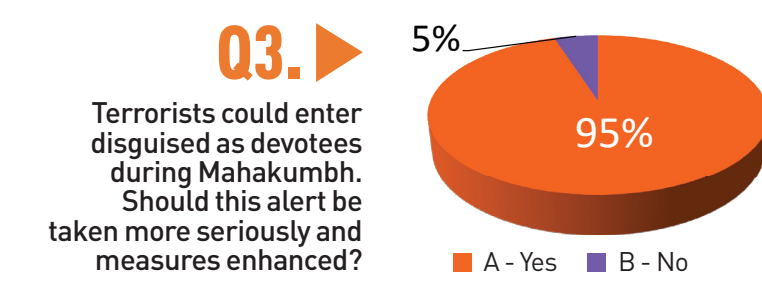
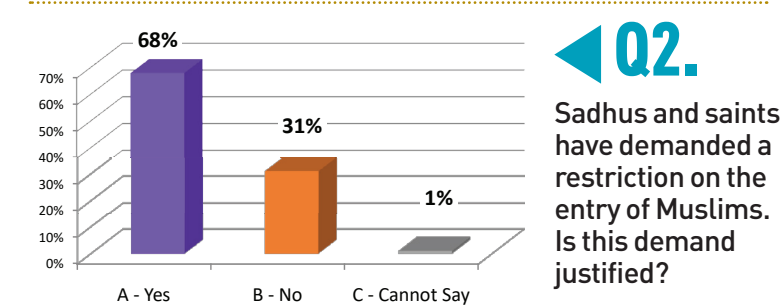
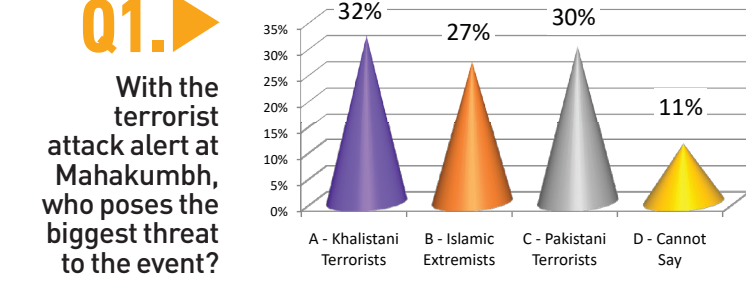
Before the Prayagraj Mahakumbh, Agni Akhada secretary Mahant Jijyanand Brahmachari announced a ban on Muslim drivers for Hindu pilgrims. He urged pilgrims to ensure they use only Hindu drivers and buy goods from Hindus. Additionally, he advised verifying that the food they consume is prepared by Hindus. In a previous order, Muslims were banned from setting up shops or attending the Kumbh Mela.



## DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON MAHAKUMBH TERRORIST ATTACK

**68% support restricting Muslim entry, as demanded by sadhus.**

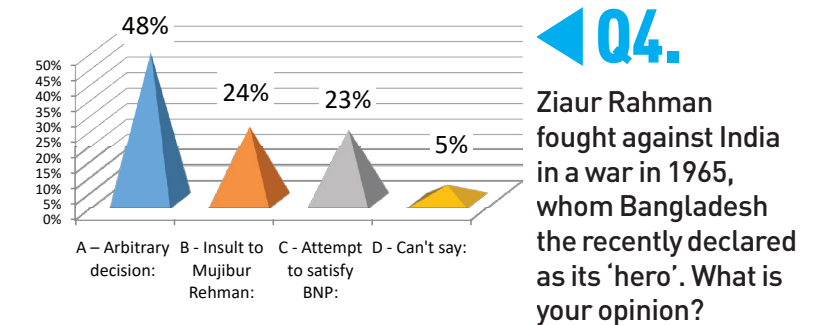
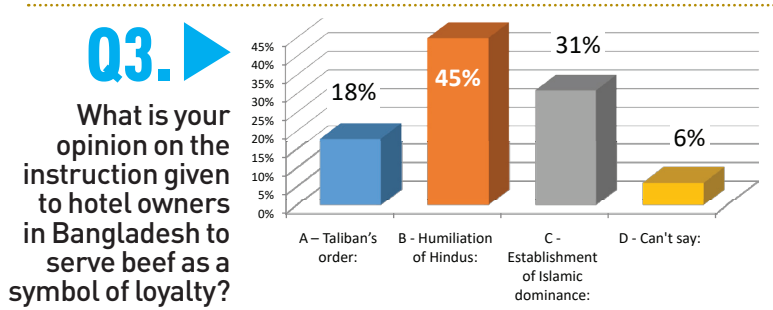
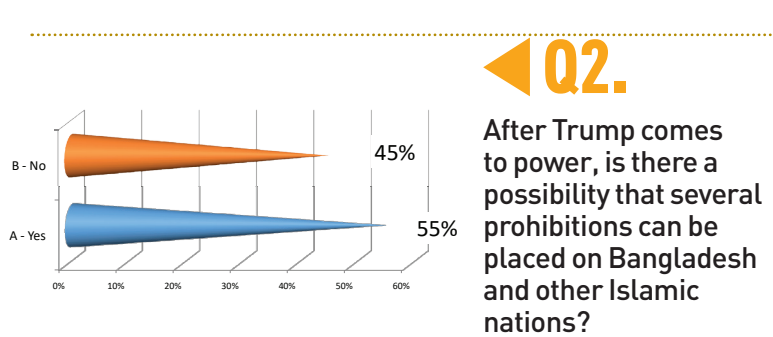
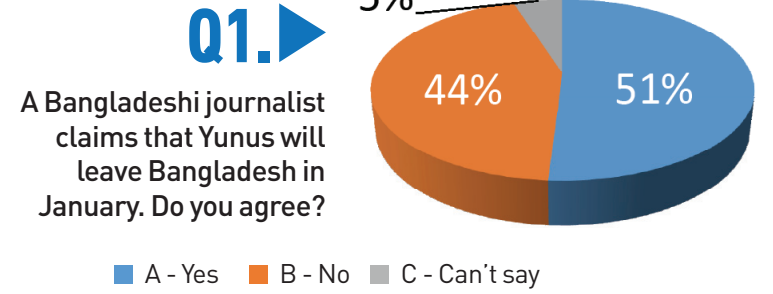
A survey on the Mahakumbh terrorist alert reveals 68% support restricting Muslim entry, as demanded by sadhus. 95% believe security measures should be heightened to prevent disguised terrorist threats. Opinions on threats vary: 32% cite Khalistani terrorists, 30% Pakistani, and 27% Islamic extremists. 64% back a Muslim entry ban at Mahakumbh.



## DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON BANGLADESH

**51% believe Yunus will leave Bangladesh in January.**

Four people were killed and over 50 injured in a violent clash between followers of two Tablighi Jamaat faction leaders, Maulana Zubayer Ahmed and Maulana Saad Kandhlawi, over control of the Bishwa Ijtema ground in Gazipur's Tongi on December 18. Among the deceased were Aminul Islam, 70, from Kishoreganj, and Belal, 60, from Dhaka's Dakshinkhan.



## PM Modi tears into Kejriwal

**CONTINUED FROM P1**  
in 2025. This year will be the year to strengthen India's position in the world. It will be the year of making India one of the biggest manufacturing centres in the world," the PM said. During his address, Prime Minister Narendra Modi also became emotional and said, "When I am here today, it's obvious to remember many old memories. When the country was fighting against Indira Gandhi's dictatorship, for many people like me who were part of the underground movement,

Ashok Vihar used to be a place for me to live..." PM Modi said. Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 1,675 newly constructed flats for the dwellers of JJ clusters and also handed over keys to eligible beneficiaries at Swabhiman Apartments in Ashok Vihar, Delhi. In his post on X, the Prime Minister said, "A home is where dreams take root, and we are committed to ensuring proper housing for every Indian. During today's programme, 1,675 newly constructed flats under the

In-Situ Slum Rehabilitation Project will be inaugurated. This will ensure better and healthier living for several people. I look forward to handing over the keys of their homes to some of the beneficiaries as well." PM Narendra Modi also virtually inaugurated two urban redevelopment projects - the World Trade Centre at Nauroji Nagar and GPR Type-II Quarters at Sarojini Nagar, CBSE's Integrated Office Complex at Dwarka and also laid the foundation stone of Veer Savarkar College at Roshanpura, Najafgarh.

## AAP an 'aapda', says Modi

**CONTINUED FROM P1**  
the AAP government of committing corruption in a host of sectors ranging from school education to fighting pollution and liquor trade. With the assembly elections set to be held in the city next month, the prime minister said Delhi had launched a war on this "aapda (disaster)" and decided to get rid of it. "This year will usher in a new politics of nation-building and people's welfare. Therefore, 'aapda' has to be removed and the BJP brought in," he said. Due to the city government not allowing the Centre's signature health insurance scheme, Ayushman Bharat, and other programmes

in the national capital, Modi said he was unable to help the people living here fully despite his efforts. If highways are being built in the capital and the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has been able to make houses for the poor, it is because "aapda" does not have much role in these sectors, he added. Taking a swipe at former Delhi chief minister and AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal, Modi said he could also have built a "sheesh mahal" for himself but his dream was to ensure homes for everyone in the country. "These people commit corruption and then glorify it," he said, accusing AAP of shamelessness and making false promises.

## Data protection law

**CONTINUED FROM P1**  
of all persons likely to be affected thereby; and notice is hereby given that the said draft rules shall be taken into consideration after 18th February, 2025," read the union government notification. "In line with the SARAL framework, certain principles like simple language, unnecessary cross referencing, contextual definition, and illustrations etc. have been used while drafting the rules," the ministry's statement read. The draft rules define the process for a notice given by a 'Data Fiduciary' (an organisation/entity) to 'Data Principal' (users), and

the registration and obligations of a 'Consent Manager.' "A Data Fiduciary shall protect personal data in its possession or under its control, including in respect of any processing undertaken by it or on its behalf by a Data Processor, by taking reasonable security safeguards to prevent personal data breach," read the draft rules. On becoming aware of a personal data breach, the Data Fiduciary "shall, to the best of its knowledge, intimate to each affected Data Principal, in a concise, clear and plain manner and without delay, through her user account or any mode of communication registered by her."

## India protests China's 'counties'

**CONTINUED FROM P1**  
Speaking further, Jaiswal also reiterated India's concerns over China's hydro-power project on the Yarlung Tsangpo River in the Tibet Autonomous Region. "We have seen the information released by Xinhua on 25 December 2024 regarding a hydropower project on the Yarlung Tsangpo River in the Tibet Autonomous Region of China. As a lower riparian state with established user

rights to the waters of the river, we have consistently expressed, through expert-level as well as diplomatic channels, our views and concerns to the Chinese side over mega projects on rivers in their territory," he said. India has urged China to ensure transparency and consultation with downstream countries, emphasizing the need to protect the interests of downstream states of the Brahmaputra. Jaiswal added, "The Chinese side has been urged

to ensure that the interests of downstream states of the Brahmaputra are not harmed by activities in upstream areas. We will continue to monitor and take necessary measures to protect our interests." The proposed dam project has sparked concerns in India, as it may impact the water flow and quality of the Brahmaputra River, which is a vital source of water and livelihood for millions of people in India's northeastern states.

## SKM rejects Centre's agri marketing policy

**CONTINUED FROM P1**  
technologies such as blockchain, artificial intelligence and machine learning will be used to create a value chain-centric framework. But critics say deregulation under NPFAM will give unlimited control to corporate agribusinesses, impacting the bargaining power and economic security of farmers. SKM asserted that the policy ignores two critical demands of the farming community including remunerative minimum support price (MSP) and minimum wages for agricultural labourers. This omission is in direct violation of the recommendations of the National Commission on Farmers headed by the late MS Swaminathan and ignores the social and political roots of the current agrarian crisis. The strategy of placing the responsibility of bypassing traditional market

intermediaries on Farmer Producer Organisations has also come under criticism. SKM says this strategy can increase corporate dominance, leaving small producers vulnerable to exploitation. The SKM alleged that the implications of NPFAM are not limited to agriculture, but it also raises constitutional concerns. According to the Constitution, agriculture, land and markets fall under the State List, but the policy allegedly interferes with the rights of the state. SKM alleged that the BJP-RSS-led government has used NPFAM as a tool to centralise power under the pretext of "One Nation, One Market", which undermines India's federal structure and food sovereignty. The policy is being seen as part of a broader stream of other pro-corporate reforms, including the GST Act, Digital Agriculture Mission, National Cooperative Policy and Labour Codes.

## DSP sacked over Bishnoi interview

**CONTINUED FROM P1**  
concluded that Sandhu, "facilitated the recording of an interview of Lawrence Bishnoi by a TV Channel, while he was in the custody of CIA, Kharar". As per the order, "And whereas after careful consideration of the facts and circumstances, the State Government is satisfied that Gursheer Singh Sandhu, PPS (under suspension) has severely dented the image of the Punjab Police as a result of his misconduct, negligence and dereliction of duty during the occurrence of the interview of Lawrence Bishnoi, while in the custody of

CIA Kharar." "His failure to perform his duty properly is a gross violation of the discipline and conduct rules of the Punjab Police. Gursheer Singh Sandhu is dismissed from the post of DSP in the Punjab Police," the order said. The order was issued following approval by the Punjab Public Service Commission (PPSC), the appointing authority for the Punjab Police Service (PPS) cadre officials. In October 2024, seven policemen of the Punjab Police including Sandhu were suspended in connection with the interview.

## 'People call it blessings': Kejriwal

**CONTINUED FROM P1**  
hirwad' (blessing). "Jo kaam AAP Sarkar kar rahi hai use log aapda nahi aashirwad kehte hai (The work the AAP government is doing isn't a crisis; people call it a blessing)," Kejriwal said at a press conference today, adding that there are three "Aapda" (crisis) in the BJP. "Aapda Delhi mein nahi BJP mein aayi hai (The crisis isn't in Delhi; it's within the BJP). The first crisis for the BJP is that they don't have a Chief

Ministerial face. The second is that they lack a narrative -- they don't even know what issues to contest the election on. The third crisis is that they don't have an agenda for this election. These three crises are within the BJP," he said. Speaking further, Kejriwal emphasized that over the last 10 years, the AAP government has achieved so much in education, health-care, electricity, water, and roads that listing of these achievements could take hours. "In contrast, the BJP gov-

ernment hasn't done a single thing in ten years that the Prime Minister could proudly highlight in his speeches. If they had accomplished anything, they would be showcasing it instead of criticizing the people of Delhi," Kejriwal said. "During the 2020 elections, the Prime Minister made several promises to the people. He had assured that by 2022, every person in Delhi would have a permanent house. This was also stated in their manifesto.

## District admin asked to meet Dallewal

**CONTINUED FROM P1**  
College and Mata Kaushalya Hospital, Patiala, to monitor Dallewal's health continuously. Additionally, two Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulances and medical teams are stationed 24/7 at the protest site. A temporary hospital equipped with emergency medicines and medical equipment has also been set up nearby, staffed by expert doctors round the clock. The team present at the site included Civil Surgeon Dr. Jagpalinder Singh, Deputy Medical Super-



intendent and Associate Professor of Anesthesia Dr. Gurjeet Singh Gandhi, Associate Professor of Surgery Dr. Dinesh Kumar

Pasi, Associate Professor of Medicine Dr. Manjinder Singh Mann, and Orthopedics Medical Officer Dr. Nirmal Das. From Mata Kaushalya Hospital, SMO Dr. Vikas Goel, SMO Dr. Shelly Jaitly of CHC Badshahpur, ECG Technician Mandeep Singh, and Lab Technician Yogesh Sharma were also present. Despite the administration's efforts, the farmer leader remains steadfast in his protest, drawing attention to his deteriorating health and the urgency of resolving the issues at hand.



# KARNATAKA BJP TO PROTEST TODAY DEMANDING PRIYANK KHARGE'S RESIGNATION

The BJP has also alleged that contractors have been facing difficulties under the Congress government in the state.

TDG NETWORK  
BENGALURU

The Bharatiya Janata Party in Karnataka will be staging a protest on January 4 calling for the resignation of Karnataka Minister for Information Technology (IT) and Biotechnology (BT) Priyank Kharge over the alleged suicide of Bidar contractor Sachin Panchal, with allegations linking the incident to Kharge's office. The protest will be held in the minister's home district of Kalaburagi.

Speaking on the matter, the Karnataka Minister said that he welcomes them and the action taken will depend on how the protesters behave.

"I welcome them. We will arrange everything for them. If they behave properly, we will serve them water and coconut water. If they misbehave, we will send them to jail," Kharge said.

Other Karnataka ministers also weighed in on the issue. Sharan Prakash Patil, State

## KEY POINTS

- BJP in Karnataka to protest on January 4, demanding IT Minister Priyank Kharge's resignation over contractor Sachin Panchal's alleged suicide linked to Kharge's office.
- Kharge welcomes protesters, warns of legal action if they misbehave, promising hospitality for proper conduct.
- BJP claims Kharge's aide harassed Panchal, causing the suicide; Kharge denies all accusations.
- Karnataka ministers accuse BJP of targeting Kharge politically, deflecting from public issues.



*"The BJP has no other work. They are targeting ministers and people who have made allegations against them and who have exposed them. So they are trying to take revenge on Priyank, and he has nothing to do with it..."*, said Sharan Prakash Patil, State Minister for Medical Education and Skill Development.

Minister for Medical Education and Skill Development, criticised the BJP's actions, stating, "The BJP has no other work. As an opposition, they have failed in their duty to

highlight public issues. They are targeting ministers and people who have made allegations against them and who have exposed them. So they are trying to take re-

venge on Priyank (Kharge), and he has nothing to do with it... They can protest, but there is no case."

Meanwhile, State Labour Minister Santosh Lad re-

sponded to the BJP's protest, saying, "This is the only thing that the BJP would do... What has happened is very sad...but in what way is Priyank Kharge involved in it? There are so many railway accidents happening day in and day out. Should the concerned minister resign for this?... Now they will take it politically... We welcome them (the protesters) definitely."

This came in the wake of the controversy surrounding the alleged suicide of a contractor named Sachin due to alleged harassment and threats from Minister Priyank Kharge's close aide, Raju Kapanur, as claimed by the BJP.

However, Priyank Kharge dismissed all the allegations surrounding the issue.

The BJP further alleged that contractors have been facing difficulties under the Congress government in the state. It claimed that financial troubles and stress are driving contractors to die by suicide.

## BJP workers protest in Bengaluru over 15 pc fare hike

TDG NETWORK  
BENGALURU

Workers of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) held protests in Bengaluru on Friday over the 15 percent fare hike for the Karnataka State Road Transportation Corporation (KSRTC) buses.

Leader of Opposition in Karnataka Assembly R Ashoka slammed the Congress government over the hike and said that there was no money in the pocket of the Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramiah which is why he resorted to the hike. Speaking to the media, Ashoka said "There has been a 15 percent hike in the fare charges. This should not be done... there is no money in the pocket of Siddaramiah that is why they are doing this.. he is the worst CM in the history of Karnataka.. When I was the Transport Minister, there was a profit for KSRTC, but when Siddaramiah came there has been a loss for KSRTC... Siddaramiah will go to people and then apologize for the hike and make more hikes."

## Chhota Rajan's henchman absconding for 32 years arrested

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

The henchman of infamous gangster Chhota Rajan, wanted for murder, kidnapping, and illegal possession of weapons, has been arrested by the Mumbai Police, officials said.

The accused had been on the run for the last 32 years. According to the police, the arrested accused who has been absconding for decades has been identified as Raju Vikanya alias Vilas Balram Pawar.

Pawar was arrested after Mumbai Police received information about his whereabouts. The police said that he was spotted in the Chembur area of Mumbai on Thursday.

As soon as the police received the information, they went to Chembur and arrested him. Many cases of murder, ransom kidnapping, and illegal possession of weapons are registered against the accused in different police stations in Mumbai. He was to be presented in a sessions court in the metropolitan. Earlier in October,



The Bombay High Court granted bail to gangster Chhota Rajan in the 2001 Jaya Shetty murder case.

Earlier, he was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment for this crime. The divisional bench, led by Justices Revati Mohite Dere and Prithviraj Chavan, set bail at Rs 1 lakh.

In 2023, a special Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) court acquitted Rajan of orchestrating the high-profile murder of renowned Mumbai trade union leader Dr Datta Samant, who was shot dead in 1997. However, Chhota Rajan is not likely to be released from jail anytime soon, as he is facing trial in several other cases in various cities.

## ED raids DMK Gen Secretary's residence over alleged violation of RBI guidelines

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday conducted searches at the residence of DMK General Secretary and Tamil Nadu Water Resources Minister Thiru Duraimurugan in an alleged money laundering case linked to alleged violations of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) guidelines and cheating by bank officials during the demonetization period.

The raids have been underway since morning at four locations in the Vellore district of Tamil Nadu, connected to Duraimurugan, as well as other accused individuals.

The investigation pertains to alleged violations of RBI guidelines and cheating by bank officials, who are accused of illegally facilitating the exchange of Rs 200 notes for Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes. The case under investigation by the ED stems from an alleged violation of RBI guidelines. This alleged malpractice reportedly enabled



Thiru Duraimurugan is a Minister for Water Resources, General Secretary of the DMK, and an MLA from the Duraimurugan seat in Tamil Nadu.

certain individuals to bypass the restrictions imposed by the government during demonetization, which aimed to curb black money and counterfeit currency.

The ED's raids at locations connected to DMK General Secretary and Tamil Nadu Water Resources Minister Duraimurugan, among others, are part of efforts to uncover the extent of these alleged irregularities and identify those

*The raids have been underway since morning at four locations in the Vellore district of Tamil Nadu, connected to Duraimurugan, as well as other accused individuals.*

involved in the conspiracy.

The Centre on November 8, 2016, decided to cancel the legal tender status of Rs 1,000 and Rs 500 denomination currency notes with several objectives, including flushing out black money, eliminating Fake Indian Currency Notes (FICN), striking at the root of financing of terrorism and left-wing extremism, to convert non-formal economy into a formal economy to expand tax base and employment, and to give a big boost to digitalisation of payments to make India a less cash economy.

## Three Naxals killed in encounter in Chhattisgarh

TDG NETWORK  
GARIABAND

As many as three Naxals were killed in the exchange of fire with security forces in Chhattisgarh's Gariaband district on Friday, police said.

As per the Gariaband Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Jitendra Chandrakar, the encounter is still underway.

Further details are awaited. In December last year, two CoBRA commandos of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) were injured in the exchange of fire with Naxals as they were securing a forward base established in the forest area of Sukma district in Chhattisgarh.

In a separate episode, two naxals were killed in an encounter with security forces in the Nendra-Punnur forests under the Basaguda Police station area. A total of two 12-bore guns, naxal uniforms, literature, explosives and other naxal materials have been recovered from the spot.

Earlier on Wednesday, as many as 11 Naxalites, includ-

*As per the Gariaband Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Jitendra Chandrakar, the encounter is still underway.*

ing Vimla Chandra Sidam, alias Tarakka, who carried a bounty of Rs 1 crore, surrendered before the police in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli.

The 11 Naxalites, including 8 women and 3 men, surrendered at Gadchiroli Police Headquarters. They had bounties totalling more than Rs 1 crore on their heads. The Chhattisgarh government had also announced a bounty on them.

Among the surrendered was Tarakka Sidam, the head of the Dandakaranya Zonal Committee and wife of Bhupati, who had been involved in Naxalism for 34 years.

## Kerala: Life imprisonment to 10 accused in Periya double murder case

TDG NETWORK  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A special CBI court in Kerala's Ernakulam on Friday sentenced 10 accused out of 14 pledged guilty in the Periya double murder case to life imprisonment.

The court has also sentenced the former MLA and CPM leader K V Kunhiraman, to five years of rigorous imprisonment for his involvement in the murder.

Congress MP from Ernakulam Hibi Eden on Friday hailed the CBI court's verdict in the Periya double murder case, which sentenced 10 accused to double life imprisonment while acknowledging the dissatisfaction of the victims' families.

The Congress MP said, "Today was the most important verdict by the Ernakulam CBI court in the Periya double murder case where two youth Congress activists were murdered by CPIM and with the help of the government. We welcome the sentence where 10 of the main culprits have



[L-R] Congress youth workers Sarath Lal and Kripesh in Periya

been given a double life sentence."

"We welcome the verdict but the family members of the deceased Youth Congress workers are not happy. We will discuss with the public prosecutors, advocates and the party about filing an appeal," he added.

Speaking on the case, Kerala Youth Congress President and Palakkad MP Rahul Mamkootathil said that a death sentence should have been given to the accused.

"I am not satisfied with the verdict. A death sentence should have been given," he

said. Earlier today, a special CBI court in Kerala's Ernakulam sentenced 10 accused out of 14 pledged guilty in the Periya double murder case to life imprisonment.

The court has also sentenced the former MLA and CPM leader K V Kunhiraman, to five years of rigorous imprisonment for his involvement in the murder.

This development is related to the murder of Congress youth workers Sarath Lal and Kripesh in Periya, Kasaragod, on February 17, 2019, allegedly by CPI (M) activists.

## Anna University sexual assault case: BJP's women protesters arrested

TDG NETWORK  
MADURAI

The Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) women's wing in Tamil Nadu on Friday staged a protest against the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) government to demand justice for a student who was sexually assaulted at Anna University in Chennai.

The women members of the BJP leading the "Justice rally" from Madurai to Chennai were later detained by the police.

"The DMK is frightened by this gathering. Everyone is protesting within the framework of the law, demanding justice for the woman who was subjected to sexual assault at Anna University. The DMK criticised us, claiming that our protests are for publicity. However, we do not need publicity. The BJP is already performing exceptionally well across India. In these four years, the DMK has achieved nothing. Many atrocities against women

*"The DMK criticised us, claiming that our protests are for publicity. In these four years, the DMK has achieved nothing.*

occur, why is Chief Minister Stalin remaining silent?" BJP leader Khusboo Sundar said.

The BJP's state unit has escalated its criticism of the ruling DMK over a student sexual assault case, with plans for the rally from Madurai to Chennai to demand justice for the victim. Announcing the protest on 'X,' BJP state president K. Annamalai alleged that the accused is linked to the DMK and accused the government of attempting to "conceal the truth" in the matter.

## Protesters attempt self-immolation over Bhopal's toxic waste shift

TDG NETWORK  
DHAR

Two people sustained burn injuries after some of the protesters attempted self-immolation during protests against the shifting of toxic waste materials from Bhopal Gas tragedy site to Pithampur in Dhar district for its disposal on Friday, according to eyewitnesses.

After four decades of the tragic incident, "Bhopal Gas tragedy"- touted as the world's worst industrial disaster, the toxic waste materials from the Bhopal's Union Carbide factory site were transported to Pithampur for its safe disposal on the night of January 1.

The Bhopal Gas tragedy had claimed the lives of several thousand people after deadly gas leaked from the Union Carbide India Limited pesticide plant on the intervening night of December 2 and 3, 1984.

One of the injured persons, Rajkumar Raghuvanshi said, "I have done this (self-immol-



ation) against the toxic waste brought here."

The crowd were staging the protest for their demand to send back the containers carrying the hazardous waste from Pithampur.

After the incident, the police present on the spot immediately shifted some of the protesters and sent them to the hospital. Earlier, the police also used mild lathi charge to disperse the crowd staging the protest.

Pithampur SDM, Vivek Gurjar said, "Currently, people are protesting in view of the waste materials at the Pithampur bus stand and we

are trying to convince them that the process (incineration of waste) is being done scientifically. The entire process will be performed under full supervision and in a scientific manner. I appeal to the people to maintain peace and cooperate with the administration."

Earlier, among the protesters, a social worker Sandeep Raghuvanshi demanded that they had only one request from the state government that the containers of the toxic waste should be sent back from Pithampur.

"There is anger among the public and the local adminis-

tration is presenting false reports at higher ups that there wasn't any anger but it is. We have only one request from the state government that the containers of the toxic waste should be sent back from Pithampur. My strike would be continued till the 12 containers of waste brought from Bhopal were sent back from here," Raghuvanshi said.

Locals also called for a 'Band' and closed their shops to mark their protest against the incineration of the toxic waste in Pithampur.

A local shopkeeper said, "The reason for shutting down the shop is that the 40-year-old toxic waste from Bhopal has been brought here in Pithampur for its disposal."

We will not let the waste be incinerated here. We are with the people of Pithampur. In order to protect our people, we have voluntarily shut down our shops to mark our protest. We want from the government that this waste should not be incinerated in Pithampur."

## 'MP govt to start public awareness of forest life to boost tourism'

TDG NETWORK  
BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Friday said that the state government was starting a campaign for public awareness of forest life and to increase tourism.

He also emphasised that there were many wildlife sanctuaries on which the attention of society needed to be intensified. This also gives an opportunity to learn about all kinds of fauna in the state and also become new tourist centers.

"The Madhya Pradesh government is starting the first phase of a campaign for public awareness of our forest life and to boost tourism. There are many sanctuaries on which the attention of society needs to be intensified. It also gives us an opportunity to learn about all kinds of fauna in our state and it also becomes a new tourist centre. Through the centres of wildlife tourism, we get a chance to understand our ecological ecosystem and we also get a chance to be

proud of the fact that Madhya Pradesh has everything that everyone would like to know," CM Yadav said.

The Chief Minister further added that he would be visiting Chambal region on Saturday where the Gharial Project was launched by the forest department.

"Tomorrow on January 4, I am going to Morena district in Chambal region where the Gharial Project was launched by our forest department. Through the project, we have done a great job for the crocodiles getting extinct and established Madhya Pradesh as the best state in the country, where the number of crocodiles are increasing," the CM said.

The Chief Minister further appealed to join the campaign to know the glorious heritage of the state. He also requested people to visit such parts (wildlife sanctuaries) of Madhya Pradesh so that tourism gets boosted, local people get benefitted and one's curiosity about the state can also be resolved.



# PM LAUNCHES SLEW OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AHEAD OF DELHI POLLS

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said the Centre's development projects will boost the self-esteem of poor people and instil confidence in them, which is the real energy of Viksit Bharat. At an event here, Modi handed over the keys to eligible beneficiaries of EWS (economically weaker section) flats at Swabhiman Apartments in the Ashok Vihar area, describing them as symbols of self-respect, dignity, and new aspirations and dreams.

The prime minister inaugurated several key development projects in Delhi, including 1,675 flats for residents of JJ (jhuggi-jhopri) clusters and the World Trade Centre, ahead of the assembly elections due in February.

Addressing a gathering, the prime minister said in the last 10 years, his government has fulfilled the dreams of owning a pucca house of over four crore people.

The development push from the BJP-led government at the Centre comes ahead of the assembly polls in Delhi, which is expected to be held in February.

The BJP has been locked in a bitter political confrontation with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which has been in power in the city since 2013, and is making all-out efforts to end its reign.

Recalling the dark days of the Emergency in the past, Modi said he and many other party workers like him who were part of the underground movement against the Emergency stayed at Ashok Vihar.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurates and lays the foundation stone of multiple development projects in New Delhi on Friday. Delhi LG VK Saxena, Union Power Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, Union Minister of Education Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister of State for Education Dr Sukanta Majumdar, MP Bansuri Swaraj and others are also present. ANI

He said the central government is handling major projects in Delhi, such as roads, metro systems, hospitals and college campuses. However, he added, the state government has failed to fulfil its responsibilities, especially in areas like the cleaning of the Yamuna River.

The PM said neglecting

the Yamuna River has led to a crisis where people are left with dirty water. He emphasised that his goal is to ensure that the benefits of good national schemes reach Delhi.

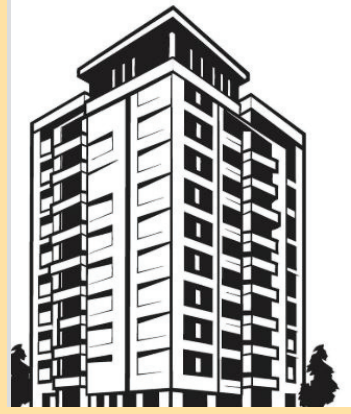
He said the central government's plans have provided the poor and middle classes with financial benefits and savings. He said the govern-

ment is also making electricity bills zero and offering opportunities for families to produce electricity.

Modi said with the central government offering Rs 78,000 to help instal solar panels, families are becoming electricity producers through the Pradhanmantri Suryaghar Muft Bijli Yojana.

## HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

- 1,675 Flats for JJ Clusters: Affordable EWS flats in Ashok Vihar.
- GPRA Quarters, Sarojini Nagar: 2,500+ modern residential units with eco-friendly features.
- Narela Sub-City: Accelerated housing development with thousands of new homes.
- World Trade Centre, Nauroji Nagar: 34 lakh sq. ft. premium commercial space with green building practices.
- New Houses in Delhi: Nearly 3,000 additional homes announced.



## ECO-FRIENDLY AND ENERGY INITIATIVES

- Pradhanmantri Suryaghar Muft Bijli Yojana: Solar panel installation support of Rs 78,000 per family.
- CBSE Integrated Office Complex, Dwarka: Eco-friendly complex with advanced facilities, built for Rs 300 crore.

## DELHI UNIVERSITY EXPANSION:

- Eastern Campus Academic Block (Surajmal Vihar).
- Western Campus Academic Block (Dwarka).
- Veer Savarkar College (Roshanpura, Najafgarh).

## AAP has become 'biggest burden and liability on people of Delhi'

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

After Prime Minister Narendra Modi likened AAP to 'aapda' for Delhi, the BJP on Friday doubled down on the Arvind Kejriwal-led party, saying it has become the "biggest burden and liability" on the people of Delhi.



The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is nothing more than a "newer version of the Congress", senior BJP leader Rajeev Chandrasekhar charged at a press conference here at the party headquarters.

Addressing people after launching a slew of infrastructure projects in the national capital, including housing and education sectors, Prime Minister Modi slammed AAP as an "aapda" (disaster) for Delhi, saying this 'aapda' had taken the national capital in its grip in the past 10 years.

He also hit out at the AAP government in Delhi and said the situation in the national capital would worsen if its reign continued.

"There is absolutely no contradiction," Chandrasekhar told reporters when asked for comment on the prime minister likening AAP to 'aapda' for Delhi. He said the prime minister put a mirror to every voter and citizen of Delhi that the AAP came promising "a new type of politics" but did exactly the opposite. "They promised a corruption-free government. They promised simple political leadership, (which) would not use a house (government bungalow), cars, align with the Congress and indulge in corrupt politics, has done exactly 180 degrees reversal of every one of its position from 2010," Chandrasekhar said.

## BJP has no agenda, no CM face for Delhi: CM

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Atishi on Friday hit back at that the Bharatiya Janata Party alleging that it has "no agenda, no vision and no Chief Ministerial face" for the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections.

Stating that the BJP has lakhs of crores worth of budget, Atishi alleged that BJP has done "nothing" for the people of Delhi in the last 10 years.

"BJP has no agenda for elections. BJP has been in power at the centre for 10 years, they have a budget of lakhs of crores, they should tell one thing they have done for the people of Delhi, they have not done any work. Today they have no vision for Delhi, they have no CM face. AAP has worked for the people of Delhi for 10 years," Delhi CM told reporters.

This comes hours after Prime Minister Narendra Modi slammed the ruling Aam Aadmi Party, saying, "Those who have been in power in Delhi for the last 10 years - have damaged school education".

Addressing a public meeting in Ashok Vihar's Ramlila Ground, PM Narendra Modi said that a new college in the name of Veer Savarkar is going to be built in Najafgarh.

"Those who have been in power in Delhi for the last 10 years - have damaged school education.

The money that the central government has given to Delhi - the current government of Delhi hasn't even spend half of that money in education," he said.

PM Modi also attacked AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal and said in the last 10 years, Delhi has been surrounded by an 'Aapda'.

"By keeping Anna Hazare at the front, a few 'kattar beimaan' people have pushed Delhi towards 'Aapda'. 'AAP aapda bankar Delhi par toot padi hai'," he added.

PM Modi also attacked the AAP over pollution in the Yamuna river and said that every resident of Delhi can see the situation of Yamuna.

"Look at their (AAP) shamelessness, what kind of 'aapda' is this, they say that cleaning Yamuna won't get them votes - will you leave Yamuna like this if it doesn't get you votes?...This 'aapda' has handed over the lives of people of Delhi in the hands of tanker mafia," PM said.

Ahead of the Delhi Assembly elections 2025, the battle between the AAP, BJP and Congress has become intense, with all three parties levelling allegations on each other.

# State Youth Festival Haryana

## Shri Vishwakarma Skill University Dudhola, Palwal

3<sup>rd</sup> January to 5<sup>th</sup> January, 2025

# Yuva Sammelan and Cultural Evening

4<sup>th</sup> January, 2025 | 4:00 PM

Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Sports Stadium, Palwal

Chief Guest

## Sh. Nayab Singh Saini

Chief Minister, Haryana

Guest of Honour

## Sh. Gaurav Gautam

Minister of State for Youth Empowerment & Entrepreneurship and Sports (I.C.)

Scan the QR code to Join the programme

"आज हमारा फोकस देश के अपने युवा साथियों पर है, जिसकी झलक हमारी हर नीति और निर्णय में देखी जा सकती है।"  
- नरेन्द्र मोदी

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# CONG FIELDS ALKA LAMBA FROM KALKAJI AGAINST CM ATISHI

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday announced the candidature of Alka Lamba from the Kalkaji constituency where she will take on AAP leader and Chief Minister Atishi in the upcoming assembly polls. The Congress on Friday released its third list of candidates -- which has just one name -- for the assembly polls due in February.

According to the All India Congress Committee, the Central Election Committee has approved Lamba's candidature from Kalkaji.

Lamba, who is the All India Mahila Congress chief, had won the Chandani Chowk seat in 2015 contesting as an Aam Aadmi Party candidate. She joined the Congress in September 2019.

## KALKAJI CANDIDATURE

- Lamba, former AAP member, joined Congress in 2019 and is the Mahila Congress chief.
- Lamba vows to tackle Delhi's pollution, crime, and poor governance.
- Lamba criticizes Kejriwal for neglecting employment and inflation while focusing on liquor distribution.
- Lamba pledges to serve all Delhiites, criticizing the Delhi government's infighting over the last decade.



The AAP's Atishi will take on Lamba from the Kalkaji seat.

The Congress has already released its two lists, declaring a total of 47 candidates for the elections to the 70-member Assembly. The AAP has released its list of all the candidates for the

polls.

Speaking to media, on contesting the upcoming Delhi state elections, Congress leader Alka Lamba said, "I thank the party for this opportunity. I am going to contest the Vidhan Sabha elections for the 4th time. First, it should be decided if

she is a CM or a temporary CM. Former Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal called her a temporary CM. He not only insulted the constitutional post and a woman chief minister sitting on that post."

"Now questions are being raised towards CM Atishi

asking her whether she is temporary or permanent. My fight is not against a specific individual, because I am not a resident of Delhi, I represent the whole capital," she said.

Adding further, Lamba said, "I was born and brought up here in the soil of Delhi. I have spent 30 years in the national capital and have seen it going from abaa to barbaad. It pains me to see that the people of Delhi are in pain. My fight is not against anyone, it is against the hazardous air, polluted Yamuna and the crimes in Delhi."

Lamba attacked the AAP supreme Arvind Kejriwal and said, "The issue was employment and inflation, what did you do? You announced a free bottle of liquor for each one. The age of drinking liquor of youth was reduced from 25 to 21.

# Yadav accuses Modi, Kejriwal of claiming Cong development projects

TIKAM SHARMA  
NEW DELHI



*He further criticized the allotment delays in Kalkaji, noting that out of the 3,000 flats completed, only 1,862 have been distributed.*

themselves.

Yadav cited a similar instance during the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) elections in 2022 when PM Modi handed over keys for EWS flats in Kalkaji to 10

slum dwellers. Despite the gesture, over 3,000 flats constructed for slum dwellers in Kalkaji remain unallotted. Yadav explained that under Congress, 229 JJ clusters were identified for development as part of schemes like the Rajiv Rattan Awas Yojana, Basic Services for Urban Poor (BSUP), and DSIDC. Construction began in 1,675 flats in Ashok Vihar, 3,024 flats in Kalkaji, and plans were finalized for 2,800 flats in Katputhli Colony. While construction of the Katputhli Colony flats began in 2014, Yadav alleged that delays under the Delhi government and the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) have stalled the project, highlighting what he described as CM Kejriwal's corruption and inefficiency.

He further criticized the allotment delays in Kalkaji, noting that out of the 3,000 flats completed, only 1,862 have been distributed.

# Kejriwal prioritized corruption over development: Sachdeva

TIKAM SHARMA  
NEW DELHI



The Delhi unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has criticized the Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) for the deteriorating condition of the national capital. According to the Delhi BJP, Kejriwal has failed to work for Delhi's progress over the past decade and has instead been embroiled in various corruption scandals.

Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva stated that Kejriwal has not delivered on development and has been associated with multiple scams during his tenure. He contrasted this with the central government's contributions under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, highlighting significant developments in Delhi, such as Yashobhoomi, Bharat Mandapam, Eco

Park, Bansera Park, Pragati Maidan Tunnel, UBR-2, Ring Road-3, East-West Corridor, Delhi-Meerut Highway, and Alipur Bypass. Sachdeva also pointed to the revitalization of landmarks like Ambedkar Memorial, Birsas Munda Chowk, and Kartavya Path.

Sachdeva emphasized that under PM Modi's leadership, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has provided quality housing to over 5,000 slum residents. The Prime Minister's initiatives have also created better job opportunities for Delhi's youth, particularly in the

NCR region, with new roles emerging in the gig economy.

In contrast, Kejriwal's tenure has been marred by controversies such as the liquor policy scam, spying scandal, panic button scam, ration card scam, hospital construction scam, neighborhood medicine and diagnostics scam, and the classroom construction scam.

Sachdeva remarked that the list of corruption cases under Kejriwal's government seems endless.

While PM Modi has provided housing to millions through the PM Awas Yojana, Kejriwal has allegedly deprived Delhi's poor of benefits from transformative schemes like PM Awas Yojana and Ayushman Bharat.

# Bharadwaj slams BJP over unfulfilled housing promises

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Ahead of the upcoming 2025 Delhi assembly elections, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Saurabh Bharadwaj on Friday lashed out at the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), saying that they had promised that everyone in the country will have a permanent house

by 2022 and the deadline has passed. The BJP had said they would provide 2.5 crore people with permanent houses by 2020, but in 2025 they are just giving away 1,675 flats, he said, adding that this was humiliating the poor.

"BJP had promised that everyone in the country will have a permanent house by 2022. We are three years past the dead-

line. I can't talk about the entire country, but let us talk about Delhi. Has the PM given people permanent housing here? They had talked about giving 2.5 crore people permanent houses in Delhi by 2022. Now in 2025, they are giving away just 1,675 flats. This is a humiliation for the poor," Bharadwaj said.

He further said that lakhs of poor people from the slums have been displaced by the central government's Delhi Development Authority (DDA) and Railways, who have been sleeping under flyovers.

"I can challenge this. The central government's DDA, Railways, etc. have displaced lakhs of poor people (from slums) and they are now sleeping under flyovers, in night shelters. I want the central government to give assurance that



they will take action against the officials who have done this. We would like to what action is taken against them," the AAP leader said. Speaking on Prime Minister Narendra Modi laying the foundation stone for a Delhi University college named after Hindutva ideologue VD Savarkar, Bharadwaj said that they are just laying the foundation stone, they should have built and inaugurated the college.

"He is just laying the foundation of the college right now. Let us see how long it

*He further said that lakhs of poor people from the slums have been displaced by the central government's Delhi Development Authority (DDA) and Railways, who have been sleeping under flyovers.*

takes to complete and the government in power at that time. We will see after whom the college is named when it gets completed..." he added.

Earlier, PM Modi attacked AAP, saying, "Those who have been in power in Delhi for the last 10 years - have damaged school education".

Addressing a public meeting in Ashok Vihar's Ramli Ground, PM Narendra Modi said, "A new college in the name of Veer Savarkar is going to be built in Najafgarh... Those who have

been in power in Delhi for the last 10 years - have damaged school education. The money that the central government has given to Delhi - the current gov't of Delhi hasn't even spent half of that money in education..."

"...Even after Independence, such works (New Education Policy) were not done, 'lekin aapke sevaks ne kar diya'..." PM Modi said. PM Modi also attacked AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal and said, "In the last 10 years, Delhi has been surrounded by an 'Aapda'.

# Thick fog engulfs Delhi, reducing visibility to zero

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Dense fog blanketed the national capital on Friday reducing visibility to zero in several areas, the weather department said.

It has forecast similar conditions in the coming days, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) recorded in the "very poor" category and 10 monitoring stations entering the "severe" category with readings exceeding 400.

Delhi's 24-hour average AQI was recorded at 371, falling in the "very poor" category, according to data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

Among the 32 monitoring stations, 10 recorded AQI levels in the "severe" category, with readings above 400, as per the SAMER app.

These stations included Jahangirpuri, Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium,



Nehru Nagar, Okhla Phase 2, Patparganj, Punjabi Bagh, and others, while the remaining stations fell under the "very poor" category.

On Thursday the AQI stood at 318.

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 maximum temperature in the city settled at 21.2 degrees Celsius, 1.9 degrees above

average and the minimum temperature was recorded at 7 degrees Celsius, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

The relative humidity during the day ranged between 74 and 100 percent, it said. More than 100 flights were delayed at the Delhi airport on Friday morning as visibility dropped to zero until 9.30 am in some areas due to dense fog.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said the IGI Airport experienced

## AMID RISE IN POLLUTION LEVELS, GRAP 3 BACK IN DELHI-NCR

NEW DELHI: The Centre's panel on Delhi-NCR's air quality on Friday brought back stage 3 curbs under the Graded Response Action Plan amid a rise in air pollution levels owing to unfavourable meteorological conditions, according to an official order. Delhi's air pollution levels showed an increasing trend and the 24-hour average air quality index (AQI) stood at 371 at 4 pm. According to forecasts from the India Meteorological Department and the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, the air quality situation is predicted to deteriorate further owing to unfavourable meteorological conditions. The Commission for Air Quality Management, responsible for strategizing air pollution mitigation in Delhi-NCR, directed authorities in the region to immediately implement curbs prescribed under stage 3 to prevent further worsening of the situation. GRAP Stage 3, which was lifted last Friday, entails a ban on non-essential construction work. Classes up to grade V are required to shift to hybrid mode under Stage 3. Parents and students have the option to choose online education wherever available. Under Stage 3, the use of BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel cars (4-wheelers) is restricted in Delhi and nearby NCR districts. Persons with disabilities are exempt. Stage 3 also bans non-essential diesel-operated medium goods vehicles with BS-IV or older standards in Delhi.

very dense fog with visibility recorded at 0 metres. It said all runways are operating under CAT-III, which allows aircraft to operate in low visibility conditions.

# Court convicts former BJP MLA in 2014 mob attacking case

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI



A Delhi court has convicted former BJP MLA Neel Daman Khatri and his associate on charges of rioting and assaulting public servants after a mob they allegedly led pelted stones on a demolition team in Narela area in the national capital. Special judge Vishal Gogne observed the riotous mob knew the identity and purpose of the government officials.

"Being the former MLA, Khatri was not only identified by all these witnesses as having either led or accompanied the crowd but was also in the nature of a leader per se His peculiar position as a former MLA denies him the benefit of being viewed as a lay bystander or participant," held the court. The case was against

quitted Raj Kumar, Surender, Praveen and Bhim Sen saying there was no evidence to prove that they were members of an unlawful assembly or caused injuries to police officials.

It said a revenue team and 17 police officials were present on the spot to discharge their duties and the "leaders of the crowd" and the mob itself couldn't be considered "under any stretch of imagination" to have doubted their identities and purpose.

The common object of the assembly or the mob was to unlawfully restrain the demolition team from carrying out its duties and preventing the police officials from protecting them, the court said.

It said as the crowd pelted stones, which meant the use of force and violence, the charges of rioting were proved. The court, however, ac-

# BJP wants to win the election through electoral scam: Sanjay Singh

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

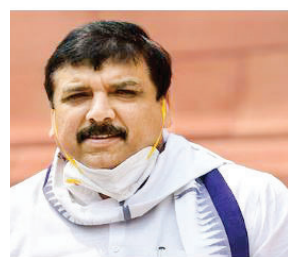
Aam Aadmi Party MP Sanjay Singh on Friday launched a scathing attack at the Bharatiya Janata Party, accusing the party of deleting the names of voters from the voters list for the Delhi Assembly polls and said that the BJP wants to win the election through an "electoral scam."

"BJP is running a campaign for the deletion of names of voters in the assembly con-

stituency of Arvind Kejriwal. This is a scam," he said.

The AAP Rajya Sabha MP, addressing some voters in the New Delhi assembly constituency, claimed that this effort targets people who have been living in the area for years and further stated, "If they can get their names deleted from the list, they can do anything with them."

"I want you to check this (Voters List) to see how the BJP is intentionally running a campaign for the deletion of votes in Arvind Kejriwal's



assembly constituency (New Delhi)--of those people who are living here for years...The Election Commission should take cognisance of it and an investigation must be done," Singh added.

Singh further stated that

*"In the New Delhi constituency, BJP leader Parvesh Sharma did the work of distributing money for votes. A BJP leader put an application in ECI for deletion of voters' names.*

the party has raised concerns with the Election Commission about the issue and demanded an investigation into the matter.

"We have continuously complained about it in the Election Commission. BJP

wants to win the election through an electoral scam," he said.

Earlier on Monday, AAP spokesperson Priyanka Kakkar accused the BJP of attempting to manipulate voters in Delhi, specifically

in the Shadara constituency, where she claims BJP leader Vishal Bharadwaj submitted applications for the deletion of voters' names.

Kakkar further alleged that BJP leader Parvesh Sharma distributed money for votes in the New Delhi constituency and submitted conflicting applications to the Election Commission for voter deletions and additions.

"BJP wants to cut the votes of the many Purvanchalis living in Delhi. One Vishal Bharadwaj of BJP gave ap-

plications for the deletion of voters' names in the Shadara constituency. When we raised our voices against it, then he stopped it," Kakkar said.

"In the New Delhi constituency, BJP leader Parvesh Sharma did the work of distributing money for votes. A BJP leader put an application in ECI for deletion of voters' names. There was another application to add names of voters. BJP is rattled," she added.

Meanwhile, Delhi BJP

President Virendra Sachdeva on Thursday accused the AAP of rigging the elections by double voting.

He stated that AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh's name has been mentioned in the voter list of New Delhi and also Tilak Nagar assemblies for the upcoming assembly elections in the national capital.

He further requested that the Election Commission and Delhi Police must take cognisance of such instances.



# PM MODI TO INAUGURATE 6-DAY-LONG GRAMEEN BHARAT MAHOTSAV TODAY

Aim is to promote rural economic stability, financial security, and sustainability, focusing on North-East India.

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate Grameen Bharat Mahotsav 2025 on Saturday morning at Bharat Mandapam. He will also address the gathering on the occasion.

Celebrating Rural India's entrepreneurial spirit and cultural heritage, the Mahotsav will be held from 4 to 9 January with the theme 'Building a Resilient Rural India for a Viksit Bharat 2047'.

The Mahotsav, through various discussions, workshops and masterclasses, aims to enhance rural infrastructure, create self-reliant economies, and foster innovation within rural communities.

Its objectives include promoting economic stability and financial security among rural populations, with a special focus on North-East India, by addressing financial inclusion and supporting sustainable

## KEY POINTS

- PM Modi to inaugurate the event on Saturday, celebrating rural entrepreneurship and cultural heritage.
- The Mahotsav (Jan 4-9) focuses on innovation, women's entrepreneurship, and economic growth, with special attention to North-East India.
- PM Modi inaugurates 1,675 flats for JJ cluster residents, ensuring affordable, improved living conditions.
- PM Modi unveils World Trade Centre, CBSE Complex, and Veer Savarkar College foundation in Delhi.



PM Modi greets during a public meeting to inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of multiple development projects, in New Delhi on Friday. ANI

agricultural practices.

A significant focus of the Mahotsav will be to empower rural women through entrepreneurship; bring together government officials, thought leaders, rural entrepreneurs, artists and stakeholders from diverse sectors to build a

roadmap for collaborative and collective rural transformation; encourage discussions around leveraging technology and innovative practices to enhance rural livelihoods; and showcase India's rich cultural heritage through vibrant performances and exhibitions.

On Friday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 1,675 newly constructed flats for the dwellers of JJ clusters and also handed over keys to eligible beneficiaries at Swabhiman Apartments in Ashok Vihar, Delhi. Ahead of the inauguration, PM

Modi also inspected newly constructed flats for the dwellers of Jhuggi Jhopri (JJ) clusters under the In-Situ Slum Rehabilitation Project.

The objective of the project is to provide the residents of the JJ clusters in Delhi with a better and healthier living environment equipped with proper amenities and facilities, a press release had said. For every Rs 25 lakh spent on the construction of a flat by the government, eligible beneficiaries pay less than 7 per cent of the total amount, comprising Rs 1.42 lakh as a nominal contribution and Rs 30,000 for five years of maintenance. PM Narendra Modi also virtually inaugurated two urban redevelopment projects - the World Trade Centre at Nauroji Nagar and GPRA Type-II Quarters at Sarojini Nagar, CBSE's Integrated Office Complex at Dwarka and also laid the foundation stone of Veer Savarkar College at Roshanpura, Najafgarh.

## Blinkit will have to abide by 'law of the land': Piyush Goyal

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday said that his only submission to Blinkit's ambulance service is that the quick commerce company has to make sure that they meet the law of the land.

Besides, other legal requirements should be properly taken care of, the Union Minister told reporters at a briefing.

"As regards Blinkit with ambulance service or medicines being delivered, my only submission would be that they have to make sure that they meet the law of the land, and whatever other legal requirements should be properly taken care of. No laws of the land should be broken," Goyal said.

After daily essentials, beauty and cosmetics, pet care products, baby care products, food items, among others, Blinkit has added one more service to its kitty, and it is for a social

*The CEO said yesterday they aim to solve the problem of providing quick and reliable ambulance service in Indian cities.*

cause - ambulances at patient's doorstep in about 10 minutes.

To start with, as many as first five ambulances hit the road in Gurugram started Thursday. Founder and CEO quick commerce firm Blinkit, Albinder Dhindsa, announced through a post on X.

The CEO said yesterday they aim to solve the problem of providing quick and reliable ambulance service in Indian cities.

According to Dhindsa, Blinkit ambulances are equipped with essential life-saving equipment, including oxygen cylinders, AED (Automated External

Defibrillator), stretcher, monitor, suction machine, and essential emergency medicines and injections.

Each ambulance would have a paramedic, an assistant and a trained driver to make sure they are able to deliver quality service.

"Profit is not a goal here," the startup founder had said. "We will operate this service at an affordable cost for customers and invest in really solving this critical problem for the long term."

Blinkit aims to expand to all major cities over the next two years.

As Blinkit launched this ambulance service, Dhindsa appealed to people to make way for an ambulance always. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the idea of quick online commerce gained much currency in India and the world over. Many players are entering into this quick commerce business, fulfilling daily essential needs of citizens in the comfort of their homes.

## New study reveals extreme poverty reduced to minimal

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

As the poverty rates in the country declined below 5 per cent in 2024, a research study by State Bank of India (SBI) also highlighted that the extreme poverty in the country has reduced to minimal.

It said "At an aggregate level, we believe poverty rates in India could now be in the range of 4-4.5 per cent with almost minimal existence of extreme poverty"

The report also highlighted significant improvements in rural and urban poverty levels over the years, supported by data from the government's Consumption Expenditure Survey.

According to the survey, rural poverty is estimated at 4.86 per cent in FY24, a

sharp decline from 7.2 per cent in FY23 and 25.7 per cent in FY12. Similarly, urban poverty has dropped to 4.09 per cent in FY24, compared to 4.6 per cent in FY23 and 13.7 per cent in FY12.

Recently PM Narendra Modi had also said that over 23 crore people have come out of poverty in last ten years. The poverty estimates may undergo minor revisions if the 2021 census is done and updated rural-urban population data is published. However, SBI Research believes that urban poverty levels could decline even further in the coming years.

It said "It is possible that these numbers could undergo minor revisions once the 2021 census is completed and new Rural Urban population share is

published. We believe Urban poverty could decline even further." The methodology for these estimates starts with the poverty line defined in 2011-12, adjusted for decadal inflation and an imputation factor derived from National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) data.

The new poverty line for 2023-24 stands at Rs 1,632 for rural areas and Rs 1,944 for urban areas. Using this adjusted poverty line and fractile distribution data, the proportion of poverty in rural areas is calculated at 4.86 per cent and in urban areas at 4.09 per cent for FY24. The report attributed the decline in rural poverty to higher consumption growth among the bottom 5 per cent of the population, leading to a shift in the poverty line.

## CCPS fully rolled out in all regional offices of EPFO

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

In a move towards enhancing pension services, EPFO completed the full-scale rollout of the new Centralized Pension Payments System (CPPS) under the Employees' Pension Scheme 1995 in December 2024.

About Rs 1,570 crore pension was disbursed to more than 68 lakh pensioners pertaining to all 122 pension disbursing regional offices of EPFO for December 2024.

The first pilot of the Centralized Pension Payment System (CPPS) was suc-

cessfully completed in October 2024 in Karnal, Jammu and Srinagar Regional Offices with the pension disbursement of about Rs 11 crore to more than 49,000 EPS Pensioners.

The second pilot was taken up in November 2024 in 24 Regional Offices in which around Rs. 213 crores pension was disbursed to more than 9.3 lakh pensioners.

Announcing the rollout, Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said, "The full-scale implementation of the Centralized Pension Payments System (CPPS) across all Regional

Offices of EPFO is a historic milestone."

"This transformative initiative empowers pensioners to access their pension seamlessly from any bank, any branch, anywhere in the country. It eliminates the need for physical verification visits and simplifies the pension disbursement process. CPPS is a testament to our commitment to modernizing EPFO services and ensuring convenience, transparency, and efficiency for our pensioners. With this rollout, we are setting a new benchmark in pension service delivery, aligning with the vision of a

tech-enabled and member-centric EPFO."

The CPPS is a paradigm shift from the existing pension disbursement system that is decentralized, with each Zonal/Regional Office of EPFO maintaining separate agreements with only 3-4 banks.

In CPPS, not only the pensioner will be able to take a pension from any bank, but also, there will also be no need for pensioners to visit the bank for any verification at the time of commencement of pension and the pension shall be immediately credited upon release. The CPPS system from

January 2025 onwards would also ensure disbursement of pensions throughout India without any need for transfer of Pension Payment Orders (PPO) from one office to another even when the Pensioner moves from one location to another or changes his bank or branch. This would be a great relief to pensioners who move to their hometown after retirement.

The government said EPFO is continuously working towards improving services for EPS pensioners and the new CPPS system is a major reform in this direction.

## Maharashtra leads in FDI

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

Maharashtra has emerged as the frontrunner in attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), with the state having already received 95 per cent of its annual average FDI inflow in just the first six months of the financial year 2024-25, stated Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Friday.

The achievement was announced by Devendra Fadnavis on social media platform X who expressed immense pride in the state's ongoing success in attracting the investments.

According to the figures



provided by Chief Minister, Maharashtra outperformed all other states in terms of FDI input, accounting for approximately 31.48% of the nation's total inflow during this time.

Fadnavis shared the latest FDI figures for the second quarter ending in Septem-

ber 2024, revealing that Maharashtra has secured a total of Rs 1,13,236 crore in foreign investment from April to September. This is a significant 94.71 per cent of the total average FDI received by the state over the last four years, which stands at Rs 1,19,556 crore

annually.

"Now the figures for the second quarter ending in September of the financial year 2024-25 have come. In just six months, a total of Rs 1,13,236 crore of foreign investment has been made in Maharashtra. If we look at the average of the last 4 years, an annual investment of Rs 1,19,556 crore has come to Maharashtra. This means that 94.71 per cent of the investment of the entire year has come in just 6 months," Fadnavis added in the post.

"This means that 94.71 per cent of the investment of the entire year has come in just 6 months," he added.

## AI will see bigger investments in 2025: UBS

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The year 2024 ended strongly for the Artificial Intelligence space, with the rally powering the key index Nasdaq Composite to strong back-to-back return years.

Global financial services firm UBS in a report dated January 2 answered key questions that matter for the AI rally in the New Year, while continuing to maintain its bullish stance on the AI theme.

It expects more spending from the Big 4, with its capex forecast to grow from \$224 billion in 2024E to \$280 billion in 2025E. Besides, it also sees more signs

*There shall be more spending from Alphabet, Microsoft, Amazon, and Meta, with its capex forecast to grow from \$224 billion in 2024E to \$280 billion in 2025E. Besides, it also sees more signs of AI monetization.*

of AI monetization.

Here, Alphabet, Microsoft, Amazon, and Meta are referred to as Big 4.

"The big capex revisions by the Big 4 demonstrated their strong commitment to the structural AI growth story. The good news is we expect the upward revisions to continue in the near term..." the UBS re-

port read. On the AI regulation front, UBS believes that with the new US administration, AI regulations would pick up in the US as well as in China and Europe "AI regulations have caught up in 2024, and more rules are set to be introduced in 2025. Regulations have always been, and will always be, a risk for the tech

sector--more so for AI today, as we expect regulations to evolve quickly in the years ahead."

He urged market participants to be prepared for more AI regulations in 2025, but demand will also grow.

"Additionally, our recent checks suggest robust and improving demand from sovereign and enterprise AI customers, which should further broaden AI capex spending trends." Further, it also advised investors that they will need to be more nimble in 2025 amid rising regulations, potential product transitions, and tariff-related uncertainties.

## 'SPF Baithak' to be organised on Jan 15-16

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) entered into a partnership with the Startup Policy Forum (SPF), among key industry organisations representing India's leading new-age companies.

Sanjiv, Joint Secretary, DPIIT, under the commerce ministry, said that pertinently, the SPF Baithak--a gathering of founders and policymakers--would be organised on January 15-16 here at Bharat Mandapam, as part of National Startup



Week celebrations.

The event will offer a platform to announce new collaborations between DPIIT and SPF members.

Additionally, SPF will

partner with DPIIT to organize specialized immersive programs, enabling global investors to engage with Indian startups and witness firsthand the groundbreak-

## STARTUP CORNER



ing innovations emerging from across the country. Sanjiv, Joint Secretary, DPIIT and Startup India said that this strategic collaboration with SPF underscores

DPIIT's commitment to create a congenial atmosphere where startups could thrive and contribute immensely to India's mission of becoming a global innovation hub.

Adding further, he said the SPF members represent the essence of India's entrepreneurial spirit and their participation in this mission will play a crucial role in achieving the goal of developed India by 2047. Director Startup India Sumeet Kumar Jangal said the collaboration aims to amplify innovation, drive technology adoption, and boost manufacturing capabilities in India.

## RBI may reduce policy rates by 50 basis points in first half of 2025: Jefferies

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is likely to cut policy rates by 50 basis points (bps) in the first half of 2025, says a report by Jefferies.

This after the central bank eased its stance on liquidity and reduced the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) by 50 bps during the last MPC meeting.

Jefferies report says "After easing stance on liquidity & CRR by 50bps, RBI may review policy rates; we see 50bps rate cuts in 1H25".

The report highlighted that the RBI's shift from a "with-

drawal" stance to a more "neutral" liquidity position, coupled with the CRR cut to the pre-COVID level of 4 per cent of Net Demand and Time Liabilities (NDTL), has set the stage for a potential rate cut.

This reduction in policy rates is expected to stabilize the regulatory momentum, which may be supportive of growth and investments in the near term.

However, the report noted that these policy changes could temporarily impact banks' Net Interest Margins (NIMs). A 10 bps decline in NIM could reduce earnings by 3-8 per cent, with the impact

being more pronounced for Public Sector Banks (PSBs).

While deposit rates have remained largely stable, banks' cost of funds has risen by 10-50 bps over the past year due to repricing and changes in funding mix. The report also highlighted the ongoing pressures on asset quality, particularly in unsecured retail loans and loans to small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) and smaller private banks catering to lower-tier clients have faced greater stress compared to lenders focused on upper-tier clients.



# 'ZAMANA KAR NA SAKA QAD KA ANDAZA...,' 'WOH AASMAAN THA, MAGAR SAR JHUKA KAR CHALTA THA..!'

Dr Manmohan Singh was the person whom P V Narasimha Rao trusted, and India's economic fortunes began to change.

## OPINION

DR VIJAY DARDA



We meet countless people in life, work with them and forge deep connections with some of them. But there are a few people who can impress you. Former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh was one such towering personality for me: captivating, just as his name suggests! His passing away marks the end of an era in history. Some called him the 'accidental Prime Minister' but his role in preparing the strong economic footing on which the country stands today is etched in history and there is no doubt that the future will always remember him for this remarkable achievement.

During his highly successful tenure, I served as a member of the Rajya Sabha and was fortunate enough to have close in-

teractions with him. I observed his working style up close. He would never brag about. He did not explain or announce his actions to people. He worked quietly and moved forward. His voice was soft but his thoughts were profound. In 1991, when India was grappling with a severe financial crisis, the then Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao decided to appoint him as finance minister. Together, they charted India's economic roadmap. Before that, the country was trudging along the path of socialism. They opened up the economy to the world, and the account of India's progress after that are before all to see. If India stands as the world's fifth largest economy today, the seeds of this growth were sown during Narasimha Rao's tenure by Dr Manmohan Singh.

Recognising his abilities, Sonia Gandhi elevated him to the position of Prime Minister. Dr Manmohan Singh lived up to the expectation fully, but ironically, most of his troubles stemmed from a new faction within the Congress party itself. When he was on an official visit to the United States, Rahul Gandhi publicly tore

an ordinance. When Dr Manmohan Singh returned, I wondered during a conversation, "I thought you would go straight to Rashtrapati Bhavan and resign." He replied, "That thought crossed my mind twice. I discussed this serious matter with Gursaran (his wife). But then I wondered, would it be appropriate? Sonia Gandhi would be hurt, so I decided to stay." The reality was that towards the end of his tenure, a new faction in the Congress party had begun wielding undue influence, making it difficult for him to function. He even contemplated resigning. He suggested to Sonia Gandhi that Rahul Gandhi should be made the Prime Minister, but Rahul was not ready. Rahul was unwilling to join the Cabinet too.

Dr Manmohan Singh had foreseen Congress' decline following the internal bickering the party was witnessing at the time and knew it would not return to power in 2014. Still, he hoped the party would secure at least 100 seats. When I said it might be fewer, he agreed, saying, "That may happen." What set Dr Manmohan Singh apart was his unwavering commitment to placing the party above himself.

As brilliant as he was, he was an equally remarkable human being. One could gauge his humility from the fact that every time I visited his residence, after a warm reception, he would personally escort me back to the gate. Indian culture was deeply rooted



*Dr Manmohan Singh had foreseen Congress' decline following the internal bickering the party was witnessing at the time and knew it would not return to power in 2014. Still, he hoped the party would secure at least 100 seats. When I said it might be fewer, he agreed, saying, "That may happen." What set Dr Manmohan Singh apart was his unwavering commitment to placing the party above himself.*

in his heart. He thoroughly enjoyed celebrating festivals like Lohri with traditional bhanga. Montek Singh Ahluwalia and his family would often join in the festivities. I vividly recall an occasion in 2008 when, on the 300th anniversary of the Khalsa

Panth, the 'Guru-ta-Gadi Tercentenary Festival' was to be organised at Gurdwara Nanded Sahib. Dr Manmohan Singh personally invited me to discuss the arrangements as he wanted the event to be grand. Since both he and the then deputy chairman

of the (erstwhile) Planning Commission Montek Singh Ahluwalia, like some other top officials, were from the Sikh community, I wrote a letter demanding maximum funds for the event. In response, the government allocated an initial amount of Rs

500 crore. The then home minister Shivraj Patil was appointed chairman of the organising committee. To avoid local factionalism, former police commissioner of Mumbai Dr P S Pasricha was made in-charge of the local committee. At the time, there was

a land issue delaying the extension of the runway. I approached the then civil aviation minister Praful Patel, and not only was the runway extended, but a new one was also built to accommodate international flights. Another instance highlights his diplomatic skills. While the Indian government was making efforts to procure nuclear energy reactors, Dr Manmohan Singh leveraged his warm relationship with American businessman Sant Singh Chatwal. Chatwal, who deeply loved India and had close ties with the US President, helped ensure a favourable outcome for India.

I share these anecdotes to give you an insight into the social and amiable nature of Dr Manmohan Singh. I can confidently say that he was a man of impeccable character and extraordinary integrity. Yet, at one point, he faced the threat of an imminent arrest, a situation that deeply troubled him. However, Prime Minister Narendra Modi took a clear stand, asserting that such actions against a former Prime Minister would set a dangerous precedent, and no Prime Minister will ever take any strong decision in future. To conclude my reflections on Dr Manmohan Singh, I would like to say...

*Zamana kar na saka uske qad ka andaza.., Woh aasmaan tha, magar sar jhuka kar chalta tha..!*

*The author is the chairman, Editorial Board of Lokmat Media and former member of Rajya Sabha.*

## How to balance spirituality and everyday life for inner joy

## OPINION

ATMAN IN RAVI



Happiness or joy is intrinsic. It is within us. It is inner joy, always. Happiness is not just an emotion, rather, it is a state of being. Therefore, one cannot 'become happy' but one must 'be happy'. One cannot find happiness in external things like materialism, people and relationships. The happiness that one gains with these is pleasure, a temporary form of feeling happiness. It is ephemeral. It will be a fleeting feeling that will come and go away in no time. But the happiness that one experiences innately, by being

in a state of Consciousness is everlasting and eternal. Spirituality helps one reach this inner state of Consciousness, Awareness and Mindfulness and tap the inner happiness or inner joy within oneself.

You must be wondering that I have spelt happiness incorrectly but no! According to me, happiness has 3 Ps that stand for the three ascending peaks of happiness in Spirituality - 'Pleasure' or temporary happiness. Then comes 'Peace', which is the foundation of True Everlasting Happiness and the highest peak is 'Purpose' that comes with Enlightenment. We must ideally experience all these forms of happiness but strive to achieve the third and the highest form - 'Purpose'. When one attains the purpose of life, they experience Enlightenment and a state of Consciousness in which they attain the Realization of the Truth about life,

birth, death and everything beyond simple comprehension. They experience an ever-flowing Eternal Bliss that is experienced in Truth Consciousness, also known as SatChitAnanda. SatChitAnanda is Eternal Bliss, something that is not ephemeral. Therefore, following the path of Spirituality, one can experience the highest form of happiness - SatChitAnanda.

How can one balance Spirituality and everyday life? Spirituality is the science of the Spirit, the Soul or the Atman. It is to understand and more importantly, Realize the Truth about oneself, Self-Realization and further, Realize the Truth about God, God-Realization. Spirituality does not demand one to renounce everything in life and set forth on its path, rather, Spirituality is like a beacon of light that will guide one to live the highest purpose of their life. Thus, we can conclude that there is no need to balance Spirituality and everyday life but one can live their everyday life in a spiritual way. One of the main tenets of Self-Realization of Spirituality is the one is not the body, mind and ego that he identifies with. They are the Soul, the Divine Immortal Soul, a Spark Of



Unique Life, which is a part of SIP, the Supreme Immortal Power we call God. An individual on the path of Spirituality, when attains this profound Self-Realization, starts living as an instrument of the Divine, doing only Divine work. He ensures that he does good actions and realizes that it is the Divine that is working through him. When

one realizes that Soul is a part of SIP, they realize that they are a manifestation of the Divine Power. Similarly, everyone has a Soul and everyone and everything is a manifestation of the Supreme Immortal Power, the Divine. Inculcating this Realization of the Truth about oneself and others in daily life will improve the quality of the life of the

individual and also he will see everyone as Divine, love everyone as Divine and serve everyone as Divine beings. Spirituality also inculcates the beautiful art of acceptance and surrender in an individual. They realize that whatever happens, happens as per the Law of Karma, a fruit of some past deed, which they may or may not remember. Hence,

they don't unnecessarily suffer. They may experience pain but don't suffer because first, they understand that the situation is due to Karma and secondly, they don't identify themselves with their body.

Thus, we can conclude this discussion by stating that Spirituality and everyday life are not two different paths. An individual on the

spiritual path doesn't have to balance the two, rather, Spirituality will inspire one to live his everyday life to its fullest potential by always being in a state of Consciousness, mindful of the profound truths of life. Infusing Spirituality in everyday life will lead an individual to experience Everlasting and Eternal Inner Joy, Peace, Love and Bliss.



# MEMORIALS FOR LEADERS: THE HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, AND POLITICS

The concept of memorializing political leaders dates back centuries, reflecting the human tendency to honour and remember those who have had significant roles in shaping the course of history.

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Former Congress leader Sanjay Gandhi, son of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, has a memorial in Delhi, whereas former Prime Minister V.P. Singh lacks one anywhere in India. As the Congress and BJP engage in a heated debate over the final resting place of ex-PM Manmohan Singh, who passed away on December 26, the decision of who receives a memorial – and where – is often influenced by the party in power at the time.

Today, we will dig deeper and find out the history and importance of such memorials and their demand for other demised leaders of utmost significance.

Memorials for political leaders have long been symbols of a nation's historical identity, collective memory, and political ideology. These structures are not mere physical objects; they represent an intersection of history, geography, and politics, often designed to convey powerful messages about leadership, nation-building, and collective identity. Whether statues, mausoleums, or commemorative plaques, memorials for leaders serve as focal points for the public's understanding of political legacies. These monuments are not static; they evolve in their meaning and significance, shifting with the changing tides of public opinion, historical perspective, and political ideology.

## HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The concept of memorializing political leaders dates back centuries, reflecting the human tendency to honor and remember those who have had significant roles in shaping the course of history. Ancient civilizations such as Egypt, Greece, and Rome, built monumental structures to honor rulers and military leaders who shaped the destiny of their respective empires. The pyramids of Giza, dedicated to the pharaohs, and the Roman emperor Trajan's Column in Rome are just two examples of early attempts to immortalize leadership through monumental structures.

In the modern era, particularly after the Enlightenment, memorials began to take on more varied and symbolic forms, reflecting the rise of democracy and the changing nature of



President Ram Nath Kovind pays tribute to former PM Atal Bihari at his memorial 'Sadaiv Atal' in 2018. File Photo

leadership. In the 19th and 20th centuries, as nations consolidated their power and sought to establish a national identity, memorials for political leaders became central to statecraft. Monuments to figures such

of the people, and often forge new identities. These commemorative efforts were especially significant in post-colonial nations where the memorials of new leaders—such as Mahatma Gandhi in India or Nelson

Washington Monument in the heart of the U.S. capital to the elaborate tomb of Mao Zedong in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, these locations are chosen for their symbolic power.

The positioning of memo-

*Some leaders of paramount rank in the Indian government have left a significant mark on India's political history, and their memorials serve as places of tribute to their contributions to the nation. The memorials, such as Rajghat for Mahatma Gandhi and Sadaiv Atal for Atal Bihari Vajpayee, are visited by millions to honor their legacy.*



An art teacher paints portraits of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh outside Gurukul School of Art in Mumbai as a tribute to the latter who died on Dec. 26, 2024. File Photo

as George Washington, Napoleon Bonaparte, and Queen Victoria were built to enshrine the ideals of leadership and the values associated with those who shaped national narratives.

The construction of memorials also intensified following the upheavals of the World Wars and the decolonization movements of the mid-20th century. Memorials, during this period, became a way for nations to assert their sovereignty, commemorate the sacrifice

Mandela in South Africa—played an important role in constructing national pride and identity.

## GEOGRAPHY

The geographical location of memorials for political leaders is often as important as the structure itself. Memorials are strategically placed to maximize their symbolic significance, reinforce political power, and connect the memory of leaders to particular geographical or historical contexts. From the iconic

rials can be seen as a means of communicating political ideologies and constructing the landscape of national memory. For instance, in countries with strong central governments or authoritarian regimes, leaders' memorials are often located in prominent locations—such as the capital city or major public squares—signifying the power and continuity of their legacies. In Moscow, the Lenin Mausoleum, which holds the embalmed body of Vladimir Lenin, is located on Red Square, at the heart of Russian political power. Its placement underscores Lenin's role in the founding of the Soviet Union and continues to reinforce his symbolic presence in Russian history.

Conversely, in democracies like the United States, memorials to leaders tend to be located at the intersections of national history and collective memory. The Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., for example,

stands on the National Mall, symbolizing Abraham Lincoln's pivotal role in preserving the Union during the American Civil War and in shaping the ideals of liberty and equality.

In the case of nations with complex colonial histories or contested borders, memorials may take on even greater significance, often becoming sites of political struggle. The memorials to anti-colonial leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru in India or Patrice Lumumba in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are not just reflections of these leaders' importance; they are also markers of resistance against colonial powers and symbols of national liberation. As such, the geography of these memorials can often become contested terrain—physically, symbolically, and politically.

## THE POLITICS

Memorials for political leaders are deeply enmeshed in the politics of nation-building, collective memory, and ideological assertion. The creation of such memorials is rarely a neutral act; rather, it is a political decision that often reflects the values, priorities, and power dynamics of the time.

Nation-Building and Ideological Symbolism In the process of nation-building, memorials to political leaders are employed to articulate and solidify the national story. For instance, after independence, many new nations constructed memorials to leaders who were instrumental in achieving freedom from colonial rule. The Indian Parliament, for example, includes a memorial to Mahatma Gandhi, whose ideals of non-violence and civil disobedience became foundational to India's identity as a post-colonial state. Similarly, in South Africa, the construction of the Nelson Mandela National Museum, located in the former prison where Mandela was held, became a key site in the creation of a "rainbow nation" identity after the end of apartheid.

Symbolic Power and Authority Memorials also serve as symbols of authority and legitimacy. Authoritarian regimes, in particular, use



Raj Ghat, the memorial for Mahatma Gandhi located next to the Yamuna river in Delhi, provided the template for resting places for other leaders. File Photo



Vijay Ghat is Samadhi of former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri in New Delhi. File Photo

memorials as tools to reinforce the power and authority of their leaders. Consider North Korea's extensive use of memorials and statues of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il. These are not just markers of individual legacy but also serve as instruments of statecraft designed to reinforce the ideological purity of the regime and its continuous rule. In totalitarian states, such memorials often act as symbols of the unbroken leadership of a single family or ideology.

Controversy and Political Contestation Memorials can also become points of political contestation, especially as societies undergo social, political, or ideological shifts. For example, the statue of Christopher Columbus, a figure controversial for his role in the European colonization of the Americas, has been the subject of debate in various countries. Many indigenous groups in the Americas have called for the removal of Columbus monuments, viewing them as symbols of colonial oppression. These memorials, initially erected to honor the figure, are now contested for their symbolism and the values they perpetuate. The debate over Confederate monuments in the United States is another example where memorials become focal points of political polarization.

Similarly, in post-Soviet countries, the removal or preservation of statues of Lenin and other Soviet figures has sparked intense debates. In Ukraine, the toppling of Lenin statues after the 2014 Euromaidan protests reflected the country's desire to break with its Soviet past and align more closely with Western Europe. In contrast, Russia continues to celebrate Soviet leaders like Lenin and Stalin, incorporating their images into national narratives of resilience and power.

The Role of Memorials in Reconciliation Memorials can also serve as instruments for national healing and reconciliation, especially in societies coming to terms with past injustices. In South Africa, for instance, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was instrumental in providing a platform for the victims of apartheid-era violence to tell their stories.

Memorials to figures like Mandela or the memorial at the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg now serve as symbols of reconciliation, representing the nation's collective effort to move beyond its racially divided past.

Similarly, in Rwanda, after the 1994 genocide, memorials such as the Kigali Genocide Memorial are places of reflection and reconciliation, remembering the victims while providing a space for education about the atrocities. In these contexts, memorials are seen not just as places of mourning but also as sites for fostering national dialogue and collective healing.

## CONCLUSION

The history, geography, and politics of memorials for political leaders are inextricably linked. Memorials serve as powerful symbols that tell a nation's history, embody its politi-

cal values, and shape the collective memory of its people. The geographical placement of these memorials amplifies their symbolic significance, while the politics of memorialization reveal the underlying power dynamics, ideological struggles, and national narratives at play.

As societies evolve, so too does the meaning and role of these memorials. Some may stand as enduring symbols of leadership and national identity, while others become contested sites of political struggle. In the future, the politics of memorials will likely continue to evolve, shaped by changing attitudes toward history, power, and identity. Whether they stand in reverence or are toppled in protest, memorials for political leaders are never static—they are living symbols of the ongoing dialogue between history, politics, and memory.

MEMORIAL PLACES OF KEY PRIME MINISTERS AND PRESIDENTS	
<b>Mahatma Gandhi (Father of the Nation)</b>	
Death: 1948	
Memorial: Rajghat, New Delhi	
<b>Jawaharlal Nehru (Prime Minister)</b>	
Death: 1964	
Memorial: Santhivan, New Delhi	
<b>Indira Gandhi (Prime Minister)</b>	
Death: 1984	
Memorial: Shakthisthal, New Delhi	
<b>Rajiv Gandhi (Prime Minister)</b>	
Death: 1991	
Memorial: Veerbhoomi, New Delhi	
<b>Lal Bahadur Shastri (Prime Minister)</b>	
Death: 1966	
Memorial: Vijay Ghat, New Delhi	
<b>Dr. Rajendra Prasad (President)</b>	
Death: 1963	
Memorial: Mahaprayan Ghat, Patna	
<b>K. R. Narayanan (President)</b>	
Death: 2005	
Memorial: Uday Bhoomi, New Delhi	
<b>Giani Zail Singh (President)</b>	
Death: 1994	
Memorial: Ektha Sthal, New Delhi	
<b>Atal Bihari Vajpayee (Prime Minister)</b>	
Death: 2018	
Memorial: Sadaiv Atal, New Delhi	
<b>Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam (President)</b>	
Death: 2015	
Memorial: Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Memorial, Pei Karumbu, Tamil Nadu	



May 27 is observed as the death anniversary of first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru. His final rites were performed as per Hindu rituals at Shantivan on the banks of river Yamuna in Delhi on May 28, 1964. File Photo



# SUPREME COURT ISSUES NOTICE ON CBI'S CHALLENGE TO ACQUITTAL OF RAM RAHIM SINGH IN 2002 RANJIT SINGH MURDER CASE

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Central Bureau Of Investigation, CBI Versus Baba Gurmeet Singh @ Maharaj Baba Gurmeet Singh @ Baba Singh observed and has issued notice in the SLP filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation, CBI challenging the order of Punjab and Haryana High Court wherein the court acquitted Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh in the 2002 murder of manager Ranjit

Singh.

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

The bench in the case issued a notice and has tagged it with another pending appeal filed by the complainant who has also challenged the acquittal.

In 2002, manager Ranjit Singh was shot dead by 4 unknown persons over the alleged suspicion by Baba Ram Rahim that the deceased was behind the circulation of an anonymous letter, highlighting



the cases of sexual exploitation of the Dera Chief's female followers.

The Solicitor General, SG Tushar Mehta appearing for the CBI informed

the bench that earlier, the bench comprising of Justice Bela Trivedi and Justice SC Sharma issued notice in the appeal filed by the complainant- father of the deceased.

The bench of Chief Justice of India, CJI while considering the same passed the following order:

'the court drawn the attention to the office report dated September 09, 2024 of order passed by the bench of Justice Trivedi, wherein the court issued notice and has tag with SLP crl no.012607/2024, the SLP be listed before the bench

*The bench in the case issued a notice and has tagged it with another pending appeal filed by the complainant who has also challenged the acquittal.*

presided by Justice Bela Trivedi.'

The bench of Justice Bela Trivedi will now hear the present matter.

## BACKGROUND OF THE CASE:

The Division bench comprising of Justice Sureshwar Thakur and Justice Lalit Batra of the

High Court found the CBI, which took over the probe in November 2023, failed to establish the motive of the crime and rather, the prosecution case was 'shrouded in doubts.' The other convicts who have been sentenced to life imprisonment along with Ram Rahim are Avtar Singh, Krishan Lal, Jasbir Singh, and Sabdil

Singh. In 2020, One of the accused, Inder Sain, had died during the trial.

The court noted that Ram Rahim is already serving 20 years of sentence for the offence of rape when he was convicted of the murder of his disciple, Ranjit Singh under Section 302 (murder) and Section 120B (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code, IPC.

He was also convicted of murdering a journalist Ram Chander Chhatrapati in which he was awarded a life sentence which will run after the end of his 20-year term.

## Supreme Court: Motor Accident Claims Tribunal can look into police records to determine question of negligence

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case ICIC Lombard General Insurance Co Ltd v. Rajni Sahoo observed and has reiterated that in motor accident claim cases, police records can be looked into by the Tribunal or Court to determine the question of negligence.

The bench comprising of Justice CT Ravikumar and

Justice Rajesh Bindal was hearing the present matter.

The bench in the case referred to the case Mangla Ram v. Oriental Insurance Co. Ltd. and Ors, wherein the court held that charge sheet and other documents collected by the police during the investigation in motor accident cases can be relied upon.

The court in the case Mangla Ram v. Oriental Insurance Co. Ltd. and Ors held that the

filing of charge-sheet prima against the driver facie points towards his complicity in driving the vehicle negligently and rashly.

The court observed that there being no dispute with regards to the position that the question regarding negligence which is essential for passing an award in a motor vehicle accident claim should be considered based on the evidence available before the

Tribunal and if the police records are available before the Tribunal, taking note of the purpose of the Act it cannot be said that looking into.

In the present matter, the court dismissed an appeal filed by an insurer against a judgment of the High Court in a motor accident compensation case. The Tribunal had relied upon the final report filed against the driver of the offending vehicle.

The High Court in the case found nothing wrong with the procedure adopted by the Tribunal. The court also referred to the judgement in the case Mat hew Alexander v. Mohammed Shafi & Anr., wherein the court held that the claimants need to only establish their case on the touchstone of preponderance of probabilities.

Accordingly, the court dismissed an appeal.

## Supreme Court issues notice in plea: High Court incorrect in deleting ECI and District Magistrate as necessary parties in election petition

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Geeta Rani Sharma Versus Election Commission Of India, ECI observed and has issued notice wherein the petition is filed challenging the order of Allahabad High Court order which allowed the deletion of Election Commission of India, ECI and District Magistrate as necessary parties in an election petition filed challenging the Lok Sabha elections in Gautam Buddha Nagar Constituency in Uttar Pradesh.

The election petition has been filed by the petitioner before the High Court with respect to wrongful rejection of nomination papers by the Returning Officer under Section 100(1)(c) of the Act, and implored the Election Commission of India, ECI as necessary party.

Before the court, the main challenged was with regards to the Lok Sabha election for the seat of Gautam Buddha Nagar Constituency. Dr Mahesh Sharma won the 17th Lok Sabha from the said constituency.

The High Court in the case observed and has directed



the Election Commission of India, ECI and District Magistrate from the array of respondent parties by relying on section 82 of The Representation of the People Act, 1951.

8. The Section 82 of the Act reads as below:

82. Parties to the petition- A petitioner shall join as respondents to his petition-

(a) where the petitioner, in addition to claiming declaration that the election of all or any of the returned candidates is void, thus, claims a further declaration that he himself or any other candidate has been duly elected, all the contesting candidates other than the petitioner, and where no such further declaration is claimed, all the returned candidates; and

(b) any other candidate against whom allegations made of any corrupt practice are made in the petition.

The High Court in the

case stated that implored the Election Commission of India, ECI and District Magistrate was outside the scope of the present petition.

The court stated that the election petitioner is not at liberty to implead parties of her choice. Her challenge would survive so long as she complies with the law and the procedure contained in the Act.

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

The bench in the case observed and has issued notice that the High Court was incorrect at least in removing the District Magistrate from the proceedings considering that the winning candidate alone would not be able to furnish information on nomination papers. The allegations were made before the court that the nomination papers were wrongly rejected and the winning candidate would not be able to answer the said assertions.

Further, the court stated that the High Court was wrong in deleting at least the District Magistrate from the array of parties.

## Supreme Court: High Courts can quash criminal proceedings invoking Article 226 jurisdiction also apart from Section 482 CrPC power

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Kim Wansoo Versus State of Uttar Pradesh & Ors observed that apart from exercising its power to quash a criminal case as stated under section 482 of Code of Criminal Procedure, CrPC.

The court stated that the High Court can also exercise powers under Article 226 of the Constitution of India to quash the criminal case to prevent misuse of the law.

The court in the case stated that it being true that normally, quashing of criminal proceedings would be sought and would be done in exercise of the inherent power of the High Court under Section 482 of Code of

*The court stated that the High Court can also exercise powers under Article 226 of the Constitution of India to quash the criminal case to prevent misuse of the law.*

Criminal Procedure, CrPC and it does not mean that it could not be done only in an invocation of the extraordinary power under Article 226 of the Constitution of India.

The bench comprising of Justice CT Ravikumar and Justice Sanjay Kumar was hearing the present matter.

The bench in the case was hearing the criminal appeal filed against the decision of Allahabad High Court, wherein the court refused to quash the criminal case against the Appellants in the

exercise of its Writ Jurisdiction under Article 226 of the Constitution of India.

In the present matter, the appellant, a foreign national and Project Manager of Hyundai Engineering & Construction India LLP (HEC India LLP), was implicated in the FIR.

The First Information Report, FIR alleged cheating, fraud, and criminal conspiracy concerning payment defaults totaling ₹9 crores.

The court observed that the chain of contracts included multiple subcontractors,

and the complainant alleged that dishonored cheques and non-payment led to financial and personal harm, including the death of his brother.

The judgment authored by bench of Justice Ravikumar observed while setting aside the decision of High Court that the High Court erred in refusing to exercise the extraordinary power under Article 226 of the Constitution of India to quash the subject FIR against the Appellants.

The court referred to case of State of Haryana and Ors. v. Bhajan Lal and Ors., wherein the court held that the extraordinary power under Article 226 of Constitution of India or the inherent power under Section 482 of Code of Criminal Procedure, Cr

P.C. could be exercised by the High Court, either to prevent abuse of process of any Court or to secure the ends of justice.

The court also referred to the case of Pepsi Foods Ltd. and Anr v. Special Judicial Magistrate and Ors, wherein the court held that the High Court could exercise its power of judicial review in criminal matters and it could exercise this power either under Article 226 of the Constitution of India or under Section 482, of Code of Criminal Procedure, Cr. P.C. to prevent abuse of the process of the Court or to secure the ends of justice. Furthermore, it was held that exercise of that power would depend upon the facts and circumstances of each case.

## Supreme Court sets aside bail of MCOCA accused: Grant of bail must be subject to embargo in special enactments

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Jayshree Kanabar Versus State of Maharashtra & Ors observed and has held that when a special law imposes an embargo on the grant of bail, then the Courts must exercise the power to grant bail subject to the conditions specified under the special provision.

The bench comprising of Justice CT Ravikumar and Justice Sanjay Karol was hearing the present matter.

The bench in the case observed and has set aside the bail granted to an accused who is being charged under the Maharashtra Control of Organized Crime Act, 1999, MCOCA because instead of limiting its consideration to whether the conditions of bail gets fulfilled or not, the High Court delved into the correctness of the prosecution's case and sufficiency of the evidence.

The section 21(4) of Maharashtra Control of Organized Crime Act, 1999, MCOCA states that the bail cannot be granted unless the Court is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for believing that the accused is not guilty of such offence and that he is not likely to com-



*The bench comprising of justice CT Ravikumar and Justice Sanjay Karol was hearing the present matter.*

mit any offence while on bail.

The court in the case observed that it being a fact that the impugned order did not reflect such consideration as has been required in respect of matter involving offences under Maharashtra Control of Organized Crime Act, 1999, MCOCA in terms of the provisions thereunder as also the decisions rendered by this Court in respect of grant of bail and when there is an embargo put in by a specific provision under a special enactment in the matter of grant of bail in respect of offences allegedly committed thereunder, the power to grant bail should necessarily

be subject to satisfaction of the conditions mentioned in such specific provision. In the case on hand, such a specific provision is contained under Section 21(4) of the MCOCA.

Further, the court emphasized that while the High Court may grant bail despite non-compliance with stringent conditions in statutes like MCOCA in cases which involves violation of Part III of the Constitution, it cannot exercise this power when bail is granted based on an assessment of the sufficiency or inadequacy of the evidence on record, rather than on constitutional grounds.

The court stated that, 'the

contention raised by the appellant that the High Court had transgressed into impermissible area inasmuch as the question of sufficiency or otherwise and correctness of the prosecution case were considered while passing the impugned order instead of confining the consideration in regard to the question of satisfaction or otherwise of the stringent conditions in the matter of grant of bail where offences under MCOCA are involved. Thus, the grant of bail to respondent No. 2 and respondent No. 3 by the High Court is not on the ground(s) of violation of Part-III of the Constitution of India. The court also reiterated that offences under MCOCA impose stringent conditions for granting bail, thus, the High Court should have ensured compliance with these requirements rather than focusing on evidentiary sufficiency or otherwise.

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case observed and has directed to evaluate the matter strictly per Section 21(4) of MCOCA within one month from the receipt of the copy of this order.

Accordingly, the court set aside the High Court order and granted bail to the ac-

cused and remanded the bail application for fresh consideration by the High Court.

The counsel, Mr. Mukul Rohatgi, Sr. Adv. Mr. Sidharth Luthra, Sr. Adv. Ms. Shivani Luthra Lohiya, Adv. Mr. Nitin Saluja, AOR Mr. Nikhil Rohatgi, Adv. Mr. Samarth Luthra, Adv. Ms. Ishita Soni, Adv. Mr. Aadiya Anirudha Pande, Adv. Mr. Bharat Bagla, Adv. Mr. Sourav Singh, Adv. Mr. Aditya Krishna, Adv. Ms. Preet S. Phanse, Adv. Mr. Adarsh Dubey, Adv. Ms. Soumya Priyadarshinee, Adv. Mr. Vinayak Aren, Adv. Mr. Amit Srivastava, Adv. Mr. Amlaan Kumar, Adv. appeared for the Petitioner(s).

The counsel, Mr. Aadiya Anirudha Pande, AOR Mr. Dama Seshadri Naidu, Sr. Adv. Mr. Uday B. Dube, Sr. Adv. Mr. Kaustubh Dube, Adv. Mr. Rushikesh Kale, Adv. Mr. Shubham Bandal, Adv. Mr. Ashish Jacob Mathew, Adv. Mr. Deepak Sharma, Adv. Mr. Abhinav Thakur, Adv. Mr. A. Selvin Raja, AOR represented the Respondent(s).

## Supreme Court rejects PSU's plea against order to include HRA and other allowances in overtime wage calculation

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Munitions India Limited & Anr. v. Ammunition Factory Workers Union & Ors observed and has dismissed an SLP filed by PSU Munitions India Limited against an interim order of the Bombay High Court wherein the court directed the implementation of a Central Administrative Tribunal, CAT decision that mandated including certain compensatory allowances in the calculation of overtime wages under the Factories Act, 1948.

The bench comprising of Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Prasanna B. Varale was hearing the present matter.

The bench in the case clarified that the petitioners could approach the High Court to seek an expedited hearing of their pending petition against the CAT decision.

The court held that, 'This court is not inclined to interfere with the impugned judgment or order of the High Court. The Special leave petition is dismissed and it would be open for the petitioners to approach the High Court for early hearing of the pending petition on merits.'

The section 59(1) of the Factories Act, 1948 mandates extra wages for overtime work

*The bench in the case clarified that the petitioners could approach the High Court to seek an expedited hearing of their pending petition against the CAT decision.*

at twice the 'ordinary rate of wages.'

The section 59(2) of the Factories Act, 1948 defines 'ordinary rate of wages' as basic wages plus certain allowances, including the cash equivalent of concessional benefits, but explicitly excludes bonuses and overtime wages. The issue raised before the court was that whether allowances such as House Rent Allowance, HRA Transport Allowance, and Small Family Allowance fall under 'ordinary rate of wages.'

The dispute arose revolves around Office Memoranda issued by the Ministry of Labour and Employment dated May 27, 2009 and the Ministry of Defence dated June 26, 2009, which excluded compensatory allowances such as House Rent Allowance, HRA, Transport Allowance, and Small Family Allowance from the calculation of overtime wages under Section 59 of the Factories Act, 1948.

The CAT, Hyderabad Bench quashed the Circular dated June 26, 2009, after considering a judgment of the Madras

High Court, wherein the court held that the decision to exclude the allowances for computing overtime allowance was contrary to Section 59(2) of the Factories Act, 1948.

On April 04, 2024, the Tribunal directed the inclusion of allowances such as House Rent Allowance, Transport Allowance, and Small Family Allowance in the calculation of overtime wages, effective from January 1, 2006.

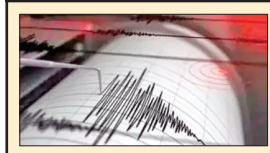
In 2022, CAT, Mumbai Bench allowed a petition by workers of the Ammunition Factory, Khadki, directing that these allowances be included for calculating overtime wages.

The Tribunal also quashed the 2009 Office Memorandum issued by the Ministry of Defence.

The said decision was challenged by the petitioners, Munitions India Limited and Ammunition Factory, Khadki, before the Bombay High Court. On November 22, 2024, the Bombay High Court, in its interim order, directed the petitioners to implement the CAT decision.



TOP OF THE DAY



**EARTHQUAKE OF MAGNITUDE 5.1 JOLTS MYANMAR**

**NAYPYIDAW** : An earthquake of magnitude 5.1 on the Richter Scale jolted Myanmar on Friday morning, National Center for Seismology (NCS) said. According to NCS, the magnitude 5.1 earthquake occurred at 10:02am (IST) at a depth of 127 kilometres. It was recorded at Latitude 24.92 N and Longitude 94.97 E. In a post on X, the NCS said, "EQ of M: 5.1 On: 03/01/2025 10:02:40 IST, Lat: 24.92 N, Long: 94.97 E, Depth: 127 Km, Location: Myanmar."

**QATAR STRONGLY CONDEMNS MONTENEGRO SHOOTING**

**DOHA**: The State of Qatar strongly condemned the shooting incident that took place in the city of Cetinje in the Republic of Montenegro, resulting in fatalities and injuries. In a statement today, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated Qatar's firm stance against all forms of violence, terrorism, and criminal acts, regardless of their motivations, according to the Qatar News Agency.



**GERMAN, FRENCH MINISTERS MEET SYRIA'S NEW RULERS**

**DAMASCUS**: The foreign ministers of Germany and France said they wanted to forge a new relationship with Syria and urged a peaceful transition as they met its de facto leader Ahmed al-Sharaa in Damascus on Friday on behalf of the European Union. Germany's Annalena Baerbock and France's Jean-Noel Barrot are the first ministers from the EU to visit Syria since rebels seized control of Damascus on Dec. 8 and forced President Bashar al-Assad to flee after more than 13 years of civil war, ending his family's decades-long rule. Their trip is meant to send a message of cautious optimism to the Islamist rebels led by Sharaa's Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), showing an openness to acknowledging the new rulers while also urging moderation and respect for minorities' rights.

**30 KILLED BY ISRAELI STRIKES IN GAZA IN 24 HOURS**

**DEIR AL-BALAH**: At least 30 people, including children, were killed in Gaza by Israeli strikes overnight and into Friday morning, hospital staff said, as sirens also sounded across Israel and stalled ceasefire talks were set to resume. Staff at the Al Aqsa Martyrs hospital said more than a dozen women and children were killed in strikes that hit various places in Central Gaza, including Nuseirat, Zawaida, Maghazi and Deir al Balah. Dozens of people were also killed across the enclave the previous day, bringing the total of people killed in the past 24 hours to 56.

**ISRAELI AIR STRIKES RAMP UP GAZA DEATH TOLL AMID NEW TRUCE PUSH**

Hamas rejects accusations it deliberately uses the civilian population to shield fighters.

AGENCIES  
CAIRO

Israel carried out air strikes on dozens of Hamas targets in Gaza over the past 24 hours, it said on Friday, in attacks that Palestinian health authorities said had killed nearly 100 people.

The surge in operations and casualties comes amid a renewed push to reach a ceasefire agreement before U.S. President-elect Donald Trump takes office this month, with Israeli mediators dispatched on Thursday to Doha, to resume talks brokered by Qatari and Egyptian mediators.

The Gaza health ministry said 27 people were killed early on Friday, after 71 were killed a day earlier including in Al-Mawasi, an area in central Gaza previously declared as a humanitarian safe zone by Israeli authorities.

The Israeli military said it had hit around 40 Hamas



A Palestinian girl stands near the site of an Israeli strike on a house, amid the Israel-Hamas conflict, in Al Maghazi refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip January 3, 2025. Agencies

**STALLED DIPLOMACY**

**CAIRO**: The United States, Egypt and Qatar have been trying to mediate a deal for a ceasefire and hostage release for a year with no success and are making another push this month before Trump's Jan. 20 inauguration. Ceasefire efforts have continually stumbled on a fundamental disagreement over how to end the conflict. Hamas says it will only accept an agreement and release the hostages if Israel commits to ending the war. Israel says it will only agree to stop fighting once Hamas is destroyed.

gathering points as well as command and control centres. It said it had taken numerous measures to reduce the risk of harming civilians, including using precise mu-

areas including buildings formerly used as schools. Hamas rejects accusations it deliberately uses the civilian population to shield fighters.

On Friday, the military told civilians in the area of al-Bureij in central Gaza to evacuate ahead of an operation ordered following rocket attacks from the area. It said residents should move to the humanitarian zone for their own safety.

Israel launched its assault on Gaza in response to the Hamas attack on Oct. 7, 2023, in which militants stormed border communities from Gaza, killing around 1,200 people and seizing around 250 hostages according to Israeli tallies.

Its military campaign, with the stated goal of eradicating Hamas, has levelled swathes of the enclave, driving most people from their homes, and killed 45,581 Palestinians according to the Gaza health ministry.

**Israeli delegation to visit Qatar for hostage negotiations**

AGENCIES  
TEL AVIV

Israel sent a delegation to Qatar's capital Doha on Friday to resume negotiations regarding a hostage agreement in the Gaza Strip, The Times of Israel reported.

The delegation included officials from Mossad, the country's intelligence agency; Shin Bet or the Israeli Security Agency, the intelligence, technological, and operational organisation of Israel; and Israeli Defence Forces (IDF).

On Thursday, the Israeli Prime Minister's Office had announced that the Prime Minister had approved the delegation's visit to Qatar to discuss a potential hostage-ceasefire arrangement.

In a statement, the Prime Minister's Office said,



Event before the delegation visit to Doha, Qatar.

*The delegation included officials from Mossad, the country's intelligence agency; Shin Bet or the Israeli Security Agency, the intelligence, technological, and operational organisation of Israel; and Israeli Defence Forces (IDF).*

"Netanyahu authorised a working-level delegation from the Mossad, Shin Bet and IDF to continue negotiations in Doha." Meanwhile, The Hos-

tages and Missing Families Forum, a civil, volunteer-based organisation, representing the families of the hostages, welcomed the decision by Netanyahu and said that "window of opportunity" cannot be missed.

In a rough translation of the post on X, the organisation said, "The Hostages and Missing Families Forum welcomes the decision to send the Israeli delegation to Qatar.

We must not miss the window of opportunity! We demand that the prime minister give the negotiating team a mandate to reach an agreement that will see the return of every last hostage -- the living to rehabilitation and the murdered for an honorable burial."

**Anti-graft agency halts bid to detain impeached Prez Yoon**

AGENCIES  
SEOUL

South Korea's anti-corruption agency halted its attempt to detain impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol on Friday over his failed martial law bid, following a prolonged standoff with the Presidential Security Service (PSS), Yonhap News Agency reported.

The Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials (CIO) announced that it suspended the execution of the detention warrant at 1:30 pm, approximately five hours after investigators arrived at the presidential residence.

The CIO in a press release said, "We determined that



*Investigators presented court-issued warrants to detain Yoon and search the residence but were blocked by PSS chief Park Chong-jun, who cited restrictions on secured areas.*

executing the detention warrant would be practi-

cally impossible due to the continued confrontation, and suspended the execution out of concern for the safety of on-site personnel caused by the resistance. We plan to decide on the next steps following a review."

It added, "We express serious regret over the behavior of the suspect who refused to comply with legally set procedures," Yonhap reported.

Earlier in the day, over 1,000 pro-Yoon protesters gathered near the residence, with slogans such as "Illegal warrant! Completely invalid!" and "Arrest the CIO." Around 2,700 police officers were deployed to maintain order.

**China targets 28 US defence firms with sanctions**

AGENCIES  
BEIJING

In a fresh escalation of trade tensions between the United States and China, Beijing on Thursday announced new export control measures targeting 28 US companies and placed 10 of them to a list, barring them from conducting business in the country, the Voice of America reported. The group of 28 companies primarily consists of defence contractors, including Lockheed Martin and five of its subsidiaries, General Dynamics and three of its subsidiaries, three subsidiaries of Raytheon, one subsidiary of Boeing, and over a dozen other firms.

**Israel police sees rise in recruitment after years of negative growth**

AGENCIES  
JERUSALEM

The Israel Police saw a record number of recruits in 2024. Last year, the police force increased by 1,804 police officers, after many years of a negative trend. In 2024, 3,822 police officers were recruited, compared to 2,018 police officers who completed their service.

For comparison, in 2021, 64 more police officers retired than were recruited. In 2022 the figure balanced out, and in 2023 the police force grew by 984 police officers. In total, in 2023 and 2024 the police force grew by 2,788 police officers.

Contrary to claims that the Israel Police received 3,000 new positions each year in 2023-24, and a total of 6,000 positions, in fact it was agreed that an additional 3,225 positions would be given over two years. However, contrary to the summaries, only 1,650 positions were transferred



Israeli police in Jerusalem. File Photo

*In 2022 the figure balanced out, and in 2023 the police force grew by 984 police officers. In total, in 2023 and 2024 the police force grew by 2,788 police officers.*

to the police, all of which were filled.

In accordance with an agreement with the Ministry of Finance dated November 18, 2024, a commitment was made to transfer 715 additional standards to the Israel Police at the end of December, but this agreement was unilaterally canceled by the Ministry of Finance.

"The Israel Police has been suffering from decades of attrition in its manpower, following the erosion of wages and service conditions, and the increase in security missions alongside the shortage of manpower," said the Police. "The shortage of police officers is burdening the existing manpower and causing accelerated departures."

**Syria to include all sectors in new government, foreign minister says**

AGENCIES  
DUBAI

Syria's foreign minister has told Saudi Arabian officials that the new leadership in Damascus wants to set up a government involving all parts of Syrian society following the overthrow of Bashar Al-Assad last month.

Minister Asaad Hassan Al-Shibani was making the first foreign trip by a member of Syria's new administration as Western and regional powers seek signs on whether it will impose strict Islamic rule or show inclusivity in government.

Al-Shibani and Syria's defence minister met with Saudi Defence Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman in Riyadh on Thursday.

"Through our visit, we conveyed our national vision of establishing a government based on partnership and efficiency that includes all Syrian components, and working to launch an economic development plan that opens the way for investment, establishes strategic partnerships, and improves living and service conditions," Al-Shibani said in a post on X.

Advertisement · Scroll to continue Since ousting Assad on Dec. 8, Islamist rebels led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) have sought to reassure Arab countries and the international community that they will govern on behalf of all Syrians



Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud meets Syria's newly appointed Foreign Minister Asaad Hassan al-Shibani, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, January 2, 2025. File Photo

and not export Islamist revolution. HTS was al Qaeda's Syrian affiliate until it broke off ties in 2016.

Saudi Arabia backed the rebels who fought Assad at the onset of the Syrian civil war.

More recently, Riyadh had embarked on a path of normalising ties with the Assad government, paving the way for Syria to return to the Arab League in 2023, in an effort to reduce Iranian influence in the country and to stem the flow of drugs including the methamphetamine captagon.

A Saudi source close to the government told Reuters the kingdom was committed to safeguarding the peace in Syria and that fostering stability was a top priority.

"At this critical juncture, our focus is on delivering essential humanitarian aid to the people of Syria, and we are exploring opportunities for expanded assistance in collaboration with regional partners," the source added.

**Malaysia doubles patrols to find Myanmar migrant boats**

AGENCIES  
KUALA LUMPUR

Malaysia's coastguard said on Friday it was doubling patrols in its waters to locate boats carrying undocumented Myanmar migrants, after almost 200 were detained on an island in the northwestern Malaysian state of Kedah.

The coastguard said police had detained 196 undocumented Myanmar migrants in the early hours of Friday after their boat came ashore on a beach on the resort island of Langkawi.

"Based on information the coastguard received, there are two more boats carrying undocumented Myanmar migrants at sea but their exact location is still

*The coastguard said police had detained 196 undocumented Myanmar migrants in the early hours of Friday after their boat came ashore on a beach on the resort island of Langkawi.*

unknown," the coastguard said in a statement.

Malaysian coastguard director-general Mohd Rosli Abdullah said authorities were patrolling the northern waters off Langkawi and border areas, and had arranged for air surveillance to be conducted to locate the boats. The coastguard is also in contact with Thai authorities to identify the movement of the boats carrying the migrants, Mohd Rosli said.

Earlier on Friday, local English daily The Star re-

ported about 200 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar had come ashore on Langkawi. The Rohingya are a mainly Muslim minority in majority Buddhist Myanmar.

The coastguard did not specify in its statement whether the migrants were Rohingya.

Around one million Rohingya have fled, mostly to neighbouring Bangladesh, to escape a Myanmar military offensive launched in August 2017, a campaign that U.N.

**China plays down reports of huge flu outbreak**

AGENCIES  
BEIJING

China on Friday played down reports of a massive outbreak of flu in the country overwhelming hospitals, saying that cases of the respiratory diseases which occur during the winter were less severe this year compared to last year.

The Foreign Ministry here said it is safe for for-

eigners to travel to China. "Respiratory infections tend to peak during the winter season in the northern hemisphere," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told the media here in response to a question on the spread of influenza A and other respiratory diseases in China.

Videos circulating on social media show over-



A student wearing a protective face mask to help curb the spread of the new coronavirus checks temperature of her classmates in Wuhan in central China's Hubei province on May 6, 2020. (File Photo)

*The diseases appear to be less severe and spread with a smaller scale compared to the previous year.*

crowded hospitals.

"The diseases appear to be less severe and spread with a smaller scale compared to the previous year,"

she said. "I can assure you the Chinese government cares about the health of Chinese citizens and foreigners in China. It is safe to travel in China," she said.

She also referred to guidelines issued by the National Disease Control and Prevention Administration of China regarding the prevention and control of respiratory diseases in

the winter.

For the past few days, reports of a massive flu outbreak in China have been circulating abroad, particularly in India and Indonesia.

Health officials, however, maintain the outbreak is an annual occurrence during the winter. China is currently experiencing severe cold weather for the past few months.



EDINBURGH EVENT



People queue for the start of Shelter Scotland's annual new year event in which the charity opens its shop with a selection of the most unusual and intriguing items donated in the preceding year in Edinburgh, Scotland. Source: Andrew Milligan

Italian PM says she is 'in tune on many issues' with Starmer

AGENCIES  
ROME

Italy's prime minister, Giorgia Meloni, has said she is "in tune on many issues" with her British counterpart, Keir Starmer, especially "the fight against mass illegal immigration" and the need to explore "innovative solutions" when it comes to processing asylum claims, touting Italy's controversial agreement with Albania.



Giorgia Meloni and Keir Starmer (in Right) in Rome in September 2024. File Photo

Meloni told the weekly magazine of the Corriere della Sera newspaper that her relations with Starmer, who is from the opposite end of the political spectrum to her far-right Brothers of Italy party, were "very good".

She added: "We are in tune on many issues. I think, for example, about the governance of migratory flows and the fight against mass illegal immigration, because it's a problem that effects the entire European continent, even beyond EU borders." Meloni also spoke about her "excellent" relationship with Donald Trump's billionaire ally Elon Musk, who on Thursday launched a fresh attack on Starmer's government.

"Elon Musk is a brilliant man and it's always interesting to debate with him," she said, adding that it made her smile to think that those who once praised Musk as "a genius" now depicted him as a "monster" because he chose "the wrong" side of the barricade. She said she and Starmer agreed on the need "to intensify the fight against traffickers, work towards greater cooperation between our police forces, strengthen the commitment on assisted voluntary repatriations and to not be afraid to also explore innovative solutions, such as the one that Italy initiated with the protocol with Albania to process asylum claims in a non-EU country, but under Italian and European jurisdiction".

Britain vows - again - to reform social care, but no plan until 2028

AGENCIES  
LONDON

Britain's latest plan to overhaul increasingly costly care for older and disabled adults will not be delivered until 2028 at the earliest, the government said on Friday, as it announced a three-year independent review to come up with proposals.



King Charles III and Queen Camilla during a visit to NHS Lothian's Medicine of the Elderly Meaningful Activity Centre at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, Scotland on July 4, 2023. File Photo

The Labour government, which took power in July, said in its manifesto it would create a "National Care Service" to meet the needs of vulnerable people and better integrate social care with the state-funded National Health Service. Health and Social Care Secretary Wes Streeting said on Friday he had tasked Louise Casey, a former senior official who has led previous high profile reviews, to chair a commission to decide how social care should be organised and funded.

There have already been multiple policy papers, inquiries and reports into social care this century, but governments have failed to find a fix for the sector and to agree how it should be funded in the long term. Former Prime Minister Theresa May set out a plan during the 2017 election campaign to make those who could afford it pay a greater share of the costs of care, but it was dubbed a "dementia tax" by opponents and she abandoned it after her poll lead halved. She lost her governing majority in the election.

MOLDOVA PM WARNS OF SECURITY CRISIS, DENOUNCES RUSSIAN GAS CUT-OFF

Flows of Russian gas via Ukraine which supplied central and eastern Europe were halted at the end of 2024 as Kyiv rejected doing further business with Moscow.

AGENCIES  
KYIV

Moldova faces a security crisis after tens of thousands of residents in the break-away enclave of Transnistria were cut off from Russian gas supply, Prime Minister Dorin Recean said on Friday.

Flows of Russian gas via Ukraine which supplied central and eastern Europe were halted at the end of 2024 as Kyiv rejected doing further business with Moscow.

Recean said Moldova would cover its energy needs with domestic production and imports but noted the separatist Transnistria region had suffered a painful hit despite its ties with Moscow.

Advertisement · Scroll to continue "By jeopardising the future of the protectorate it has backed for three decades in an effort to destabilise Moldova, Russia is revealing the inevitable outcome for all its allies - betrayal and isolation," Recean said in a statement.

ENERGY SHORTAGE

- Gas Flow Halted: Russian gas to Ukraine stopped in late 2024 after Kyiv rejected deals with Moscow.
- Moldova's Response: Relies on domestic energy production and imports, but Transnistria faces a severe impact.
- Prime Minister Dorin Recean: Calls it a security crisis, viewing it as an effort to destabilize Moldova.
- Russia's Betrayal: Recean accuses Russia of betraying its allies, leading to isolation.
- Concerns: Moldova fears pro-Russian forces could return to power and threaten Ukraine.



Prime Minister of Moldova Dorin Recean addresses the 79th United Nations General Assembly at U.N. headquarters in New York, U.S., September 27, 2024. File Photo

"We treat this as a security crisis aimed at enabling the return of pro-Russian forces to power in Moldova and weaponising our territory against Ukraine, with whom we share a 1,200 km border." Advertisement · Scroll to continue The southeast European nation of about 2.5 million people has been in the spotlight since Russia's invasion of neighbouring

Ukraine at a time of mounting tensions between Moscow and the West. Its pro-European President Maia Sandu won a second term in an election last year and has pledged to accelerate reform and consolidate democratisation. Moldova plans to hold a parliamentary election this summer. The mainly Russian-speaking territory of Transnistria, which split

from Moldova in the 1990s, received Russian gas via Ukraine. In turn, Moldova used to receive the bulk of its electricity from Transnistria but with Kyiv making clear it would stop gas transit from Russia, the Chisinau government prepared alternative arrangements, with a mixture of domestic production and electricity imports from Romania, Recean said.

US President-elect Trump attacks Biden's border policy

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON

US President-Elect Donald Trump on Friday criticised US President Joe Biden's administration for alleged failure to seal borders.

Trump said that the administration was busy attacking him, rather than doing their job, and called for the Central Intelligence Agency to get 'involved'.

In a post on X, Trump said, "Our Country is a disaster, a laughing stock all over the World! This is what happens when you have OPEN BORDERS, with weak, ineffective, and virtually nonexistent leadership. The DOJ, FBI, and Democrat state and local prosecutors have not done their job. They are incompetent and corrupt, having spent all of their waking hours unlawfully attacking their political opponent, ME, rather than focusing on



Donald Trump (Left) and Joe Biden

protecting Americans from the outside and inside violent SCUM that has infiltrated all aspects of our government, and our Nation itself." Trump alleged that the US is 'breaking down' and the security is eroding from the nation. "Democrats should be ashamed of themselves for allowing this to happen to our Country. The CIA must get involved, NOW, before it is too late. The USA is breaking down - A violent erosion of Safety, National Security, and

Democracy is taking place all across our Nation. Only strength and powerful leadership will stop it. See you on January 20th. MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!" he added. Trump criticised Biden's 'Open Border's Policy' and said that whatever his administration has done will never be forgotten. "With the Biden 'Open Border's Policy' I said, many times during Rallies, and elsewhere, that Radical Islamic Terrorism, and other forms of violent crime, will become so bad in America that it will become hard to even imagine or believe. That time has come, only worse than ever imagined. Joe Biden is the WORST PRESIDENT IN THE HISTORY OF AMERICA, A COMPLETE AND TOTAL DISASTER. What he and his group of Election Interfering "thugs" have done to our Country will not soon be forgotten! MAGA," he said.

YEAR-END REFLECTION: KEY GLOBAL POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

The conclusion of the year brings a mixture of both positive and negative reflections from the perspective of global politics. The summary this week highlights the significant international events that have transpired over the course of the year. In the month of January, Chinese newspaper Global Times praised Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his achievements in global politics, highlighting India's economic, political, and social achievements. India has become one of the fastest-growing major economies and advocates for a multi-alignment strategy, promoting relations with the US, Japan, Russia, and other countries and regional organizations. On the other hand, tensions escalated in the East Asian region as North Korea fired over 200 rounds of artillery shells, posing a severe security threat to South Korea and global security. The Israel-Hamas conflict intensified as Israel accused the International Court of Justice of being a 'legal arm' of Hamas. Also, India signed a significant Lithium exploration pact with Argentina, one of the three Lithium Triangle countries in Latin Ameri-

ca. This move was seen as a major step to boost green development and contain China in the region. China got concerned about the new anti-Chinese President in Taiwan, Lai Ching-te, who is labelled as an 'instigator of war' by China. US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, wholeheartedly praised Indian Prime Minister for his remarkable achievements and the establishment of India-US relations. Amid all these developments, France's President visited India for Republic Day celebrations highlighting the deepening strategic partnership between the two nations. The visit highlighted the growing cooperation in various sectors such as defence, security, space, civil nuclear energy, education, trade, and cultural exchanges. In the month of February, Maldives encountered a political crisis as its president Ibrahim Muizzu faced the charges of impeachment for abuse of power. On the other hand, China offered to mediate between Iran and Pakistan, positioning itself well to ease tensions. India abolished the Free Movement Regime (FMR) along the Myanmar border to protect its internal security and

**WORLD RECAP**  
ANSHU JOSHI

maintain the demographic composition of its North-eastern states. Pakistan's citizens participated in the national election to choose their new government. India's Prime Minister visited UAE to strengthen bilateral relations and economic cooperation between the two nations. Both signed numerous memorandums of understanding, including co-investments, green energy, and renewable energy projects. The leaders also launched the RuPay card, promoting financial inclusivity and integration. The inauguration of Abu Dhabi's first Hindu stone temple marked a pivotal moment in the relationship. Japan's government signed a finance agreement with India worth 232 billion yen (approximately Rs. 12,800 crores) to fund nine important infrastructure projects in India, strengthening bilateral economic ties between the two nations. The month of March observed intensified Israel-Hamas war. On the other

hand, South Korea and the US remained cautious of possible North Korean activities. Amid this, Pakistan's Shehbaz Sharif was elected as the new Prime Minister of the country. Meanwhile, in the US, Nikki Haley's attempt to challenge Republican frontrunner Donald Trump ended when she stepped back. Belarus supported India's call for UNSC reforms, stating that it supports the idea of a permanent seat and a proposed model for reforms. The G4 proposal, presented by Brazil, Germany, Japan, and India, proposes an expansion of the UNSC's membership from 15 to 25, with six permanent members and four or five non-permanent members. Meanwhile, Japan and the US focused on alliance projection against China, with Japan focusing on maritime security and national interests. The US confirmed its support for India by calling Arunachal Pradesh an integral part of India. The US also condemned China for its false territorial claims across the Line of Actual Control (LAC), leaving China in fury. India's External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar, visited Singapore, the Philippines, and Malaysia to discuss bilateral and multilateral issues. Meanwhile, Russia was severely impacted by a brutal terror attack by ISIS, which claimed responsibility for the attack. In the month of April, bilateral relations between India and Sri Lanka strained due to the issue of handing over Katchatheevu island to Sri Lanka. On the other hand, India rejected allegations of foreign interference in Canadian elections, despite the inquiry concluding that there was no evidence of India attempting to interfere. Russia and China announced plans to strengthen their strategic and trade partnerships in Europe and Asia to counter the US's hegemonic power. Japan and the US announced a 'new era of military cooperation' after the Japanese Prime Minister visited the US and signed 70 agreements on defence cooperation. Philippines announced to receive the BrahMos missile system

from India as part of its 'Horizon 2' Priority Project. The Muizzu government's victory in Maldives indicated a significant shift in the political landscape of the Maldives and the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). In the month of May Putin began his fifth term as the Russian President, a record for the longest-serving Kremlin leader since Josef Stalin. His term is set to continue until 2030. India and Iran signed a long-term deal for Chabahar port. Meanwhile, Pakistan's economy faced a crisis due to high inflation, unemployment, and foreign debts. Amid this, PoK activist Amjad Ayub Mirza called for India's intervention in Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, emphasizing the region's integral part of India. Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi and foreign minister Hossein Amirabdollahian died in a helicopter accident in East Azerbaijan. The sudden death of Raisi left Iranian politics in a state of muddle. Leaders of Norway, Ireland, and Spain announced their intention to officially acknowledge Palestine as a separate country, causing Israel to recall its envoys. In the month of June, China and Cambodia started

a joint military exercise, raising tensions for the US. Russia and China expressed reservations over a US draft resolution on a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in Gaza. Hezbollah launched rockets into northern Israel, heightening regional tensions during a visit by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken. India reaffirmed its support for Israel against Hamas' terror attack and reiterated its support for free Palestine. Narendra Modi participated in the G7 summit in Italy, discussing the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and the situation in Gaza. Russia and North Korea signed a mutual defence pact during Putin's first visit to North Korea in 24 years, aiming to strengthen their bilateral relations. In the month of July, Narendra Modi visited Russia and Austria. Apart from signing significant agreements with both the nations, he reiterated his message of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' and urged for global peace and security. US President Joe Biden announced his exit from the US presidential race and endorsed Kamla Harris as the nominee, sparking global politics. In the month of August,

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



REVIEW: SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 3 ★★★★★

## SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 3



PRAVEEN NAGDA

Children are in for great entertainment this weekend with the release of Sonic the Hedgehog 3. With Keanu Reeves as Shadow the Hedgehog, Jim Carrey as Doctor Eggman (and also as Dr. Gerald Robotnik), Krysten Ritter as Director Rockwell, Ben Schwartz as Sonic, James Marsden as Tom Wachowski, Tika Sumpter as Maddie Wachowski, and Alyla Browne as Maria Robotnik, the film is an action-comedy adventure that will definitely win your hearts.

Live-action and animated characters that are as lively as humans fill the film with a great deal of emotions, fun, laughter, drama, and comedy. In the case of live-action films, my personal experience is that the first sequel remains the best, but this logic often fails in the case of animation films, where the next edition ends up becoming superior to the previous ones.

Thanks to real hard work behind the scenes and the technology used to create the theatrical excellence, Sonic The Hedgehog 3 packs a good punch. Based on a game series by SEGA, the film opens up with a scene of prison in Japan, where Shadow The Hedgehog has been in captivity for the last 50 years and has been put in suspended animation. Shadow escapes with the help of a plan by Dr. Gerald Robotnik and starts creating havoc in the city. Shadow, having extra powers in the form of Chaos Control, was created by Dr. Robotnik to counter his arch-rival Sonic.

Sonic, Knuckles, and Tails fight him hard, but Shadow's powers are immense, and he is filled with the ideas of revenge for what

has been done to him for the last 50 years. In 1974, while Dr. Robotnik was escaping with Shadow and Maria from his lab, Maria was killed, and Shadow could never forget this. What follows is a roller-coaster ride of fights between Team Sonic, Dr. Gerald Robotnik teaming up with his grandson Dr. Eggman, and Shadow The Hedgehog, and the bosses at G.U.N. (Guardian Units of Nations), all aiming to capture a keycard that can unleash the Eclipse Cannon's power.

Well, there is a change of heart for a few and the foes turn friends and vice versa too in the film. Dr. Ivo Robotnik (the grandson) joins hands with his grandfather Dr. Gerald Robotnik, to destroy Earth and instead decides to save it since he could never rule it. Animations, visual effects, and special effects are simply awesome and provide a great visual treat. Action sequences, armoured fights, drone attacks, and the lightening maneuvers of Sonic and Shadow are simply thrilling.

Many good lines like "You always have choices, Make the right one," or "There's no such thing as a friendly ghost," or "It's Almost Like We're Played By The Same Actor" or "Stone, you were more than a sycophant to me," or "You were... a sycophant," or "Talk about low budget flights. No food or movies, I'm outta here!" come at the right moments making you laugh or tickle or shock for that matter.

Jeff Fowler directed Sonic The Hedgehog 3 is not only a visual treat but also a great fun watch for the children and their parents!

Praveen Nagda is Festival Director of KidzCINEMA and CultureCinema Film Festivals

## MEGHAN MARKLE'S LIFESTYLE SHOW TO BE OUT ON JANUARY 15, TRAILER OUT

AGENCIES  
LOS ANGELES

After making her Instagram appearance after nearly five years, Meghan Markle, the Duchess of Sussex, has now surprised her fans by announcing her lifestyle show.

Titled 'With Love, Meghan', the Netflix show will be out on January 15. The makers also unveiled the show's trailer Markle chilling at home with friends, making meals and sharing all sorts of home-maker tips.

In the footage, Markle makes a vegetable platter, a multilayer cake and some focaccia bread as she harvests honey and laughs humbly at a compliment while hosting famous friends (such as Roy Choi, Mindy Kaling and Alice Waters), as per The Hollywood Reporter.

Meghan's husband Prince Harry also marked his appearance at the end of the trailer.

Sharing the link of the trailer, Meghan on Instagram wrote, "I have been so excited to share this with you! I hope you love the show as much as I loved making it. Wishing you all a fantastic new year! Thanks to our amazing crew and the team @netflix. Beyond grateful for the support - and fun! As ever, Meghan."

On January 1, marking the arrival of 2025, Meghan launched her own Insta-



gram account with the username @meghan. Her first post is a black-and-white video of herself at the beach. In the video, she can be seen writing "2025" in the sand before smiling and running back off-camera. She also updated her profile picture to a black-and-white shot of herself smiling.

As per People, the update comes over two years after Meghan hinted that she was getting back on Instagram in conversation with The Cut. "Do you want to know a secret?" she said in a wide-ranging interview published in August 2022.

"I'm getting back... on Instagram." Although Meghan "would relay she was no longer sure she would actually return to Instagram" later in the interview, she's maintained a presence on the platform in the past. Before she married Prince Harry in 2018, the Suits star had 3 million followers on an Instagram account under her own name as well as lifestyle blog The Tig.

PICTURE PERFECT

Ananya Pandey poses for her social media. (Instagram)



## TEASER OF 'PAATAL LOK 2' OUT NOW

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

After a long wait, 'Paatal Lok' is returning with a new season.

On Friday, the makers unveiled the teaser of Jaideep Ahlawat-starrer series. The teaser offers a thrilling glimpse into a new case that pushes Hathi Ram to his limits.

The new season will also bring back Ishwak Singh and fresh entries Tillotama Shome and Gul Panag.

Produced by Clean Slate Filmz, in association with Eunoia Films LLP, the eight-episode series is created and executive produced by Sudip Sharma. Avinash Arun Dhaware has directed the show, which will be out on Prime Video from January



17. Sudip Sharma, the creator and showrunner of the series, shared his excitement in a press release shared by Prime Video.

He said, "The overwhelming response to the first season inspired me to craft

stories that are raw, relatable, and intensely gripping. Collaborating with an exceptional team has been a privilege, and we've amplified the themes of crime, mystery, and suspense in this new chapter."

The first season of the se-

ries, which came out in May 2020, was praised for its intense storytelling and raw portrayal of Indian society. It introduced audiences to the morally complex world of Inspector Hathi Ram Chaudhary portrayed by Jaideep.

## 'A Parsi, a Muslim...': Big B remember 'heroes' who passed away in 2024

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

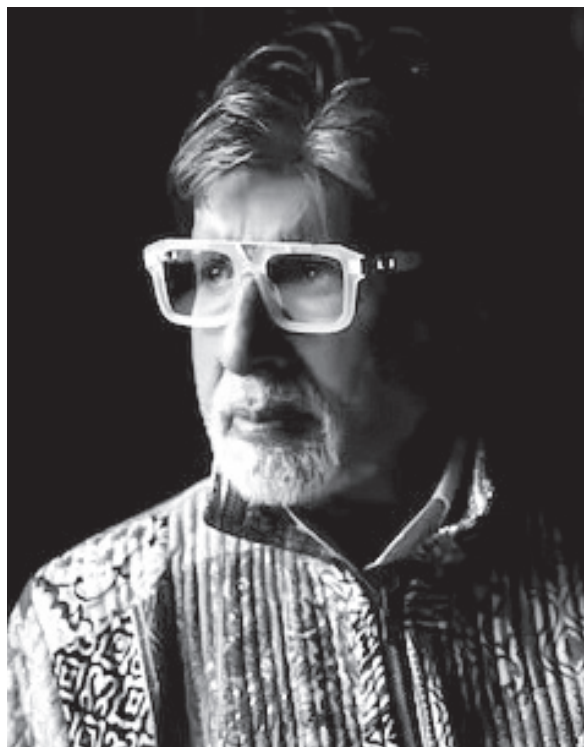
From Ratan Tata to Manmohan Singh, last year India bid farewell to many eminent dignitaries who played key roles in shaping the nation's journey across various spheres.

Welcoming the new year, megastar Amitabh Bachchan on Friday took a moment off his schedule to remember such "heroes".

Big B shared a powerful image titled "Our heroes in heaven". The illustration featured the doodles of Ratan Tata, Shyam Benegal, Zakir Hussain and Manmohan Singh together. It was accompanied by a profound caption: "A Parsi, a Muslim, a Sikh, and a Hindu passed away in 2024, and the whole nation mourned and remembered them only as Indians!"

Sharing the picture, Big B wrote, "... the picture says it all."

Through his post, Amitabh Bachchan highlighted



India's unity in diversity. It also garnered loads of comments and likes from netizens.

"How thoughtful," a social media user wrote.

"One nation, One religion - Humanity," another one

commented.

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh breathed his last on 26th December 2024. Singh's political career spanned several decades, with notable positions including

Finance Minister from 1991 to 1996, during which he spearheaded economic reforms that transformed India's economy. He served as the 13th Prime Minister of India from 2004 to 2014, succeeding Atal Bihari Vajpayee. His tenure is particularly remembered for his steady leadership during economic crises and his contributions to modernising India's economy. After his second term, Singh retired from public life, having led India through a period of unprecedented growth and international recognition. He was succeeded by Narendra Modi in 2014 after the Congress-led UPA lost the general elections.

Speaking of tabla maestro Zakir Hussain, his final adieu came on December 15. Zakir Hussain, son of the legendary tabla player Alla Rakha, blended traditions with global influences to create masterpieces that transcend language and culture.

## Check out Junaid Khan, Khushi Kapoor's chemistry in title track of their film 'Loveyapa'

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

The title track of Junaid Khan and Khushi Kapoor's film 'Loveyapa' has been unveiled.

The song shows a fun chemistry shared between Junaid and Khushi in the age of social media. Nakash Aziz and Madhubanti Bagchi have lent their vocals to the track.

Sharing the song, Zee Music Company on their YouTube channel wrote, "Babu Shona karte-karte ho gaya dimag ka Bha-jjyapa? Well, this is the beginning of Loveyapa! #LoveyapaHogaya song out now."



The upcoming rom-com will be released on February 7, 2025. Advait Chandan, who helmed 'Laal Singh Chaddha', has come

on board to direct the project. The film is produced by Phantom Studios and AGS Entertainment. As per the makers, Loveyapa

is a "tangled tale of love and its complications with a mix of fun and laughter, shaping up to be a cinematic treat."

BRAIN PICKING



I was a happy person before marriage. I'm definitely happier after marriage.



- VIDYA BALAN  
(Indian Actress)

## GOLDEN GLOBES: GARFIELD, TAYLOR-JOY NAMED AS PRESENTERS FOR UPCOMING EDITION



AGENCIES  
LOS ANGELES

The 82nd Annual Golden Globes awards are around the corner. Creating excitement among the fans, the organisers recently announced the presenters for the upcoming edition.

As per Deadline, presenters for this year's Golden Globes include Andrew

Garfield, Anthony Mackie, Anthony Ramos, Anya Taylor-Joy, Ariana DeBose, Aubrey Plaza, Auli'i Cravalho, Awkwafina, Brandi Carlile, Catherine O'Hara, Colin Farrell, Colman Domingo, Demi Moore, Dwayne Johnson, Edgar Ramirez, Elton John, Gal Gadot, Glenn Close, Jeff Goldblum, Jennifer Coolidge, Kaley Cuoco, Kate Hudson, Kathy Bates, Ke Huy Quan, Kerry Washington, Margaret Qualley, Melissa McCarthy, Michael Keaton, Michelle Yeoh, Miles Teller, Mindy Kaling, Morris Chestnut, Nate Bargatze, Nicolas Cage, Rachel Brosnahan, Rob McElhen-

Netflix leads the pack in the Golden Globes nominations for 2024 on both the TV and film side, while A24 and HBO are well represented.

Netflix leads the pack in the Golden Globes nominations for 2024 on both the TV and film side, while A24 and HBO are well represented.

Viola Davis will receive the Cecil B. DeMille Award. Davis won a Supporting Actress Oscar and a Golden Globe for 2016's Fences. She also has six other Golden Globe noms, most recently for 2022's The Woman King.

India is also eyeing an award with filmmaker Payal Kapadia's 'All We Imagine As Light' obtaining two prestigious nominations at the 82nd Annual Golden Globe Awards

## PRATIK GANDHI, PATRALEKHA'S 'PHULE' TO BE RELEASED IN APRIL

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

The release date for Pratik Gandhi and Patralekha-starrer 'Phule' has been announced.

The film will be released in theatres on April 11, the 197th birth anniversary of Mahatma Phule.

Directed by Ananth Mahadevan, the film stars Pratik Gandhi as Mahatma Jyotirao Phule and Patralekha as his wife, Savitribai Phule, bringing to life the inspiring journey of this iconic couple who championed equality and education in India.

Talking about the release, Patralekha in a press note said, "I am deeply honored to portray Savitribai Phule in this film. Alongside Jyotirao Phule, she laid the very foundation for modern education and social equality in India. On her birth anniversary today, it's only fitting that we announce the release of Phule. I'm thrilled that audiences will soon witness



their inspiring journey on the big screen, and hopefully, be moved by their extraordinary courage and vision."

Mahadevan emphasised, "We have stuck to the historical facts while making this film but it is not just a historical narrative. The film is a call to recognise the sacrifices and values that continue to shape our society. This is our humble tribute to a great son and daughter of India. The film is a must-watch for the Y-generation, as it offers more than what history books have touched upon. It's an immersive journey back in time, showcasing how these visionaries shaped our nation's history."



# ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS NEED IN 2025



RIDHIMA KANSAL

In 2025, the global business landscape continues to evolve rapidly, offering unprecedented opportunities and challenges for women entrepreneurs. To thrive in this dynamic environment, they must hone a set of entrepreneurial skills that go beyond traditional business acumen. Here's a closer look at the skills that will empower women entrepreneurs to lead successfully in the year ahead.

## 1. ADAPTABILITY AND RESILIENCE

In an era defined by uncertainty and rapid change, adaptability is key. Women entrepreneurs must be prepared to pivot their strategies, embrace emerging trends, and respond to unexpected challenges with resilience. Building a strong support network and maintaining

mental well-being will also play a critical role in sustaining their entrepreneurial journey.

## 2. DIGITAL LITERACY AND TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION

The digital revolution continues to reshape industries. Women entrepreneurs must stay ahead by mastering digital tools, leveraging data analytics, and adopting emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and the Internet of Things (IoT). These tools can streamline operations, enhance customer engagement, and provide a competitive edge.

## 3. FINANCIAL SAVVY AND FUNDING EXPERTISE

Access to capital remains a significant hurdle for many women entrepreneurs. In 2025, understanding financial management, mastering fundraising techniques, and exploring alternative financing options like crowdfunding and impact investing will be crucial. Women leaders must also cultivate strong financial acumen to make informed decisions and scale their ventures effectively.

## 4. INNOVATIVE THINKING AND



## PROBLEM-SOLVING

Innovation is the lifeblood of entrepreneurship. Women entrepreneurs must foster a culture of creativity within their teams and think outside the box to solve problems. Staying attuned to customer needs and market gaps will enable them to create unique value propositions that resonate in competitive markets.

## 5. SUSTAINABLE AND ETHICAL PRACTICES

Consumers and stakeholders

increasingly prioritize sustainability and ethical business practices. Women entrepreneurs should integrate environmental and social responsibility into their business models, ensuring long-term success and positive impact. Transparent and authentic communication about these efforts can also build trust and loyalty among stakeholders.

## 7. NETWORKING AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

A strong professional network can open doors to partnerships, mentorships, and market opportunities. Women entrepreneurs must prioritize building meaningful connections within their industry and beyond, leveraging these relationships for mutual growth.

*Women entrepreneurs should integrate environmental and social responsibility into their business models, ensuring long-term success and positive impact. Transparent and authentic communication about these efforts can also build trust and loyalty among stakeholders.*

## 6. LEADERSHIP AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

As businesses grow, leadership skills become more critical. Women entrepreneurs need to inspire and guide diverse teams while fostering inclusivity and collaboration. Emotional intelligence, understanding and managing emotions will enhance interpersonal relationships, conflict resolution, and team dynamics.

As 2025 unfolds, the entrepreneurial journey for women is both challenging and rewarding. By embracing these essential skills, women entrepreneurs can navigate the complexities of the modern business world, drive innovation, and inspire future generations to lead with confidence and impact. The future is bright, and women are poised to lead the charge.

*The author is Director, Rosemoore*

# Things Women Should Notice When Reconciling with Their Partner

JEEVIKA SHARMA

Rekindling a relationship with a former partner can be a rewarding but challenging experience. Whether the separation was due to miscommunication, unresolved conflicts, or external circumstances, reconciling requires careful consideration and emotional readiness. Here are some key aspects women should notice when navigating this journey

## 1. CHANGES IN BEHAVIOR

Observe whether your partner has genuinely addressed the issues that led to the breakup.

Look for consistent actions rather than temporary gestures or promises.

Notice improvements in communication, emotional availability, or other areas of concern from the past.

## 2. ACCOUNTABILITY

Has your partner taken responsibility for their role in the breakup? Genuine accountability is a strong indicator of growth and willingness to change.

Avoid partners who deflect blame or minimize their contributions to the past issues.

## 3. YOUR OWN FEELINGS

Reflect on your reasons for wanting to reconcile. Are you motivated by love and hope for a better future, or fear of being alone?

Ensure you're not ignoring red flags or settling for less than you deserve.

## 4. COMMUNICATION PATTERNS

Assess whether communication between you and your partner has improved.

Effective reconciliation requires honest, open, and respectful dialogue. Avoid situations where important conversations are avoided or dismissed.

## 5. BOUNDARIES

Have both of you established clear boundaries to protect the relationship



from repeating past mistakes?

Respecting each other's space, time, and emotions is crucial for a healthy partnership.

## 6. MUTUAL GOALS AND VALUES

Ensure that you both share aligned goals and values moving forward.

Discuss future plans, including career aspirations, family expectations, and lifestyle preferences.

## 7. THIRD-PARTY INPUT

Seek advice from trusted friends, family, or a counselor. Sometimes, external perspectives can provide valuable insights.

Avoid allowing third-party opinions to dictate your decisions, but consider their observations

thoughtfully.

## 8. TRUST REBUILDING

Trust takes time to rebuild after a breakup, especially if betrayal or dishonesty was involved.

Notice if your partner's actions consistently align with their words over time.

## 9. CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS

Pay attention to how your partner handles disagreements or conflicts during this renewed phase.

Healthy conflict resolution involves active listening, compromise, and mutual respect.

## 10. PERSONAL GROWTH

Reconciliation should involve growth for both parties. Notice if your partner has worked on

themselves during the time apart.

Equally, ensure you've used the time to grow, reflect, and address your own areas for improvement.

## 11. EXTERNAL STRESSORS

Consider whether external factors, such as financial issues, work stress, or family dynamics, have changed and whether they're likely to impact the relationship again.

## 12. FORGIVENESS AND LETTING GO

True reconciliation requires forgiveness from both sides. Notice if unresolved resentment lingers, as it can hinder progress.

Ensure both of you are ready to leave the past behind and focus on building a healthier future together.



# The 2025 Guide to Fertility: A Holistic Approach for Couples

TDG NETWORK

As we step into 2025, couples seeking to embrace parenthood have more opportunities than ever to embark on their fertility journey with confidence and hope. Dr. Shobha Gupta, Medical Director and renowned IVF specialist from Mother's Lap IVF Centre in New Delhi and Vrindavan emphasizes that the path to parenthood begins with a proactive and holistic approach, addressing physical, emotional, and lifestyle factors for both men and women.

## OPTIMIZING HEALTH THROUGH DIET

Nutrition plays a pivotal role in enhancing fertility. A well-balanced diet can improve reproductive health by supporting hormonal balance and improving overall wellbeing. Dr. Shobha Gupta recommends the following dietary guidelines for couples:

**For Women:** Include foods rich in folic acid, iron, and omega-3 fatty acids. Leafy greens, citrus fruits, nuts, and seeds are essential. Incorporate whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats like avocados. Avoid excessive caffeine and alcohol, which can negatively affect ovulation.

**For Men:** Focus on foods high in zinc, selenium, and antioxidants to enhance sperm health. Walnuts, pumpkin seeds, tomatoes, and eggs are beneficial. Reducing processed foods and incorporating a Mediterranean-style diet can significantly improve sperm quality.

Staying hydrated is equally important for both genders. Aim to drink at least 8-10 glasses of water daily to support metabolic processes and cellular health.

## LIFESTYLE CHANGES FOR BETTER FERTILITY

"Modern lifestyles often contribute to stress and poor health habits, which can impact fertility. Your body is the foundation of your dreams. Nurture it, and it will nurture the life you hope to create" said Dr. Shobha Gupta. Here are few lifestyle changes for couples to consider in this new year:

**Stress Management:** Chronic stress can disrupt hormonal balance. Engage in stress-reducing activities such as yoga, meditation, or mindfulness practices to promote relaxation and mental clarity.

**Maintain a Healthy Weight:** Both underweight and overweight indi-



viduals may face challenges with fertility. Achieving a healthy BMI through regular exercise and mindful eating is crucial.

**Quit Smoking and Limit Alcohol:** Smoking has been shown to reduce fertility in both men and women. Alcohol consumption should also be moderated to minimize its impact on reproductive health.

**Adequate Sleep:** Quality sleep is vital for hormonal regulation. Aim for 7-8 hours of uninterrupted sleep each night.

## NATURAL REMEDIES AND SUPPLEMENTS

Dr. Gupta highlights the importance of natural remedies and supplements in enhancing fertility:

**For Women:** Folic acid supplements are essential for preventing neural tube defects. Coenzyme Q10

and vitamin D supplements may also support ovarian health.

**For Men:** Supplements containing L-carnitine, vitamin C, and vitamin E can improve sperm count and motility.

Additionally, herbal remedies like ashwagandha and maca root have shown promise in improving reproductive health, but these should be used under medical supervision.

## THE ROLE OF ADVANCED FERTILITY TREATMENTS

Despite making lifestyle changes, some couples may still require medical intervention. Dr. Shobha Gupta explained that "advanced fertility treatments play a transformative role in helping couples overcome infertility challenges and achieve their dream of parenthood. Techniques like IVF, ICSI, and egg freezing offer tailored solutions for various fertility issues, ensuring higher success rates and personalized care." These advancements empower individuals with hope and options, even in complex cases. With cutting-edge technology and compassionate care, couples are empowered to achieve their dreams of parenthood.

Embarking on a fertility journey in 2025 requires a multifaceted approach that prioritizes physical health, emotional well-being, and professional support. With guidance from experts couples can embrace the new year with optimism, knowing they are taking meaningful steps toward building their family. Let 2025 be the year of hope and new beginnings.



Dr Shobha Gupta, IVF Expert, Mother's Lap IVF Centre



# HEAVEN AND HELL



B.K. SHEILU

Various religious traditions contain references to paradise, which is described as a place or period of complete happiness, with no trace of sorrow.

When or where was this paradise? Does it still exist somewhere? Many people believe that paradise or heaven is a place above, or apart from, our world. That is why people are said to ascend to heaven after death. Mythological tales describe angels escorting virtuous souls to heaven. Similarly,

hell is believed to be the nether world where souls are flung to suffer for their sins.

In fact, heaven and hell exist in this very world at different points of time. They are not distinct places but qualitatively different periods in the cycle of world history.

Our world is heaven during the Golden Age, when only deities, or people with divine qualities, exist. The deities are aware of their true identity - that they are souls, not bodies. Consequently they are free from the influence of vices, which arise from identifying the self with the body. Being completely virtuous, they lead a life of unalloyed happiness.

Such a world seems to be a fantasy when we look at the current state of affairs. If heaven existed on this very planet, how has it turned into the violent, chaotic place it is today?

It is vices that turn heaven



When everyone becomes completely virtuous, this world becomes heaven.

into hell. With the passage of time, as souls interact with matter, they are gradually influenced by it. Their purity diminishes and they lose awareness of subtle truths. The physical begins to feel more real than the metaphysical. They lose their awareness of being

souls and start to identify themselves as bodies. This gross consciousness gives rise to vices such as lust, anger, greed, and ego.

Lust, the strongest vice, robs us of purity and dignity. The honour that chastity brings is evident even in today's world, where celibate

monks and nuns are looked up to. In some cultures, virgins are worshipped on certain festive occasions. In contrast, those who trade in vice are looked down upon and often live as social outcasts.

Anger robs the soul of peace and pains the self as

well as others. It impairs the intellect, whereby we cannot make correct decisions. Angry individuals cause unease and disturbance wherever they go, so they are unwelcome and shunned by others.

Greed makes us acquisitive and does not allow us to

be content even in the midst of abundance. It denies us the blessings that are earned by giving and sharing. Greed also destroys our scruples, leading to corruption and crime.

Attachment is not recognised as a vice by most people. It subtly holds us in bondage to whatever we are attached to. Our happiness is then dependent on the object of our attachment: if it is harmed or taken away from us, we suffer.

Unlike attachment, ego is easily identified as a vice because of the hurt it clearly causes. The bigger our ego, the less we respect others. We end up losing respect, and that hurts all the more because an egoist expects to be respected, and when that does not happen, they feel insulted. Ego also makes us rigid and damages relationships, ultimately leaving us unloved and isolated.

This is how vices bring sorrow and gradually turn heaven into hell. The Gita

says that when viciousness reaches extreme proportions, God incarnates Himself to re-establish a righteous world order.

He does that by reminding us that we are souls, His children: we are not weak and helpless but actually virtuous and powerful like Him. When souls are reawakened to their true identity, and become fully aware of who they really are and who their Father is, there is a qualitative shift in their consciousness. No longer insecure, needy, or selfish, they become joyous, generous, and strong - givers rather than takers. A world inhabited by such souls is naturally full of happiness.

This is how the victory of good over evil ushers in the Golden Age, or heaven, once again.

B.K. Sheilu is a Rajyoga teacher at the Brahma Kumaris headquarters in Mount Abu, Rajasthan.

## Boost your resilience – simple habits for a stronger mindset



GITTE HULDEN

Resilience can be likened to the tension in a stretched rubber band. A strong rubber band will be able to withstand a great deal of pressure, but it can only go so far, until at one point it snaps. It will not suddenly snap of its own accord; it will have been stretched beyond its point of elasticity, which is roughly ten times its length. The same thing happens to us, unless we develop a way of meeting challenges without the need to stretch ourselves beyond our limits. We can build up resilience, so that our mind and abilities are flexible and strong, and we can stretch to meet testing times, and still bounce back to our original state of peace.

A balanced life needs rest and sleep, good nutrition,

and regular exercise. We can also balance our spiritual life through meditation, spiritual study, putting what we learn into practice, and finding ways to be of service to others. If we look at a 24-hour period, there are habits we can adopt to incorporate practices that will heighten our resilience.

Starting with the early morning, we can devote some time to ourselves and build a foundation for the day. We need to start our morning a little earlier than most, so that we have access to uninterrupted time. When we start the day with meditation, and recharge the battery of the soul by connecting with the Supreme source of spiritual energy, the Supreme Soul, we are compiling a bank of energy.

We are ready then to study spiritual truths that enrich our mind and intellect. Spiritual study is fascinating, and not only serious, but full of fun and playfulness. There are moments of great understanding and insights into our own progress. Throughout the day we will find opportunities to put what we learn in the early morning into practice. Once we do that, those



Connecting with the Supreme Soul and downloading His spiritual power boosts our resilience.

qualities and abilities become our own. In so doing, we bring benefit to the self, as it brings out the best in us, and we also influence others. It is said that each person affects at least 20 others.

However, there are three special practices that literally transform the way we deal with what the day holds in

store.

The first is to understand that all fears have their roots in fear of death. The powerful and liberating understanding that no-one ever really dies removes all fear. The body finishes but the consciousness never dies. The consciousness or soul simply moves on to a new physical identity, like

changing clothes. We need have no fear of anything.

Secondly, when we learn how to become a detached observer, we can make our own movie. The moment we begin to watch our life unfold as if it were a movie or a cartoon show, we immediately gain power and perspective. We are above everything while

still being a part of everything. We gain such perspective, that we can find humour in most of the trivial situations that otherwise would bother us.

Finally, in the evenings we can rewrite our story. At the end of each day, we can keep a diary or journal and examine how the day unfolded. If we find mistakes, then with detachment and wisdom we can see what went wrong and how we can act differently the next time we are in a similar situation. The power of writing at the end of the day is not to be underestimated, especially if we take time to list all the things we are truly grateful for. An attitude of gratitude greatly strengthens our resilience.

The key to it all is to find the time to engage in early morning meditation. To deeply connect with the self, and then through a connection with the Supreme Soul, download and absorb all the spiritual power we need to become mentally strong and resilient.

Gitte Hulden is the National Coordinator for the Brahma Kumaris in Finland.

### A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Somewhere inside, I remember a better version of myself. This is why I get upset when I act in lesser ways. It's frustrating to not be my best. But how do I know what my best is? I have a benchmark recorded in my memory that acts as a reminder of what I was and what I can be. The harsh voice of criticism may have come later from someone else, but the memory of my highest standard is recorded within me. Today let me honour my memory of greatness and seek to restore myself to my best.

## Smile, and the world changes



JIM RYAN

Each smile is an energy that generates an atmosphere of well-being, and each smile moves and draws everyone into a world of goodwill and loving feelings. Smiling is the yogic art of facial communication that transmits our intention of supportive energy.

However, when we are not sure or fully engaged, we hold back, smile and acknowledge, but only with our eyes, and when we disagree or disapprove, our lips widen into a smile, but our eyes are inactive, and our face is still. In both cases, we are critical and

reticent, not connecting or supporting; we are passive critics. Sometimes, we meet the crooked smile of deceit or deception; however, reciprocating with a smile of truthful kindness, we offer a mirror that disarms, and reminds each one of what is correct and authentic.

When we smile, a soft wave of well-being flows through us, full of acceptance and benign good feelings. We all love to smile and receive a smile in return. It is the language and currency of positive relationships. It signals to others that you are friendly, kind, and mean no harm, and the reciprocating smile acknowledges that they are also the same. The smile arises from each one's inner truth. It is a unique moment of spiritual unity beyond the forms and norms of the limitations of language, role, and gender. It is a subtle expression of the soul's pure nature; transcending the turmoil of the divisive energies of fear and need.

A smile has incredible



Smiling is a simple way to express values, truth, and friendship.

power. It breaks down barriers and draws the mind away from the shadows of misapprehension and fear. Smiling becomes a pathway, sometimes the only way to express values, truth, and friendship, especially when the effects of our chaotic and aggressive world block our channels of communication in relationships.

The basis and fuel for the

power. It breaks down barriers and draws the mind away from the shadows of misapprehension and fear. Smiling becomes a pathway, sometimes the only way to express values, truth, and friendship, especially when the effects of our chaotic and aggressive world block our channels of communication in relationships.

Thus empowered and reassured, we wear an inner smile that becomes a sun

*The smile arises from each one's inner truth. It is a unique moment of spiritual unity beyond the forms and norms of the limitations of language, role, and gender. It is a subtle expression of the soul's pure nature; transcending the turmoil of the divisive energies of fear and need.*

energy of our smile is spiritual self-awareness. As we link to God's great power, we become a channel for a beautiful flow of lightness, happiness, and good wishes. Our smile becomes the flame of spiritual power crowning the candle of eter-

of hope for all our brothers. We create a smile that lasts forever.

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



# BOLAND, STARC SHINE AS INDIA FALL FOR 185; BUMRAH'S LATE STRIKE GIVES INDIA CHEER

# Bumrah outshines Virat in batting stat as slump continues

TDG NETWORK  
SYDNEY

A fine bowling performance by red-hot Scott Boland pushed India to a low score despite fighting knocks from Rishabh Pant and Ravindra Jadeja but a wicket from skipper Jasprit Bumrah on the last ball of the day's play gave India something to cheer about in the fifth and final Test against Australia at Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) on Friday.

Australia ended the session at 9/1, with Sam Konstas (7<sup>th</sup>) unbeaten.

India resumed the final session at 107/4, with Rishabh Pant (32<sup>nd</sup>) and Ravindra Jadeja (11<sup>th</sup>) unbeaten.

India's struggles against Scott Boland continued as a fine delivery from him saw Pant mistime a shot and throw the ball into hands of skipper Pat Cummins at midwicket. Pant was gone for 40 in 98 balls, with three fours and a six. India was 120/5 in 56.4 overs.

Boland was on a hat-trick as just on the next ball, he got the big wicket of in-form Nitish Kumar Reddy for a duck after being caught by Steve Smith at slips. India was 120/6.

Jadeja's fighting knock of



26 in 95 balls, with three fours was also ended by Mitchell Starc, who trapped him leg-before-wicket. India was 134/7 in 62.4 overs.

Later in a controversial decision, Washington Sundar was given out for just 14 in 30 balls, as he fell to skipper Cummins. He was caught behind by Alex Carey while attempting a pull, but despite doubts over whether the ball hit his bat or gloves, he was given out. India was

148/8 in 66 overs.

Prasidh Krishna was next to go, dismissed by Starc and caught by Sam Konstas at deep backward square leg for just three. India was 168/9 in 68.2 overs.

Bumrah's fighting knock of 22 in 17 balls, with two fours and a six was ended by Cummins, with an easy catch to Starc at midwicket. India was bundled out for 185 in 72.2 overs.

Boland (4/31) was the pick

BRIEF SCORES

**INDIA:** 185 (Rishabh Pant 40, Ravindra Jadeja 26, Scott Boland 4/31) vs **AUSTRALIA:** 9/1.

of the bowlers for the Aussies and once again a thorn in the eyes of Indian batters. Starc took 3/49 while Cummins got 2/37.

Opens Usman Khawaja

and Sam Konstas came out for Australia. On the last ball of the session, Khawaja lost his wicket to Bumrah for just two runs, giving KL Rahul a catch at slips. Australia ended the day on a poor note, with momentum on India's side.

At Tea, India stood at 107/4, with Rishabh Pant (32<sup>nd</sup>) and Ravindra Jadeja (11<sup>th</sup>) unbeaten on the crease.

India resumed the second session at 57/3, with Virat

Kohli (12<sup>th</sup>) unbeaten at the crease and tried to build on a partnership with Rishabh Pant, who replaced Gill after Lunch.

At a time when the Aussies were disciplined under their bowling attack, the Indian batters looked unsettled at the crease.

One of the main talking points from the second session will be Pant's attacking approach which continued at the Sydney Test. The India wicketkeeper-batter suffered three body blows against the Aussie pacers in the second session. The Australian bowling attack didn't show any mercy on the visitors as they continued to deliver bouncers.

India crossed the 100-run mark in the 48th over. All credit goes to the partnership of Jadeja and Pant, who cemented a 35-run stand after facing 111 balls.

India scored 50 runs in the second session, meanwhile, the Aussie bowling attack could take just one wicket.

In the 32nd over, Scott Boland got rid of Virat Kohli for 17 runs. Kohli's performance will be a talking point after the end of the prestigious series, as the talisman India batter was dismissed in the same manner after getting an outside-off edge.



TDG NETWORK  
SYDNEY

Star India batter Virat Kohli's latest failure in Test Cricket has witnessed him joining an unfortunate list of players, involving bowlers like Jasprit Bumrah, Keshav Maharaj and Shoaib Bashir instead of batters. He has the second-lowest average while batting in first innings of a Test since 2024 and has been outshined by many tailenders, including Bumrah.

Virat achieved this unique, but an absolutely undesirable stat during the Sydney Test against Australia, which is the fifth and final Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. During his innings, Virat battled hard for 69 balls and got out for just 17 runs without a boundary. His struggles with the outside off stump deliveries continued and pacer Scott Boland dismissed him for the third

time in this series.

Since the start of 2024, Virat has batted in the first innings of a Test five times and scored just 35 runs across five innings at an average of 7.00 and best score of 17.

In the first innings, he has had scores of 17, 7, 5, 0 and 6.

Virat has the second-lowest Test average since 2024 while batting in the first innings of a Test, with South African spinner Keshav having an average of 5.4 with 27 runs in five innings and the best score of 24.

At third is English spinner Shoaib Bashir with an average of 8.33, with 25 runs in seven innings and best score of 11.

Virat has been outshined even by pace spearhead Bumrah in this regard, who has had a batting average of 10 while batting in the first innings since 2024, scoring 70 runs in seven innings with the best score of 26.

## Rohit's road ahead: Tough to see 'Hitman' in India jersey beyond Champions Trophy

AGENCIES  
SYDNEY

The recent Melbourne Test against Australia was possibly Rohit Sharma's last appearance for India in the traditional format, but will this white ball colossus continue beyond next month's Champions Trophy is the million dollar question.

Rohit's absence from the ongoing fifth Test might have been sugarcoated as "opted to rest" by everyone concerned but if one cuts through the niceties, he is as good as dropped.

When the name in talks is as big as Rohit, who has given his everything for the country for the past 17 years, his future appearances could be open to conjecture.

As it is, he has retired from T20 Internationals post India's victory in the ICC World Cup earlier this year in the West Indies.

The selectors will certainly have discussions after the Australia series and the roadmap for both Rohit and Virat Kohli will be decided.

The wisemen will now have to sit together to pick the team for the England bilateral series at home and the Champions Trophy.

Obviously, the longevity of



Kohli's Test career hinges on the second innings at Sydney and it is increasingly becoming difficult to carry him for the England series unless he makes a significant contribution here.

So, is there a way forward for Rohit, the Test cricketer? Unfortunately, the next Test match that India will play if they don't qualify for the World Test Championship (WTC) final is against England from June 18-22 in Leeds.

Of course, the selection committee will take call only after the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, but someone as intelligent as Rohit, a T20

World Cup and five-time IPL winning skipper, knows that it is difficult to add to his 67 Test appearances.

Having been "nudged" into taking rest here, does Rohit have it in him to slog it out in the domestic cricket when Ranji Trophy resumes later this month, as there will be no red ball cricket available for him before the England tour?

If yes, then Rohit is sending out a message to go out on his own terms.

The selectors can decide not to select him for Tests but whether to quit a format is the player's sole prerogative and he is answerable to

none.

But if the answer is a no, then, logically the Ajit Agarkar committee cannot pick a 38-year-old for the next World Test Championship cycle that runs from 2025-2027.

So, what Rohit has in his calendar if he does not get picked for Test matches? Three ODIs against visiting England and the Champions Trophy before the IPL.

The one-dayers are no longer the most sought after bilateral format as most teams keep them confined to just three games.

Once the Champions Trophy is over, the next ODI bilateral rubber is against Bangladesh in August, and the next big 50-over event, the World Cup, is in South Africa in 2027.

Rohit will be 40 by then. Will he be in prime form or fitness to play a blue riband tournament with a good 9 to 11 games in a space of six weeks including travel?

Hence, the Champions Trophy looks like a fitting international swansong.

If India happens to win the event, Rohit will be the only captain apart from Mahendra Singh Dhoni to win two ICC events as captain.

## Boland continues rampaging form, completes 50 Test wickets for Australia

TDG NETWORK  
SYDNEY

Australian pacer Scott Boland continued his rampaging form in the ongoing Border-Gavaskar Trophy, completing his 50 Test wickets on Friday. Boland reached this milestone during his side's fifth and final Test against India at Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG).

Boland was exceptional in the first innings, removing four players for just 31 runs in his 20 wickets at an economy rate of 1.60. He got scalps of dangerous Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli and Nitish Kumar Reddy and troubled the batting line-up with his impeccable lines and lengths.

He is the fifth-highest wicket-taker in the series so far, with 15 scalps in three matches at a brilliant average of 15.46, with best figures of 4/31. He has taken the prized scalp of Virat three times in the series and troubled him with the outside off-stump length.

In 13 matches, Boland has taken 50 wickets at a sub-20 average of 18.88, with best figures of 6/7. His record in home conditions remains incredible, with 43 scalps in nine matches at an average of 13.34 and best figures of 6/7.

Against India in five Tests, Boland has taken 20 wickets at an average of 18.55, with best figures of 4/31.

At the age of 35 years and 267 days, he is the oldest seamer to get to 50 Test wickets since New Zealand's Bevan Congdon (37y 10d) reached the milestone in February 1975.

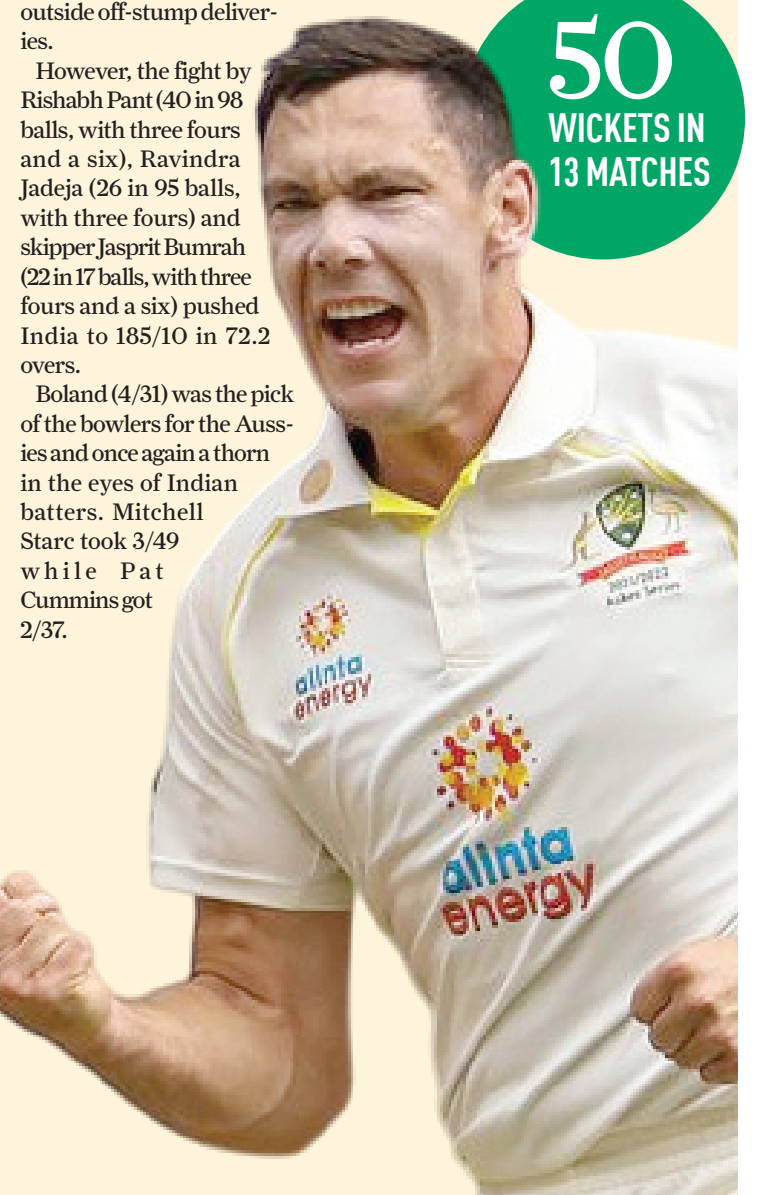
Coming to the match, India won the toss and elected to bat first. India was off to a disappointing start yet again as the top order threw away their wickets, especially Virat Kohli (17) who continued his struggles with

outside off-stump deliveries.

However, the fight by Rishabh Pant (40 in 98 balls, with three fours and a six), Ravindra Jadeja (26 in 95 balls, with three fours) and skipper Jasprit Bumrah (22 in 17 balls, with three fours and a six) pushed India to 185/10 in 72.2 overs.

Boland (4/31) was the pick of the bowlers for the Aussies and once again a thorn in the eyes of Indian batters. Mitchell Starc took 3/49 while Pat Cummins got 2/37.

50  
WICKETS IN  
13 MATCHES



Grandmaster Koneru Humpy on Friday met Prime Minister Narendra Modi after her recent triumph in the FIDE Women's World Rapid Chess Championship and described it as a 'once-in-a-lifetime privilege'. X

## 'Arjuna Award a dream, brings more responsibility'

TDG NETWORK  
ROURKELA

After being conferred with the Arjuna Award by the central government, Indian hockey stars Jarmanpreet Singh and Sanjay Kumar said that more responsibilities and motivation come to a player when they get conferred with national awards and they will continue playing good hockey and working harder for their country.

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

performance in Sports and Games 2024.

Speaking to media in Rourkela, Jarmanpreet and Sanjay, who are playing in the ongoing Hockey India League (HIL) for Delhi SG Pipers and Kalinga Lancers respectively, expressed their happiness on their accomplishment.

Jarmanpreet said to ANI, "It is the dream of an athlete to receive the Arjuna award and when you get to know that you are going to receive this, it is very exciting. It also brings more responsibilities on your shoulders when you get a



national award. I am very happy" Sanjay also said that his family and friends have offered him a lot of support in his career. "Then came the village coaches, the Chandigarh Hockey Academy, I kept getting support as I rose to the Indian national camp.

I would like to give credit to the Indian hockey team because we performed very well in the Olympics and won medals... This award will motivate me to work harder and win more medals for the country."

Double Olympic medalist Manu Bhaker, World Chess Champion Gukesh Dommaraju, Indian men's hockey

team captain Harmanpreet Singh and Para Athlete Praveen Kumar have been awarded the prestigious Khel Ratna, according to a statement by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports.

The Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports on Thursday announced the National Sports Awards 2024.

"Today, the Government of India has announced the names of players, coaches, universities and institutions in various categories for the National Sports Awards - 2024. This is not just an award, it is an honour for your tireless hard work and for giving the country a moment of pride."