



4
KTR ACCUSES CONG OF BETRAYING TELANGANA FARMERS



11
ISRAEL RAZES GAZA NEIGHBORHOOD OVERLOOKING SDEROT



16
AUSTRALIA CRUISE TO SIX-WICKET VICTORY

PM MODI DOUBLES DOWN ON 'AAPDA' ATTACK

■ No welfare scheme to be shut if BJP comes to power in Delhi: PM

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday accused Delhi's AAP government of wasting a decade fighting with the Centre and urged its people to give the BJP an opportunity to turn the national capital into a city of the future.

The Prime Minister also assured that no public welfare scheme would be discontinued if the BJP assumed power but the party's government would weed out the corruption in their implementation.

Addressing a rally in the Rohini area, Modi dubbed the AAP government a "disaster" that had struck Delhi and asserted the BJP would usher in change.

"Only when this 'aapda (disaster)' is gotten rid of in Delhi, the double-engine of development will come in," Modi said.

He said the Centre had been developing highways in Delhi, expanding the Metro network, starting the Namo Bharat Regional Rapid Transit System, and running big hospitals.

"However, the moment you step out of a Metro sta-

tion, you can see potholed roads, overflowing sewers. Some areas are such that even auto and cab drivers refuse to ply due to long traffic jams," he said.

"In the past 10 years, Delhi has witnessed a state government that is no less than an 'aapda (disaster)'. Delhiites have realised this. Only one voice is reverberating in Delhi -- 'Aapda nahi sahenge, badal kar rahenge (will not tolerate disaster, will bring change)," Modi said.

The Prime Minister said when the people of Delhi were grappling with COVID-19, struggling to find oxygen and medicines, the entire focus of the "aapda people" was on building their "Sheesh Mahal".

"They made a huge budget for the 'Sheesh Mahal'. This is their truth... They do not care about the people of Delhi. That is why every Delhiite today is saying... 'we will not tolerate aapda, we will change,'" he said.

Modi also accused the AAP government of spreading fear that a BJP government in Delhi would discontinue several welfare schemes implemented by it. ■ P3



PM Modi waves to the gathering during the BJP's 'Parivartan Rally' ahead of the Delhi Assembly polls, at Japanese Park Rohini, in New Delhi on Sunday. Union Minister Manohar Lal, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva among others are also seen. (ANI Photo/Amit Sharma)

13-km section of RRTS corridor thrown open

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday inaugurated a 13-km section of the Delhi-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) corridor from Sahibabad in Uttar Pradesh to New Ashok Nagar here. Modi also took a ride on a Namo Bharat train

from Sahibabad station to New Ashok Nagar station. During his journey, the Prime Minister interacted with children and people. With the inauguration of the Delhi section of the RRTS, Namo Bharat trains have now arrived in the national capital. ■ P3

Kejriwal hits back at PM

NEW DELHI: Aam Aadmi Party national convenor Arvind Kejriwal came out heavily against Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday, over his 'AAP-DA' jibe at the Delhi government and accused the Bharatiya Janata Party of not fulfilling the promises made to ■ P3

Dallewal's health worsens a day after Mahapanchayat

NEERAJ MOHAN & TARUNI GANDHI
CHANDIGARH

After addressing the Kisan Mahapanchayat at Khanauri border, farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal suffered a severe health setback.

Dallewal, who has been on the fast unto death for the past 41 days, reportedly felt dizzy and vomited due to a sudden drop in blood pressure after addressing the gathering on Saturday. He was carried back to his tent, and a medical team immediately attended to him. Former DIG Narinder Bhargav, who has been involved in backchannel talks with the farmer leader, rushed to the site along with a health department team on standby.

Doctors issued a medical bulletin stating that Dallewal's liver, kidneys, and lungs have been severely affected



Farmer's Leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal delivers a speech during 'Kisan Mahapanchayat' at the Khanauri border amid ongoing protests over various demands, in Sangrur on Saturday.

A medical bulletin said Dallewal's liver, kidneys and lungs have been affected due to hunger strike. Even if he ends strike, there is a risk that his organs may not fully recover.

due to the prolonged hunger strike. Even if he ends his strike, they warned, there is a risk that his organs may not fully recover.

Before the event, Dallewal underwent medical tests, including blood, urine, and ECG, which confirmed his vitals were stable. He was then brought to the stage in an ambulance to deliver his address, during which he appealed ■ P3

Haryana's sex ratio at birth at 8-year low, Beti Bachao campaign a damp squib

Just 910 girls born per 1,000 boys in 2024

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

Haryana's sex ratio at birth has plunged to its lowest since 2016, with just 910 girls born per 1,000 boys in 2024, marking a six-point decline from the previous year.

The data by the Haryana Health Department revealed the sex ratio at birth dipped to 910 female births per 1,000 male births in 2024 which

is the lowest after 2016 when it stood at 900-underscoring the persistent societal biases against girl children and the failure of legal frameworks to curb female foeticide effectively.

In 2015, Haryana had reported the worst sex-ratio with 876 girls born against 1,000 boys. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had chosen Haryana's Panipat to launch Beti Bachao-Beti Padoos campaign. But the figures marks slight improvement in the past five months as the state recorded an SRB of just 905 female births per 1,000 male births till October 2024.

In 2024, five districts in Haryana reported a sex ratio below 900 as Charkhi Dadri (869) remained worst followed by Faridabad (899), Gurugram (899), Rewari (873), and Rohtak (888).

The steepest declines in the sex ratio between 2023 and 2024 were seen in Charkhi Dadri -down by 28 points, Palwal -37 points, and Gurugram witnessed a decline of 29 points. On the other hand, Yamunanagar recorded the highest sex ratio at birth in the state at 939, followed by Sirsa at 936 and Fatehabad ■ P3

Bidhuri's sexist remark stirs controversy

NEW DELHI: Bharatiya Janata Party candidate from Kalkaji constituency, Ramesh Bidhuri on Sunday expressed regret over his controversial remarks about Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra amid Congress outrage. Bidhuri clarified that his comments were made in the context of remarks by Lalu Yadav and emphasized that the Congress party had remained silent when similar statements



were made during his tenure as a minister. This came following a video of Bidhuri shared by AAP MP Sanjay Singh on X, where he stated that they would make all the roads in Kalkaji like the "cheeks of Priyanka Gandhi" if BJP comes to power. Ramesh Bidhuri, courted controversy by allegedly saying that after victory in the Delhi Assembly polls next month, he will develop smooth roads in the constituency like Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi's "cheeks". ■ DETAILS P6

Dense fog throws normal life out of gear in North India

Nine people killed in road accidents in Haryana alone

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

North India remained under the grip of dense fog and freezing cold, leading to major disruptions in daily life with transport being hit hard. Tragically, road accidents have claimed nine lives in Haryana.

The fog reduced visibility to zero across several states, severely affecting air, rail, and road travel. Over 400 flights and 80 trains were delayed, leaving thousands

of passengers stranded in overcrowded waiting rooms, including Ambala Cantonment. Shatabdi trains were running late by several hours.

Low visibility caused multiple accidents across Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan. In Haryana alone, nine people lost their lives, and over 65 vehicles were damaged in crashes reported from Hisar, Karnal, Panipat, Sonapat, Bahadurgarh, and Gurugram.

A tragic incident occurred in Hisar's Uklana, where rescuers trying to help after a car accident were hit by a truck, killing two people. In separate incidents, seven more people died in different

part of Haryana.

In Punjab, three women died when a bus carrying farmers to a mahapanchayat overturned due to the fog.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has warned that dense fog will continue in states like Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan until January 9, especially during late-night and early-morning hours. Rain caused by a western disturbance may offer some relief by improving visibility.

While the foggy weather is beneficial for wheat crops, agricultural experts warn that prolonged cold conditions could harm vegetables, potentially leading to a price increase. ■ P3

4 killed as car skids off road, plunges into river in J&K

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Four people were killed after their vehicle skidded off the road, rolled down a hill and fell into a river in Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday, police said.

Two persons, including the driver, are missing and a rescue operation is underway. The accident took place in the Paddar area, a police official said.

Police did not immediately identify the vehicle. Union Minister Jitendra ■ P3

4 Naxals, a cop killed in search ops in Chhattisgarh

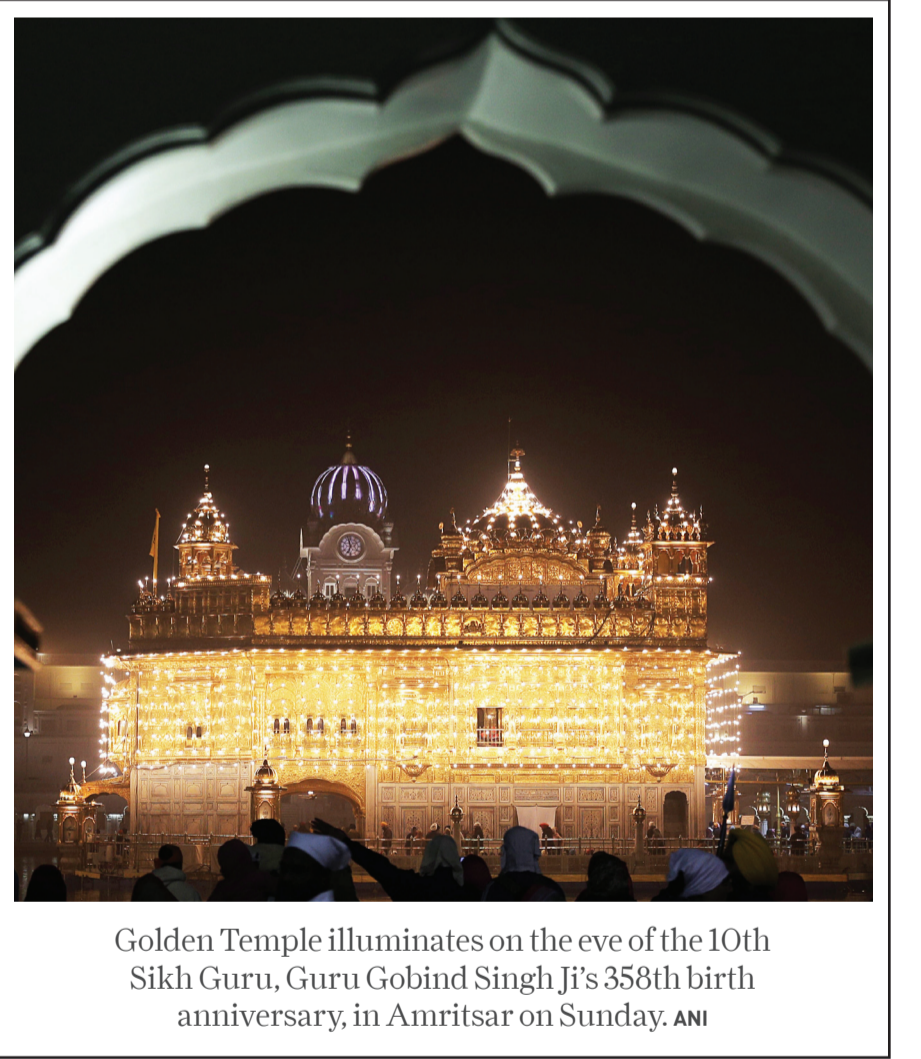
AGENCIES
DANTEWADA (CHHATTISGARH)

Four Naxals were killed during a joint anti-Naxal search operation in the South Abujmahar forest area at the Narayanpurdantewada district border of Chhattisgarh, according to Inspector General of Bastar, P Sundarraj.

As per Sundarraj, Head Constable Sannu Karam of the District Reserve Guard (DRG) was also killed in action during the operation.

The operation was ■ P3

HARYANA'S SEX RATIO AT BIRTH	
YAMUNANAGAR recorded the highest sex ratio at birth in the state at 939 .	
832	in 2012
868	in 2013
871	in 2014
876	in 2015
900	in 2016
914	in 2017, 2018, and 2021
923	the highest figures were recorded in 2019
922	in 2020
917	in 2022
916	in 2023



Golden Temple illuminates on the eve of the 10th Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji's 358th birth anniversary, in Amritsar on Sunday. ANI

DAYS AFTER LALU'S OFFER, COMES A SNUB FROM NITISH

The JD(U) supremo made the remark days after Prasad, a former CM himself, had claimed that the RJD was keeping its "doors open" for the former ally, who is now back in the BJP-led NDA.

TDG NETWORK
PATNA

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Sunday snubbed the RJD, headed by his arch-rival Lalu Prasad, stating that he had forged alliances "by mistake" with the opposition party which "did nothing" while in power.

The JD(U) supremo made the remark days after Prasad, a former CM himself, had claimed that the RJD was keeping its "doors open" for the former ally, who is now back in the BJP-led NDA.

Talking to reporters in the north Bihar district of Muzaffarpur, as part of a state-wide Pragati Yatra, Kumar said, "Those who were in power before us...

THE CRITICISM

- Nitish Kumar criticized RJD, calling alliances with them a "mistake."
- Kumar highlighted improvements for women, citing self-help groups (Jivika).
- Refused to comment on Lalu Prasad's offer for re-alignment.
- RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav downplayed Prasad's offer.
- BJP leaders support Kumar as the NDA's CM candidate for 2025 elections.



Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar with others during a visit to Ramdayalu Nagar area during his Pragati Yatra, in Muzaffarpur, Sunday, Jan 5, 2025.

did they do anything? People used to fear stepping out of their homes after sunset. I had by mistake aligned with them a

couple of times."

"What was the condition of women back then? Today you can see these self-help groups,

which we gave the name 'Jivika'. The Centre replicated our model and called it 'Ajivika'. Did you see such confident rural

Om Birla to inaugurate 'Panchayat se Parliament 2.0' today

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will be inaugurating the second edition of the oneday programme "Panchayat Se Parliament" on Monday at the Central Hall of Samvidhan Sadan, as per an official statement.

The programme is being organised in commemoration of the 150th birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsa Munda and will include workshops, sessions, and a guided tour of key locations such as the new Parliament House, Samvidhan Sadan, Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya, and Rashtrapati Bhawan.

The programme will bring together 502 elected women representatives from Scheduled Tribes across 22 states and Union Territories. Its primary focus is to empower these women representatives from Panchayati Raj institutions by enhancing their understanding of consti-



Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to inaugurate 'Panchayat se Parliament 2.0' today.

titutional provisions, parliamentary procedures, and governance. The programme also aims to recognise the contributions of these representatives in areas such as education and rural development.

Interactive workshops and sessions

will also be held, moderated by experts and Members of Parliament. Topics will include constitutional provisions related to women, with a special focus on the 73rd Amendment and the Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) (PESA) Act, as well as government schemes addressing tribal issues.

The Lok Sabha Speaker will also lead the delegates in reading the Preamble to the Constitution of India during the event. The event will be attended by several dignitaries, including Union Minister for Women and Child Development Annapurna Devi, Chairperson of the National Commission for Women Vijaya Rahatkar, and others. Utpal Kumar Singh, Secretary-General of Lok Sabha will deliver the welcome address, and Union Minister of Tribal Affairs, Jual Oram, will address the second session later in the day.

Bajwa seeks Bharat Ratna for Late PM Manmohan Singh

TARUNI GANDHI
CHANDIGARH

Congress leader Partap Singh Bajwa has called for a joint resolution in the Punjab Assembly to recommend the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour, for former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. In a letter to Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and Assembly Speaker Kultar Singh Sandhwan, Bajwa proposed the initiative to recognise Singh's "monumental contributions to India's progress and his exemplary service to the nation."

Bajwa also reached out to BJP Legislative Party leader Ashwani Sharma, Shiromani Akali Dal MLA Manpreet Singh Ayali, and Bahujan Samaj Party lawmaker Natch-



Congress leader Partap Singh Bajwa

hatar Pal, suggesting the formation of an all-party delegation to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and advocate for conferring the honour on Singh.

Manmohan Singh, widely regarded as the architect of India's economic liberalisation, passed away on December 26 at the age of 92 due to age-related complications. Bajwa highlighted Singh's pivotal role in shaping modern India, particularly his tenure

as the principal architect of the 1991 economic reforms and as Prime Minister, where he prioritised inclusive growth, social justice, and economic stability.

In his letter, Bajwa described Singh as a unifying force in Indian politics, whose calm demeanour and intellectual acumen transcended political boundaries. He emphasised Singh's contributions to Punjab, particularly in addressing challenges in agriculture, rural development, and education.

Bajwa shared his proposal on social media, stating, "Honouring Dr Singh with the Bharat Ratna will celebrate his extraordinary contributions and reaffirm our shared commitment to democracy, integrity, and excellence in public service."

26 Myanmarese deported to their country: Manipur CM

TDG NETWORK
IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Sunday said 26 Myanmarese, who entered India through the state's border, were deported to their country. Singh also said his government is committed to act against illegal immigration.

In a post on X, the chief minister said, "A group of 26 Myanmar nationals, who entered India through Manipur's porous border, were deported to their home country today."

Singh also said that the state government "reaffirms its commitment to providing humanitarian assistance to those seeing war, ensuring their care and dignified departure".

Coast Guard helicopter crash: 3 crew members die

TDG NETWORK
PORBANDAR

Two pilots and an aircrew diver of an Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) of the Indian Coast Guard were killed when the chopper crashed and caught fire at Gujarat's Porbandar airport on Sunday, government authorities said.

The crew members killed in the accident are Commandant Saurabh, Deputy Commandant SK Yadav and Manoj Pradhan Navik, according to the defence ministry.

Porbandar Superintendent of Police Bhagirathsinh Jadeja said the helicopter was returning from a routine sortie and crashed while trying to land on the runway.

The chopper crashed near the runway and caught fire. The blaze was later brought under control with the help of a fire tender, he said.

The three crew members were brought out of the



Rescue work underway after a helicopter of the Indian Coast Guard crashed during landing at Porbandar airport, Gujarat, 5 January, 2025.

chopper and rushed to a hospital in Porbandar in a severely burnt condition, he said.

The defence ministry said the ALH MK-III helicopter met with the accident at the airport's runway at around 12:15 pm.

"An ALH MK-III helicopter of Indian Coast Guard met with an accident at Porbandar airport runway in Gujarat at about 1215 hours

on January 5. The ICG helicopter, with two pilots and one aircrew diver, was on a routine training sortie," the ministry said in a statement.

It said immediately after the incident, the crew were taken to a government hospital, Porbandar, where they were declared brought dead.

The reasons leading to the incident are being investigated by a Board of Inquiry.

BJD opposes Centre's move to split Waltair railway division from ECoR

TDG NETWORK
BHUBANESWAR

The opposition BJD on Sunday raised concerns over the Centre's move to delink the Waltair division from the East Coast Railway zone, claiming that the "unilateral" decision would result in "severe economic repercussions for Odisha".

The party questioned the alleged silence of the state's BJP government on the "critical" issue.

The BJD, however, welcomed the establishment of a new railway division at Rayagada, the foundation stone for which will be laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday.

The BJD welcomed the establishment of a new railway division at Rayagada, the foundation stone for which will be laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday.

"Delinking the Waltair division, a revenue-generating part, from East Coast Railway, is a move aimed solely at appeasing Andhra Pradesh," BJD leader Brugu Baxipatra said at a press conference.

BJD MLA Rupesh Panigrahi, and former MP Pradeep Majhi, were also present at the press meet.

They expressed strong reservations about the central gov-

ernment's move and claimed that the Waltair zone is one of the largest revenue-generating divisions in the ECoR jurisdiction.

"The decision to split the division and transfer ECoR's key revenue-earning part to the South Coast Railway zone is nothing short of an attempt to appease Andhra Pradesh, particularly its political leadership," Baxipatra said.

He highlighted the significance of the Waltair division, which covers over 1,052 kilometres of rail routes, including the Kottavalasa-Kirandul (KK) line, one of the country's biggest freight revenue earners.

The Waltair division is also home to the largest diesel locomotive shed in Indian Railways with the capacity to accommodate 300 diesel locomotives.

As a division that surpassed the 75 million tonne mark in loading and exceeded Rs 10,000 crore in revenue earnings by March 31, 2024, he said.

The Waltair zone ranked among the top revenue-earning and freight-loading divisions in the country, he added.

WOMAN POWER



Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal women's wing participate in a rally to spread women's awareness, in Mumbai on Sunday.

Kumbh Mela: Self-floating propelled jetty, VIP baths set up to enhance pilgrim experience

TDG NETWORK
PRAYAGRAJ

The special arrangements for Maha Kumbh devotees, including a floating self-propelled jetty for VIP bathing experience away from the crowd at Sangam have been set up this time to provide a seamless spiritual experience.

The self-propelled jetty is developed by the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur.

Prof Ranadev Datta of IIT Kharagpur said the government is making special arrangements for devotees at the Maha Kumbh.

"This time on the occasion



of Maha Kumbh, the government is going to make some different arrangements for the devotees. If the devotees bathing in Sangam want to take a VIP bath away from

the crowd then a floating self-propelled jetty is being constructed for them. Das & Kumar Company of Varanasi has been given the responsibility of building the VVIP

POLICE GOES DIGITAL TO RECORD ATTENDANCE

Prayagraj : The Uttar Pradesh Police has decided to digitally record the attendance of their officers at the Maha Kumbh 2025 while paving the idea of 'Digital Kumbh.' According to a statement by UP Police, this has saved time that was spent in taking attendance of personnel and also allowed for easier maintenance of records.

"Uttar Pradesh Police is realising the vision of Yogi government's digital Maha Kumbh. The attendance of police personnel, which was recorded on paper earlier has become

digital attendance in Maha Kumbh," the statement mentioned.

"All the police personnel who have come for duty in Maha Kumbh-2025 are being trained for duty in the fair. The attendance of all the police personnel undergoing training is being recorded biometrically," it added.

Around 50,000 police personnel have been deployed to ensure that the devotees will be having a safe bathing experience to 40 crore participants attending the Kumbh.

jetty. This work is going on at a fast pace in Arai," he said. Yash Agarwal, from Varanasi's Das & Kumar Company, highlighted innovative floating solutions for

the Kumbh Mela, featuring comfortable seating, dedicated changing rooms, solar lighting & secure bathing areas, enhancing the overall experience for devotees.

"We specialise in designing floating jetties and pontoons. For the Kumbh Mela, we've created a comprehensive floating solution, featuring deep-water barricading,

floating jetties, and change room jetties. Our innovative jetty system allows for comfortable seating and travel, providing a unique experience. The floating lounge on the jetty offers ample space for 4-5 people to sit comfortably. Additional amenities include dedicated changing rooms with mirrors, solar lighting for nighttime use, and a secure bathing kund with an enclosed area and safety net, ensuring a worry-free bathing experience," he said.

The Maha Kumbh, the world's largest spiritual congregation, is being celebrated after 12 years and a huge turnout of devotees is

expected in Prayagraj from January 13 to February 26. To prevent mishaps, the district administration has been taking important steps to ensure the safety of the devotees, especially for crowd management and avoiding fire incidents.

Rooted in Sanatan Dharma, the event signifies a celestial alignment that creates an auspicious period for spiritual cleansing and devotion.

The main bathing rituals, known as the Shahi Snan (royal baths), will take place on January 14 (Makar Sankranti), January 29 (Mauni Amavasya), and February 3 (Basant Panchami).

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON RISING INFLATION IN BANGLADESH

92% believe Bangladesh govt is unable to control inflation

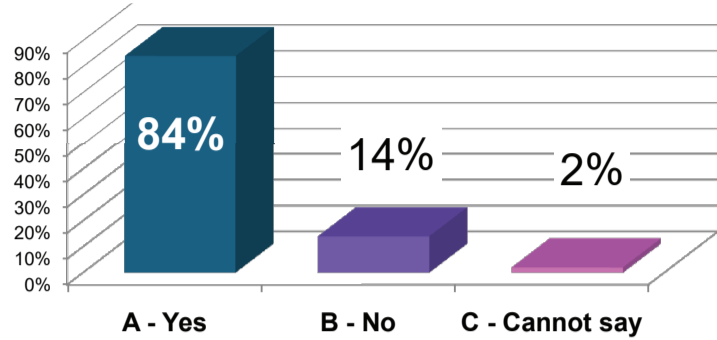
Bangladesh's inflation hit an 11.66% 12-year high in July, up from 9.72% in June, amid student protests over a job quota

system, reports The Dhaka Tribune. Data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics shows food inflation soared

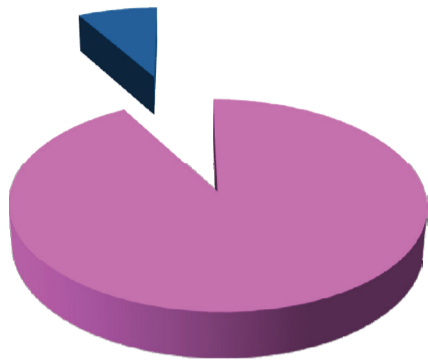
to 14.10%, while non-food inflation rose to 9.68%. The previous peak was 9.94% in May, the report noted.

Q1. ▶

The prices of food and drink items have risen sharply in Bangladesh. Is due to deteriorated relations with India?



A - Yes
B - No

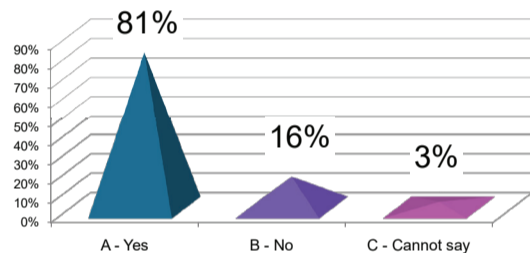
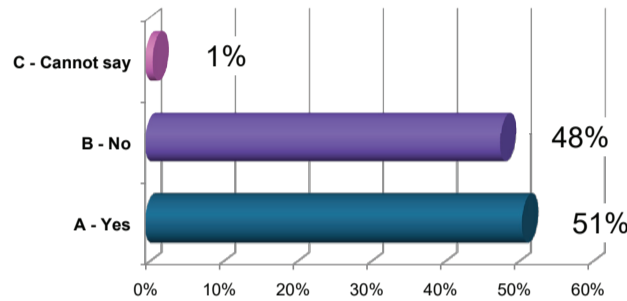


Q2. ◀

Is Bangladesh's current government unable to control inflation?

Q3. ▶

Under the 'Neighbourhood First' policy, India helped Bangladesh in December. Should India help again?



Q4. ◀

Will the rising inflation and Islamic extremism push Bangladeshi citizens against the govt?



Training session underway at Counter Insurgency and Anti Terrorism School (CIATS), in Bengaluru on Sunday. (ANI Photo)

Commuters hail PM Modi as Namo Bharat trains cut travel time

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Commuters travelling on the Namo Bharat train on Sunday expressed their gratitude and praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for inaugurating the 13-km section of the Delhi-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) corridor.

The new stretch, part of the 'Namo Bharat' corridor, connects Uttar Pradesh's Sahibabad with Delhi's Ashok Nagar, reducing travel time and improving connectivity for daily commuters.



PM Modi disembarks from the Namo Bharat Train after taking a ride from Sahibabad RRTS Station to New Ashok Nagar RRTS Station, in New Delhi on Sunday. (ANI Photo)

Speaking to ANI, a commuter Shristi Tripathi said, "We were given a very warm welcome. The connectivity it is providing to Meerut and other places is very good. I

will save a lot of time. I am very happy."

"I travel daily to Noida from Meerut for my job. It will save a lot of time for me and others like me. I will reach Noida in 40 minutes. I live with my family in Meerut. I don't want to move here, it will save me 1 and a half hours. The comfort level is accessible because the infrastructure is very good, almost seems as if you're travelling in an airplane. The facilities are very good. I thank PM Modi, he is doing a lot for the country," said another commuter.

AAP a 'disaster', says PM Modi

CONTINUED FROM P1

The Prime Minister asserted a new BJP government would implement central schemes that, he claimed, had been stalled by the AAP government with renewed vigour.

"For Delhi, these people have made every season, every weather, 'aapda kaal'. The energy of Delhiites is spent in dealing with 'aapda' throughout the year," he said.

"Aapda" turned every season into an emergency, with water shortages, waterlogging and pollution, the prime minister alleged. "Therefore, only if AAP is removed from Delhi, the double-engine of development and good governance will come." "We are in the 21st century and 25 years have passed. Two or three generations have entered their youth. The next 25 years are very important for Delhi. The next 25 years

will see India emerging as a developed nation before their eyes. We all will be stakeholders in this journey," Modi said.

The national capital should be a part of this glorious journey, he added.

"In Delhi, people blessed the BJP in the Lok Sabha elections and now, in the assembly polls, are set to bless the BJP. This is a golden opportunity to win the heart of Delhi and free it of disaster ('aapda')," he said.

Dallewal's health worsens

CONTINUED FROM P1

to farmer organizations across the country to join the fight for MSP, asserting that it was not Punjab's struggle alone.

"This is a do-or-die battle. I will not end my fast till an Act guaranteeing MSP is enacted as per the recommendations of the parliamentary committee on agriculture," Dallewal declared from a bed inside a makeshift cubicle on the stage.

To safeguard Dallewal, he is being kept in a heavily guarded glass cubicle surrounded by over 100 tractor-trailers welded together and 700 volunteers. This precaution follows a November 26 incident where police forcibly took him to a

Dallewal he is being kept in a heavily guarded glass cubicle surrounded by over 100 tractor-trailers welded together and 700 volunteers. This follows a November 26 incident where police forcibly took him to a hospital in Ludhiana.

hospital in Ludhiana. The Kisan Mahapanchayat, organized by the SKM (Non-political)

and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha, marked the fourth major farmer gathering in less than a month, underscoring the intensifying agitation for MSP. As per a statement by the farmer leaders, his muscle mass has completely depleted, and doctors expressed concern that it may not regenerate. His Glomerular Filtration Rate (GFR), which measures kidney function, has significantly declined, reducing his body's ability to filter blood effectively. Dallewal has been experiencing frequent vomiting since Friday evening and is now unable to stand properly or speak.

Before the Kisan Mahapanchayat, Dallewal underwent blood, urine, and ECG tests, which confirmed

that his vitals were stable enough for him to address the gathering. He was transported to the stage in an ambulance around 2 PM for the speech.

Despite his fragile health, Dallewal expressed solidarity with the families of farmers who lost their lives or were injured in road accidents while traveling to Khanauri. He thanked the thousands of farmers who gathered to support him, saying their presence gave him new energy. Doctors have urged immediate intervention to prevent further deterioration in Dallewal's health. Farmer leaders continue to stand firm, highlighting the gravity of the ongoing protests and appealing for resolution.

Kejriwal hits back at PM Modi

CONTINUED FROM P1

the people of 'Delhi Dehat', adding that this time they will take 'revenge' from BJP. Kejriwal accused the Centre of not abrogating Section 81 and Section 33 of the Delhi Land Reforms Act and not implementing the long-awaited land-pooling policy. Addressing a press conference on Sunday, Kejriwal said, "Today, the PM spoke for 30 minutes and he kept abusing the people of Delhi and the elected govt of Delhi - I was listening to it, it felt bad...The promise made by the Prime Minister for Delhi in 2020 - the people of Delhi Dehat are still waiting for that to be fulfilled."

"PM has promised that Section 81 and Section 33 of the Delhi Land Reforms Act, 1954 will be abolished and this can only be done by the Centre. The land-pulling policy has not been implemented since 2018, if this had been done then settlement in unauthorized colonies would have been stopped. The whole of 'Delhi Dehat' is waiting to take revenge on the BJP. Now, they don't believe in the promises made by the Prime Minister as they did not fulfil any of their promises and are just seeking votes by abusing

Kejriwal," he added. Kejriwal also mentioned the inauguration of the New Ashok Nagar RRTS station by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the presence of Delhi CM Atishi as part of the Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS). He added that AAP didn't resort to 'vendetta politics' despite their top leadership being sent to jail.

"Those who blame that - the AAP keep fighting - today's inauguration is an example that shows that AAP only works for the people of Delhi. They sent our top leadership to jail - but the atrocities that happened against us, we didn't make that an issue - otherwise these projects would not have been inaugurated," Kejriwal said. Meanwhile, Kejriwal also welcomed the inauguration of new metro and rapid rail lines, saying that under AAP's government, the Delhi Metro has expanded by 200 km.

In a post on X, Kejriwal said, "Congratulations to all the people of Delhi on the launch of the new Metro line and the laying of the foundation stone of another line. After the formation of the Aam Aadmi Party government, the Delhi Metro has expanded rapidly. So far,

200 km has been expanded and work is in progress on 250 km."

Earlier in the day, PM Modi appealed to the voters of the national capital to give Bharatiya Janata Party a chance in the upcoming 2025 Delhi assembly elections. He took a dig at the AAP government, saying that the government has been no less than a "tragedy (AAP-DA)."

"We need to develop Delhi into the capital of Viksit Bharat. I want to appeal to the people of Delhi to give an opportunity to the BJP for the bright future of Delhi, it is the BJP which can develop Delhi. In the last 10 years, the government that Delhi has seen is no less than 'AAP-DA'. Now, we can only hear 'AAP-DA nahi sahenge, badal ke rahenge' in Delhi. Delhi wants development and the people of Delhi have trust in BJP," PM Modi said while addressing the 'Parivartan Rally' at Japanese Park in Rohini.

The assembly elections in Delhi are likely to be held in February 2025. Congress, which was in power in Delhi for 15 successive years, has performed poorly in the past two assembly polls, failing to win any seat.

Haryana's sex ratio at birth at 8-year low

CONTINUED FROM P1

at 925. The figures revealed that some districts showed improvement as Yamunanagar and Karnal each recorded an 18-point increase, while Sirsa and Bhiwani saw an 11-point and 12-point rise, respectively.

However, the experts have expressed deep concerns over development terming the decline in Haryana's sex ratio for the third consecutive year is worrying, especially since the state had shown steady improvement after the launch of the "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao". The previous figures revealed that Haryana's sex ratio at birth was 832 in 2012, improving to 868 in 2013 and 871 in 2014. After the campaign, it further increased to 876 in 2015, 900 in 2016, and 914 in 2017, 2018, and 2021. The highest figures were recorded in 2019 (923) and 2020 (922). However, the ratio dropped to 917 in 2022 and

916 in 2023.

Despite several government initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and tackling the preference for male heirs, Haryana continues to remain among the states with the lowest sex ratio in the country. Despite the provisions of the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PC-PNDT) and Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Acts, Haryana has seen a marked decrease in the number of FIRs filed against illegal sex determination and female foeticide activities as total of 1,208 FIRs have been registered under the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994.

Experts attribute this grim trend to a combination of deep-rooted patriarchal norms, societal hostility towards daughters, and a lack of stringent enforcement of laws prohibiting prenatal sex determination and female foeticide.

Four killed as car skids off road, plunges into river in J&K

CONTINUED FROM P1

Singh took to social media X and said that he was in touch with the Kishtwar District Commissioner Rajesh Kumar Shavan and was receiving updates about the accident. "Got in touch with DC Kishtwar, Rajesh Kumar Shavan immediately after receiving the report of a road accident at Sanyas in the Paddar area. 5 persons were travelling in the vehicle. Rescue teams have been put into action. I am regularly receiving the updates," the post read.

The Union Minister offered his condolences to the bereaved families. "Saddened to learn just now that 4 of the passengers travelling in the vehicle have been found dead on the spot. Two other persons, including the driver, are not traced as yet. My sincere condolences to the bereaved families. Om Shanti," the post further read.

Meanwhile, on Saturday, Tragedy struck in Bandipora district on after an army vehicle veered off the road and plunged into



a deep gorge near the Wular viewpoint in the SK Payeen area.

Two soldiers have died and three others have been injured in the accident, said Masarat Iqbal Wani, Medical Superintendent of Bandipora District hospital. "The three people have been referred for Srinagar for the medical treatment. We immediately sent our ambulance upon receiving the information of the accident..." the Medical Superintendent told ANI.

4 Naxals, a cop killed in search ops

CONTINUED FROM P1

conducted by the Special Task Force (STF) in coordination with DRG teams from Narayanpur, Dantewada, Jagdalpur, and Kondagaon districts

in the Abujmarh area on Friday, the IG Bastar added. The encounter, which began on Saturday evening, resulted in the deaths of four uniformed Naxals. Automatic weap-

ons, including AK-47s and SLRs, were recovered during the search, Sundarraj stated.

Search operations are still underway, and further details are awaited.

KTR ACCUSES CONG OF BETRAYING TELANGANA FARMERS

KTR announced a protest demanding Rs 15,000 per acre for farmers.

TDG NETWORK
HYDERABAD

Bharat Rashtra Samiti (BRS) working president KT Rama Rao on Sunday accused the Telangana government of betraying its commitment to farmers of the state and announced to hold a protest on January 6 demanding the Congress to raise the assistance to Rs 15,000 per acre as initially promised.

Speaking to ANI, KTR said, "It is a travesty and truly atrocious breach of promise by Congress party in Telangana to deceive and betray farmers of Telangana...Congress party had made a promise, a categorical farmer declaration in Warangal and Rahul Gandhi was here in Telangana. They made a categorical commitment that Rythu Bandhu would be enhanced and each farmer who was getting Rs 10,000 for two crop cycles in Telangana would be given an additional Rs 5000."

KTR SLAMS CONGRESS

- KTR announced a protest on January 6 demanding Rs 15,000 per acre for farmers.
- Congress had promised an additional Rs 5,000 under the Rythu Bandhu scheme, but hasn't delivered.
- KTR urged Rahul Gandhi to intervene and ensure the promise is fulfilled.
- CM Revanth Reddy ordered the release of Rythu Bandhu funds and loan waivers for farmers.
- BRS demands immediate action to meet the Rs 15,000 per acre pledge.



"Unfortunately, today they feel betrayed...I hope Rahul Gandhi will intervene and instruct Revanth Reddy Government not to betray the farmers because they promised a delivery in 100 days. But today, it has been more than 400 days. So, as BRS, we have decided that

we will protest across the length and breadth of state tomorrow supporting farmers and demanding that the Congress party keeps up its promise made in the farmer declaration, Rythu declaration, and demanding that Rs 15,000 be given per acre as was promised," the BRS

leader added.

Earlier on December 12, 2023, Telangana chief minister Revanth Reddy ordered officials to release amounts under the Rythu Bandhu scheme into the farmers' accounts.

"CM Revanth Anumula directed to start the process

"CM Revanth Anumula directed to start the process of depositing 'Rythu Bandhu' funds in their accounts to all the farmers in the state from today," the Telangana Chief Minister's Office said in a post on 'X'.

of depositing 'Rythu Bandhu' funds in their accounts to all the farmers in the state from today," the Telangana Chief Minister's Office said in a post on 'X'.

As per his government's promise, the Chief Minister ordered the top officials to prepare an appropriate action plan to waive off the loans of Rs 2 lakh to the farmers of the state, the CMO said.

BJP launches projects, then does nothing for 5 years: Sanjay Raut

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Sanjay Raut, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP, supported AAP convenor Arvind Kejriwal, stating that the BJP's practice of launching projects just before elections is a "habitual tactic."

He expressed confidence that the people of Delhi would remain loyal to Arvind Kejriwal, implying that the BJP's last-minute efforts would not sway public opinion.

"It is their (BJP's) habit. They launch such projects worth thousands of crores before the elections. It was done in Maharashtra as well. They do not do anything for 5 years and before the announcement of the election date, they want to do everything. They again go silent for the next 5 years. The people of Delhi are with Kejriwal," Raut said.

Earlier today, PM Modi inaugurated the 13 km long section of Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut Namoo Bharat Corridor between Sahibabad and New Ashok Nagar and he also addressed the rally in Delhi's Rohini.



I am confident that the lotus will bloom in Delhi Assembly too," he said.

PM Modi slammed the AAP government, said it lacks vision for Delhi's development, and asserted that the BJP-led Centre is driving modernization efforts in the national capital. He expressed confidence that the BJP will emerge victorious in the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections.

"The AAP government which has no vision for Delhi and does not care for Delhi cannot develop Delhi. Whatever work is being done to modernise Delhi is being done by the BJP government at the Centre. I am confident that the lotus will bloom in Delhi Assembly too," he said.

PM Modi slammed AAP, saying they falsely accused the Central government of not allowing them to work or providing funds, calling them "big liars".

He cited the 'Sheeshmahal' as an example, referencing a report by a leading newspaper revealing excessive expenditure on the Delhi CM's residence, based on the CAG report.

"Those who brought AAP to power in Delhi falsely allege that the Central government does not allow them to work... the Central government does not give them money... how big liars they are... an example of this is their Sheeshmahal. Today itself a leading newspaper has revealed the expenditure incurred on the Sheesh Mahal based on the CAG report," he said.

PM Modi criticized the AAP government in Delhi, accusing them of prioritizing the construction of their "Sheesh Mahal" over the welfare of Delhi's citizens, who were struggling to access oxygen and medicines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CM Patel lays foundation of Anjana Dham with Rs 300 cr investment

TDG NETWORK
GANDHINAGAR

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, along with Governor Acharya Devvratji and Speaker of Gujarat Legislative Assembly Shankarbhaj Chaudhary laid the foundation stone of Anjanadham on Sunday, the Gujarat Chief Minister's Office stated in a press release.

The dignitaries honoured the donors on the occasion of laying the foundation stone of the magnificent Anjanadham, which took shape at a cost of Rs 300crore, near Jamiyatpura village, near Kalol, on the Ahmedabad-Mehsana highway.

On this occasion, Sri Sri 1008 Mahant Sri Dayaramji Maharaj, Protector of Shikarpura Ashram Rajasthan, also bestowed his blessings. The saints and dignitaries present on this occasion laid the foundation stone of the Anjana Dham Bhavan worshipping



the Sheela (brick) with the scriptural ceremony and chanting mantras, the release stated.

On the occasion of laying the foundation stone of Anjanadham, which was built by Vishwa Anjana Foundation and Anjanadham Trust, Governor Acharya Devvratji said "Anjanadham is not only for imparting literacy to students or IAS-IPS to the youth of the society. Not just a centre of creation, Anjanadham becomes a mission for creating cultured human beings who make society, parents and the nation proud. Anjana-Chowdhary society is a patriotic society. Anjana youth should support the successful Prime Minister of India Narendrabhai

Modi's Atmanirbhar Bharat and Developed India campaign."

Acharya Devvratji added, "The same country and society progress where women contribute as much as men, Anjana Samaj should pay special attention to the education and development of girls. The society which will give education and culture to its children and keep them free from addictions will progress."

The charitable leaders of the society who donated to Anjanadham were honoured by Governor Acharya Devvratji and Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel. Governor Acharya Devvratji himself announced a donation of five lakh rupees and said that hard work and money are sacred. Donors have put their sacred money to good use. Giving an example of the 'karma-phala system', he explained that donation is RTGS done right now for the next birth. There is an arrangement.

Atul Subhash's father slams bail for accused, claims child exploitation

TDG NETWORK
SAMASTIPUR (BIHAR)

Pawan Kumar Modi, father of deceased Atul Subhash on Sunday said that his wife Nikita Singhania, Nisha Singhania and brother-in-law Anurag Singhania should not have been granted bail.

Speaking to the media, the father said "Bail has been granted to them under legal process, but they shouldn't have been granted bail. I am really worried about my grandson and where he is. We have received information from the Karnataka Police about our grandson that he is in a boarding school in Faridabad... he has been admitted to the school at a very young age which is illegal. The mother has no love for her child. She is just using him as an ATM to extort money..."

Further, he added that his late brother's wife had applied for her bail stating the child as the reason.

"The mother used the

child as a reason to apply for her bail. She has done this before as well...the school had winter vacations but my grandson still wasn't sent back to me. Was the school not aware that the child was being used by the mother?" he added.

The bail to the wife, mother-in-law and brother-in-law of late Atul Subhash was granted by Bengaluru's Civil Court on January 4.

The alleged accused in the case--Nikita Singhania, Nisha Singhania, and Anurag Singhania--were arrested on December 15. After the arrest, all three accused were remanded to judicial custody.

According to DCP Kumar Bengaluru Police, Nikita Singhania was arrested in Haryana's Gurugram. The other accused, including Nisha Singhania and Anurag Singhania, were arrested near Hotel Rameshwaram in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj.

Tamil Nadu: Madurai Jallikattu registration starts today

TDG NETWORK
MADURAI (TAMIL NADU)

The online registration for the globally renowned Jallikattu events at Avaniyapuram, Palamedu, and Alanganallur will commence on January 6 at 5 pm and will remain open until January 7 at 5 pm, the Madurai district administration announced.

These events, which are held as part of the Tamil harvest festival Pongal, are scheduled for January 14, 15, and 16, respectively, in three villages.

Preparations, including the traditional "muhurtha kaal" ceremony, have already begun, and intensive groundwork is underway to ensure the success of the events.

The Jallikattu competitions will take place as follows -- Avaniyapuram on January 14, Palamedu on January 15 and Alanganallur on 16.

Bull tamers and owners of bulls willing to partici-



pate in the events need to register through the official district administration website, "madurai.nic.in", within the stipulated 24-hour window.

According to the district collector, Sangeetha, only one owner and one assistant, familiar with the bull, will be allowed to accompany each participating bull.

Furthermore, a bull is permitted to participate in only one of the three events to ensure fairness and smooth coordination.

Once registered, all submitted documents will be verified by the authorities. Only those deemed eligible will receive a downloadable token, which is mandatory for participation. Without

this token, neither bull tamers nor bulls will be permitted to enter the event.

Meanwhile, veterinary hospitals across Tamil Nadu have been issuing fitness certificates to ensure the participating bulls meet the required health standards.

The announcement has sparked significant interest among bull owners and tamers from across the state, who view participation in the Madurai Jallikattu events as a matter of pride. Many have already begun preparing for the competitions by training their bulls and honing their skills.

The Jallikattu events of Madurai, particularly those in Alanganallur, are internationally recognized as a vibrant celebration of Tamil heritage and rural valour. With preparations in full swing and expectations running high, this year's competitions are set to attract significant participation and global attention.

Kerala MLA Anvar held for vandalising forest office

TDG NETWORK
MALAPPURAM

Nilambur legislator P V Anvar was arrested on Sunday for allegedly vandalising the District Forest Office (DFO) following a protest over the death of a tribal man in an elephant attack in this north Kerala district, police said.

Earlier in the day, Anvar, an independent MLA, criticised the state government and the forest department over the death of the tribal man Mani, who was trampled by a wild elephant on Saturday evening.

The workers of the Democratic Movement of Kerala (DMK), a social collective led by the MLA, staged a protest in front of the forest office alleging negligence by wildlife personnel in addressing man-animal conflicts in the area. Nearly 10 of them trespassed into the North DFO office and vandalised the office room.

Nilambur police booked Anvar and 10 others over



Earlier in the day, Anvar, an independent MLA, criticised the state government and the forest department over the death of the tribal man Mani, who was trampled by a wild elephant on Saturday evening.

the incident under various sections of the BNS and the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act.

NAVAL DISPLAY



Eastern Naval Command conducts an Operational Demonstration (Op Demo), at Ramakrishna Beach in Visakhapatnam. ANI

100 Islamic group members detained for protest attempt

TDG NETWORK
MADURAI

Nearly 100 members of Islamic outfits Sikkandar Mosque Committee and Ayyikiya Kootomaippu Jamath were detained by the police for allegedly trying to stage a protest demanding the opening of Sikkandar Badusha Thozhugai Pallivasal in Tiruparankundram near here on Sunday.

The members of the two groups were kept in a marriage hall till evening and later let off, police said.

"Around 100 of them tried to stage a protest. They demanded that they go on a

procession to the Sikkandar Badusha (Thozhugai) Pallivasal. They were detained as permission to hold protests was not given and were kept in a marriage hall till evening. They were let off," police sources told PTL.

The members of the Muslim outfits claimed that Sikkandar Badusha Thozhugai Pallivasal was built by Sultan Sikkandar about 400 years ago and they were not allowed to visit the site to offer prayers. Thiruparankundram is one of the six holy sites of Lord Subramania Swamy and has been the most revered destination by Saivaites.



PROJECTS LAUNCHED BY MODI	
1	Inauguration of 13-km Section of Delhi-Meerut RRTS Corridor (Sahibabad to New Ashok Nagar)
2	Foundation Stone for Central Ayurveda Research Institute (Rohini, Delhi)
3	Inauguration of First Section of Delhi Metro Phase IV (Janakpuri West-Krishna Park Extension)
4	Foundation Stone for Rithala-Narela-Kundli (Sonapat) Metro Corridor (Under Phase IV)

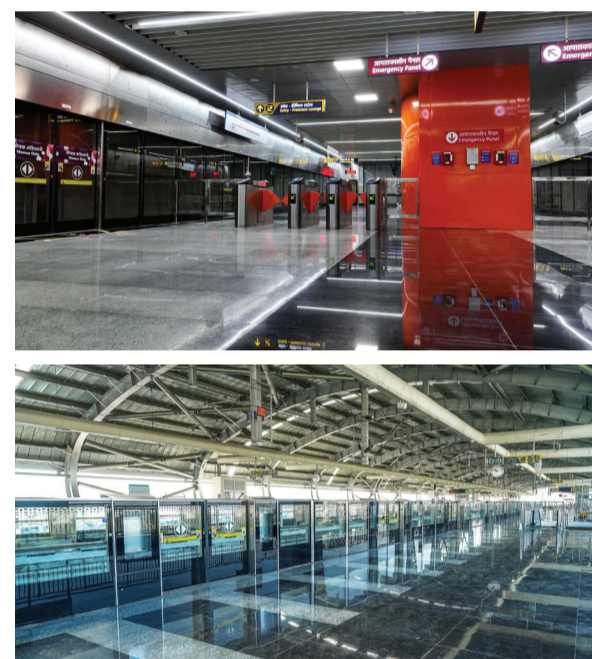
With the inauguration of the Delhi section of the RRTS corridor, Meerut city is now directly connected to Delhi in just 40 minutes.



DELHI GETS MAJOR UPGRADES AS PM MODI UNVEILS KEY DEVELOPMENTS



In a series of landmark developments, Prime Minister Narendra Modi today unveiled several transformative projects in the national capital, marking a significant step towards improving infrastructure, healthcare, and connectivity.



KEY FEATURES OF THE NAMO BHARAT	
1	55 km RRTS corridor operational between New Ashok Nagar and Meerut South with 11 stations.
2	Fares: Rs 150 (standard) and Rs 225 (premium).
3	6 km underground section, including Anand Vihar station.
4	Reserved coach for women; additional seats for elderly and differently-abled.
5	Trains have spaces for wheelchairs and stretchers.
6	Seamless connectivity with buses and metro.
7	82 km RRTS corridor connecting New Delhi to Meerut.
8	Over 5 million passengers served.



Government of Haryana

ਸੂਰਾ ਸੋ ਪਹਚਾਨਿਏ ਜੁ ਲਰੇ ਦੀਨ ਕੇ ਹੇਤ ॥
ਪੁਰਜਾ ਪੁਰਜਾ ਕਟਿ ਮਰੈ ਕਬਹੂ ਨ ਛਾਡੈ ਖੇਤੁ ॥

'Deg Teg Fateh'
Heartiest Greetings on the Prakash Parv of
Sahib-E-Kamal
Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji

6 January, 2025




“में श्री गुरु गोबिन्द सिंह जी को उनके प्रकाश पर्व के पावन अवसर पर शीश नवाता हूं तथा मानवता की सेवा में उनके योगदान का स्मरण करता हूं। उनका अद्वितीय साहस सदैव लोगों को प्रेरित करता रहेगा।”
- नरेन्द्र मोदी

PM MODI, KEJRIWAL EXCHANGE BARBS

Political heat intensifies in the capital ahead of the Delhi assembly polls.



"No welfare scheme will be stopped in Delhi, but those who have contracts with dishonest people in it will be thrown out"

"The moment you step out of a Metro station, you can see potholed roads, overflowing sewers. Some areas are such that even auto and cab drivers refuse to ply due to long traffic jams."

"They made a huge budget for the 'Sheesh Mahal'. This is their truth... They do not care about the people of Delhi. That is why every Delhiite today is saying... 'we will not tolerate aapda, we will change', " he said.

-NARENDRA MODI

"After the formation of the Aam Aadmi Party government, the Delhi Metro has expanded rapidly. So far, 200 km has been expanded and work is in progress on 250 km."

The whole of 'Delhi Debat' is waiting to take revenge on the BJP. Now, they don't believe in the promises made by the Prime Minister as they did not fulfil any of their promises and are just seeking votes by abusing Kejriwal," he added.

They sent our top leadership to jail - but the atrocities that happened against us, we didn't make that an issue - otherwise these projects would not have been inaugurated,

-ARVIND KEJRIWAL

Delhi and Centre jointly taking transport sector forward: CM Atishi

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Atishi on Sunday hailed the joint efforts of the Delhi government and the Central government in advancing the transport sector of the national capital.

Atishi said, "I would like to congratulate all the

people of Delhi. The Delhi government and the central government are jointly taking the transport sector in Delhi forward."

CM Atishi added that with today's inauguration of the metro line, Delhi is starting to become a model in the transport sector in the country and the world. "In the last 10 years,

the transport sector has expanded on a very large scale in Delhi. In the last 10 years, the 200-km metro line has expanded. Apart from that, a 250-km Metro line is still under construction. 38 new flyovers in Delhi are providing high-speed transport, high-speed road travel to Delhi.

Bidhuri's Priyanka remarks stir controversy

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Bharatiya Janata Party candidate from Kalkaji assembly constituency, Ramesh Bidhuri on Sunday expressed regret over his controversial remarks about Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra amid Congress outrage.

Bidhuri clarified that his comments were made in the context of remarks by Lalu Yadav and emphasized that the Congress party had remained silent when similar statements were made during his tenure as a minister.

This came following a video of Bidhuri shared by AAP MP Sanjay Singh on X, where he stated that they would make all the roads in Kalkaji like the "cheeks of Priyanka Gandhi" if BJP comes to power.

Ramesh Bidhuri, courted controversy by allegedly saying that after victory in the Delhi Assembly polls next month, he will develop smooth roads in the constituency like Congress leader



"Such statements have been made before. I have said that in the context of what Lalu Yadav had said. Congress remained silent on that even when he (Lalu Yadav) was a minister in their govt."

Such statements have been made before. I have said that in the context of what Lalu Yadav had said. Congress remained silent on that even when he (Lalu Yadav) was a minister in their govt. If anyone is hurt by my remark, I express regret over it and I take my words back," the BJP leader said.

Such statements have been made before. I have said that in the context of what Lalu Yadav had said. Congress remained silent on that even when he (Lalu Yadav) was a minister in their govt. If anyone is hurt by my remark, I express regret over it and I take my words back," the BJP leader said.

Congress leader Supriya Shrinete on Sunday strongly criticised the BJP candidate from Kalkaji for the upcoming Delhi Assembly Polls, Ramesh Bidhuri, over his recent comment on Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi, terming the remark as "shameful," and accused the BJP of fostering an anti-women mindset.

Taking to X, Shrinete said that Bidhuri's statement against Congress Lok Sabha MP from Wayanad, was not only shameful but also shows his "disgusting" mentality towards women. Congress candidate from

Kalkaji and Mahila Congress president Alka Lamba lashed out at Bidhuri and accused him of "insulting" women once again in his "usual indecent language".

"Will the public in Kalkaji have such (a person) who cares neither for the dignity of the House (Parliament) nor respects the women," she said in a post on X.

However, Sachdeva criticized the Congress for its "double standards," pointing out that the party remains silent when similar comments are made about BJP MP Hema Malini.

"I have not heard Ramesh Bidhuri's full statement, but women have a special contribution in society and we should respect them, any such comment should be avoided. But Congress will also have to give up its double standards. When any statement comes about our MP Hema Malini, they clap... But I still say that no one should even think of insulting women," he said.

Parvesh asks Atishi to open 'Sheesh Mahal' for public

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Bharatiya Janata Party candidate Parvesh Verma has written a letter to Delhi Chief Minister Atishi, requesting her to open the "Sheesh Mahal", the former official residence of AAP Chief Arvind Kejriwal for public viewing.

In his letter, Verma said that the residence has now become an important symbol of Delhi's governance and administration history.

"I would like to bring to your attention that during the tenure of former Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party leader, Arvind Kejriwal, the official residence was specially decorated and made grand. It is now popularly known among the public as "Sheesh Mahal". The people of the New Delhi Legislative

Assembly constituency, who have elected Kejriwal as their representative to the assembly three times consecutively, have a strong desire to visit and see this building. This residence has now become not just a place of residence but an important symbol of Delhi's governance and administration history," Parvesh Verma said.

"The public wishes to understand what the place looks like where their elected representative spent his tenure," he added.

The BJP leader further requested CM Atishi to open the place from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, so that the people of Delhi can see it up close.

Kejriwal spent Rs 33 cr on carpets, curtains, luxurious toilets: Lamba

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Congress candidate for the upcoming Delhi Assembly Polls, Alka Lamba, slammed former Aam Aadmi Party national convener Arvind Kejriwal, over the alleged use of Rs 33 crores of taxpayers' money for the renovation of the Chief Minister's official residence during the pandemic.

This comes as the BJP continues to intensify its attack on the former Delhi Chief Minister over the "Sheesh Mahal" narrative.

Lamba, who has been fielded against CM Atishi from Kalkaji constituency, pointed out that the said amount was spent on items like carpets, curtains, luxurious toilets, and even a swimming pool.



She further asserted that Kejriwal, who had previously claimed he would not accept any facilities such as a bungalow, car, or security, had reportedly spent the funds on personal luxuries instead.

The Congress leader expressed concerns that this expenditure came at a time when the people of Delhi are grappling with inflation and questioned why the funds were not directed towards providing relief to women

facing economic difficulties.

"From the headline of a leading English newspaper, the people of Delhi got to know that the so-called common man Chief Minister of Delhi, who was saying that he would not take a bungalow, car, or any facilities or security, has actually spent Rs 33 crores of taxpayers' money on carpets, curtains, luxurious toilets, and even a swimming pool. It is definitely a question mark, and former CM Arvind Kejriwal will have to answer," the Congress candidate from Kalkaji said.

She further added that the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), a government body, had conducted an audit of the expenditure, which has raised further concerns.

Dense fog envelops Delhi, 51 trains delayed, air quality affected

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A thick layer of fog enveloped several areas of Delhi for a third consecutive morning, leading to 51 trains being delayed, officials said on Sunday.

The Met office said there was zero visibility at Palam between 4 am and 7:30am. On Saturday, Palam had recorded a nine-hour spell of zero visibility.

At Safdarjung, the visibility dropped to 0.50 metres at 5:30 am.

General visibility at the Palam and the Safdarjung airports was reduced to zero in very dense fog at 7:30 am. According to the India Meteorological Department, Delhi recorded 10 degrees Celsius at 5:30 am on Sunday. At this time yesterday, the city's temperature was



A drone view of the Kidwai Nagar area covered in fog, in New Delhi on Sunday. ANI

OVER 100 FLIGHTS DELAYED DUE TO FOG

NEW DELHI: More than 100 flights were delayed at the Delhi airport on Friday morning as visibility dropped to zero in some areas due to dense fog. A thick blanket of fog engulfed the national capital in the morning, with the weather department predicting cloudy skies for much of the day. Delhi's minimum temperature was recorded at 7 degrees Celsius, the weather office said. An official said over 100 flights have been delayed at the Delhi airport due to bad weather conditions but there are no diversions so far. "While landing and takeoffs continue at Delhi Airport, flights that are not CAT III compliant may get affected. Passengers are requested to contact the airline concerned for updated flight information.

10.2 degrees Celsius. Several trains are running late at New Delhi railway station due to fog.

Meanwhile, the air quality in the national capital continued in the 'very poor' category. According to the Central Pollution Control Board, the AQI was recorded at 377 in Delhi today at 6 am. Yesterday at the same time it was 385.

In a related development, the national capital's air quality was in the 'very poor' category, with an Air Quality Index (AQI) reading of 372 at 9 am, according to Central Pollution Control Board data.

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'.



National Cadet Corps (NCC) Cadets participate in the Republic Day Camp-2025, at Delhi Cantonment in New Delhi. ANI

NGT issues notice on alleged misuse of afforestation land

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has sought a response from the Delhi government and others regarding the alleged "misuse" of forest land allotted for afforestation.

The green body was hearing a plea claiming that 125 bighas (around 30 hectares) of Gram Sabha land in Kharkhari Jatmal village, Najafgarh, was allocated to the forest department for

afforestation in 2005 and the lieutenant governor approved this allocation to mitigate pollution, enhance green cover and contribute to environmental protection.

The petition alleged this land had been misused as the "land mafia" encroached upon it and started illegal construction and unauthorised agricultural activities.

In its order dated January 2, a bench of NGT Chairperson Justice Prakash



The respondents in the matter are the Delhi government, the deputy conservator of forest, department of forest and wildlife and the sub-divisional magistrate concerned.

Shrivastava noted that the plea also alleged that the demarcation of the land was incomplete and that there was illegal extraction and sale of groundwater from this area. "Issue notice to the respondents for filing their response/reply by way of affidavit before the tribunal at least one week before the next date of hearing (on April 22)," said the bench also comprising judicial member Justice Arun Kumar Tyagi and expert member A Senthil Vel.

LG approves relaxed recruitment criteria for 1984 riot victims

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has approved full relaxation in required educational qualification and age relaxation upto 55 years for 88 applications for employment from victims of the 1984 anti-sikh riots, officials said on Sunday. According to a release from the Delhi LG office, this relaxation has been approved for their appoint-

ment in Government Service to the post of Multi-Tasking Staff (MTS). Repeated representations had been made by the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee, public representatives and groups of victims, who had met LG recently, in this regard.

The Delhi LG had earlier granted a full relaxation in educational qualification requirements to 50 applicants, and obtaining an age relaxation for 22 other ap-

plicants. A total of 72 applicants were appointed after a special drive by the Revenue Department in 2006.

"A rehabilitation package, including provision of jobs was sanctioned by MHA, GoI on Jan 16, 2006, for victims of anti-Sikh riots. The revenue department in a subsequent special drive got 72 applicants out of appointment was given to 22 applicants by obtaining age relaxation from then LG," read the note.

FORMAL RURAL CREDIT LOWERS BORROWING COSTS: NABARD

Rural credit shifts to formal sources, reducing interest costs and boosting margins.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India's rural credit ecosystem is increasingly getting formalised and borrowers across the country are preferring formal sources due to a variety of reasons, including interest subventions and subsidised credit, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) Chairman Shaji KV told reporters on Sunday.

"The access of credit from informal sources is actually coming down very drastically. That means that a formalisation of rural credit is happening. (Formalisation of rural credit) in itself will leave a lot of margins at the hands of the rural people, because if you access an

informal source, the rate of interest will be higher, thus margins before them will be lower," Shaji KV told a press conference at the ongoing six-day Grameen Bharat Mahotsav in Bharat Mandapam here.

Interest-subvented loans through Kisan Credit Cards, agri fund schemes, and a cap on the rate of interest on informal means put together helped formalisation of rural credit, he said.

Rural consumption in India is improving and the rate of growth in rural consumption is better than urban consumption, creating a lot of demand in the rural pockets.

Going ahead, with farm-gate infrastructure being set up across the country, Shaji KV said there now is a need

KEY POINTS

- Rural credit formalises: Borrowers shift to formal sources, reducing high-interest informal loans.
- Rural demand surges: Consumption growth outpaces urban areas, boosting market demand.
- Agri credit hits Rs 28L crore: 13% growth projected; digitisation tackles regional disparities.
- NABARD backs rural products: Promotes GI-tagged goods, digital sales via ONDC.



to shift people out of agricultural production to value-added processing through a value chain development. He said agri credit growth is expected to be more than

13 per cent this fiscal 2024-25. Agri credit growth has been on an average at 13 per cent over the past ten years. "This year we will be achieving around 27 to 28

lakh crore in agriculture

"...for any credit to grow there needs to be a linking of the KYC with the activity which they are doing. So in the case of certain areas, there is still a problem of land records being made available," NABARD Chairman Shaji KV said.

credit," the NABARD chairman said.

The NABARD chairman was also asked to respond about the regional imbalance in agri credit, particularly in east and northeast India. He said the lack of digitised land records was an impediment.

"...for any credit to grow there needs to be a linking of the KYC with the activity which they are doing. So in the case of certain areas, there is still a problem of land records being made available. So that is what is preventing. To address this, the government is now going for this digitisation," he said.

A lack of data is creating that imbalance, he stressed. "So we are addressing that imbalance through making available the data and making it easier for banks to lend credit," he supplemented.

Asked whether only subsidization of fertilizer will help augment the agricultural sector, Shaji KV argued that subsidization of fertilizer will definitely help, and in the same breath added that irrigation, better roads, high-yielding crops, credit availability at subvented or subsidised rates were also key.

The ongoing six-day Grameen Bharat Mahotsav at the national capital is aimed at improving the visibility of rural Indian products to urban consumers. NABARD is India's apex development bank, established in 1982 under an Act of Parliament to promote sustainable and equitable agriculture and rural landscapes.

"We are showcasing their specialised products, especially the GI tag products, organic products, products of rural artisans, products of tribal people, products of women entrepreneurs, products of SHGs, FPOs, and such other things," the NABARD chairman said.

NABARD is also hand-holding rural artisans to market their produce on the internet, including the flagship digital public infrastructure ONDC.

Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) is aimed at promoting open source networks for all to exchange goods and services on the internet, and most importantly it is independent of any specific platform.

"We are working in different states with different groups for improving their productions and improving their visibility," the NABARD chairman said.

Sensex may rise 18% in 2025: Morgan Stanley

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Morgan Stanley expects India to be among the best-performing emerging markets in 2025. With strong earnings, macro stability and domestic flows, the global investment banking company argues it is hard to argue against India's investment case.

Against that backdrop, Morgan Stanley has given an "overweight" rating to ten companies in what it referred to as a "focus list".

Those companies are Brainbees Solutions, Maruti Suzuki, Trent, Reliance Industries, ICICI Bank, SBI Life Insurance, Hindustan Aeronautics, Larsen and Toubro, Infosys, UltraTech

Infrastructure spending, restructuring of GST rates, direct tax reforms, more free trade agreements and focus on energy transition are other catalysts.

Cement. Morgan Stanley is overweight on financials, consumer discretionary, industrials and technology.

In financial market parlance, going by definition, an overweight rating on a stock means that an analyst or an advisory firm believes the company's stock price will perform better in the days to come.

The robust fundamentals of the Indian economy are underpinned by strong macro stability as a result of improving terms of trade and

flexible inflation targeting; estimated earnings growth of about 18-20 per cent annually over the next 4 to 5 years, rise in discretionary consumption, among others, said Morgan Stanley.

The report also listed a few catalysts of Indian economic growth.

"The Maharashtra elections have put to rest concerns market participants may have had about the Central government's ability to undertake reforms," said the Morgan Stanley report.

Textile sector aims \$300 billion by 2030

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Minister of Textiles Giriraj Singh stated that the textile ministry is committed to helping the industry to reach the market size of \$ 300 billion in year 2030 and provide employment to 6 crore persons in textile value chain, the Ministry stated in a release on Sunday.

Textiles Minister Singh inaugurated the new permanent campus of the Indian Institute of Handloom Technology at Fulia, Nadia, West Bengal.

The new campus of the institute has been constructed using state-of-the-art technology in a sprawling campus of 5.38 acres of land with the expenditure of Rs 75.95 crores.

HD Kumaraswamy launches PLI scheme for green hydrogen steel

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Minister of Steel and Heavy Industries HD Kumaraswamy will launch 'PLI scheme II' for the steel industry, the Ministry of Steel said in a release on Sunday.

Applications for the scheme will be invited during an event scheduled at Hall No. 1, Vigyan Bhavan, Maulana Azad Road, New Delhi, on January 6, 2025, the release added. The concept of Production-Linked Incentives (PLI) was conceived during the global lockdowns of 2020, emphasising the need to boost domestic manufacturing.

Initially launched for three sectors, the PLI scheme was



later extended to include steel in November 2020.

Steel Ministry's PLI has attracted a commitment in investment of Rs 27,106 crore, direct employment of 14,760 and estimated production of 7.90 million tonnes of 'Specialty Steel' identified in the scheme. As of November 2024, companies have

already invested Rs 18,300 crore and generated over 8,660 in employment.

Ministry of steel has been interacting regularly with the participating companies and based on feedback, it was felt that there was a scope to notify the scheme again to attract more participation, the release added.

According to the Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) data recently released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the steel production (weight: 17.92 per cent) increased by 4.8 per cent in November, 2024 over November, 2023. Its cumulative index increased by 5.9 per cent during April to November, 2024-25 over corresponding period of the previous year.

The Government has taken decisive steps to enhance the industry's environmental sustainability.

Ministry of Steel is preparing 'Green Steel Mission' with an estimated cost of Rs 15000 Crore for helping the Steel Industry to reduce carbon emission and progress towards the Net Zero Target.

CII urges budget for 1 lakh job deductions

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has called for a range of measures to be included in the upcoming Union Budget announcements, including an integrated National Employment Policy, policy support for employment generation, implementation of labour codes, and increased participation of women in the workforce, among other initiatives.

As is the convention, the budget for 2025-26 will be tabled on February 1, 2025.

The industry body added in its suggestions that the Union

Budget for FY 2025 had outlined a series of initiatives to boost employment generation, including the Employment Linked Incentive Scheme, but the forthcoming budget could announce further measures to boost employment generation.

Sharing a comprehensive set of recommendations to harness India's demographic dividend, Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, CII, said, "India stands at a unique juncture where its demographic dividend presents a tremendous opportunity to propel economic growth and social transformation. Employment generation is a critical pillar



Confederation of Indian Industry President Sanjiv Puri

in this journey. Coupled with higher employment, India also needs to ensure that productivity goes up. India's Incremental Capital Output Ratio (ICOR) needs to trend down from its

present level of 4.1. We need to establish metrics of measuring this. In fact, the Union Budget could set up an expert committee to study this in greater detail and recommend measures on the way forward."

CII has proposed an integrated National Employment Policy, which could subsume under its ambit the slew of employment-generating schemes currently in works by various ministries/states.

In addition, the unified policy could also build on the single integrated employment portal, the National Career Service (NCS), wherein all the data can flow into this from various

ministries and state portals, the industry body stated.

CII advocated for the development of a Universal Labour Information Management System (ULIMS) under NCS, adding that the move will help provide information about employment opportunities and projections, job classification, skills demand, and training opportunities aligned to the projections.

CII has proposed a new section in lieu of section 80JJAA to encourage new employment. The new provision should continue as Chapter VIA deduction from gross total income, which is available even if the

taxpayer opts for the concessional tax regime, CII added.

It can be made available to any taxpayer who carries on business or profession and is liable to tax audit, it added.

It can be provided that employees who are recruited by the taxpayer as part of split/reconstruction or business reorganisation will not qualify for the deduction. The deduction can be granted for the first three years of new employment with reference to salary paid in the respective tax year but is subject to a ceiling of Rs. 1 lakh per month, CII added in the suggestions.

Giving emphasis on job cre-

ation, the industry body advocated for targeted support for employment-intensive sectors such as construction, tourism, textiles, and low-skilled manufacturing.

To boost exports from labour-intensive manufacturing sectors, which will lead to employment generation, tariff structures, support through Production/ Employment Linked Schemes, and the Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) that India is entering need to be synced, CII stated.

CII stated that for the rural areas, the government could consider launching an internship program in government

offices in rural areas for college-educated youth, adding that the program would help augment the available manpower resources for the effective implementation of various initiatives.

CII also emphasised the need to incentivise participation of women in the workforce, which is currently low. New initiatives, including the construction of dormitories using CSR funds, the formalisation of sectors like the care economy, and the establishment of government-supported creches in industrial clusters, could be taken to increase female labour force participation, it added.

Haryana will initiate schemes to fund entrepreneurs: CM Saini

TDG NETWORK
GUWAHATI

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Saturday held a meeting with startup entrepreneurs and emphasized that the government is committed to establishing the state as a startup hub. "The government is making dedicated efforts to position Haryana as a prominent player in the national startup ecosystem, aligning with the objectives of Make in India and Startup India," Saini was quoted as saying in an official statement here.

He explained that the initiative aims to drive economic growth and create new employment opportunities for the youth, ensuring that Haryana gains a unique identity as a center of innovation and entrepreneurship across the country. The Chief Minister further stated that

STARTUP CORNER



overall development.

Saini also mentioned that the state government is considering new schemes to promote startups in the upcoming 2025-26 budget. These initiatives are designed to provide youth with guidance and access to funds to establish their own businesses, he said.

In line with Prime Minis-

ter Narendra Modi's vision to transform India into a developed nation by 2047, Saini reaffirmed that the government's priority is to make Haryana a developed state. The state government is already offering various incentives through policies designed to foster industrial growth and development, he noted.

Forex reserves decline by \$4.1 billion

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India's foreign exchange reserves continue to decline, extending downhill journey for three months now.

In the week that ended December 27, the country's foreign exchange kitty declined by \$ 4.112 billion to \$ 640.279 billion, data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) showed.

India's forex reserves have slumped twelve out of the past 13 weeks, hitting a fresh multi-month low.

The reserves had been falling ever since it touched an all-time high of \$ 704.89 billion in September. Effectively, they are now about 10 per cent lower from the peak.

The reserves have been declining likely due to RBI intervention, aimed at aggressively preventing a sharp depreciation of the Rupee.

The latest RBI data showed that India's foreign currency assets (FCA), the largest component of forex reserves, stood at \$ 551.921 billion.

Gold reserves currently amount to \$ 66.268 billion, according to RBI data. Estimates suggest that India's foreign exchange reserves are sufficient to cover approximately one year or nearabout of projected imports.

In 2023, India added around \$ 58 billion to its foreign exchange reserves, contrasting with a cumulative decline of \$ 71 billion in 2022.

In 2024, the reserves

rose by a little over \$ 20 billion. Without the latest decline, the reserves would have been much higher.

For-

often intervenes by managing liquidity, including selling dollars, to prevent steep Rupee depreciation. A decade ago, the Indian Rupee was among the most volatile currencies in Asia. Since then, it has become one of the most stable. The RBI has strategically bought dollars when the Rupee is strong and sold when it weakens, enhancing the appeal of Indian assets to investors.

The RBI closely monitors foreign exchange markets, intervening only to maintain orderly market conditions and curb excessive volatility in the Rupee exchange rate, without adhering to any fixed target level or range. The RBI



'AIYAR NOT ONLY DISILLUSIONED BUT HAS NO ILLUSIONS EITHER'

OPINION

RASHEED KIDWAI



Modi as a 'chaiwallah.' Dwelling at lengths at 'My Chaiwallah Comment' in a chapter, "Decline... Fade Out... Fall: 2016-24" Aiyar gives a lengthy account of January 17, 2014 when an AICC plenary was taking place at Delhi's Talkatora Stadium. This was at a time Modi was BJP's prime ministerial candidate and seen by many as a likely winner of the 16th Lok Sabha polls. Aiyar recalls speaking to the TV news agency ANI and records, "... So in the interview I stressed that it was outrageous for a man who did not know that Alexander had never come to Pataliputra or that Taxila (Takshashila) was in present-day Pakistan to seek to step into Jawaharlal Nehru's shoes. The people of India would never accept this, I said, adding, 'Never! Never! Never!' in thundering tones. I then quipped that if, after he lost the election, Modi still wanted to serve tea, we could make some arrangements for him here [at the AICC]."

Aiyar rues how his remark has, since then being touted as him having said that Modi could not become PM because he was a 'chaiwallah'. "The media and Modi played out my alleged (but wholly untrue) remark about Modi being unfit to rule as PM because (as he claimed) he had begun life as a 'chaiwallah'. This was no more

than a hollow election gimmick that the election pundit, Prashant Kishor, who was given much of the credit for Modi's stunning electoral victory, told me he had exploited to the full through the 'chai pe charcha' events that he stage managed with a hologram (then unknown and unprecedented) of Modi joining the tea drinkers."



Aiyar also notes that his 'chaiwallah' remark provided a handle to 'elements in the Congress party' to later divert attention from the real causes of the party's humiliating collapse at the 2014 hustings to shift the blame on this one remark put out in what he describes as a 'sarcastic, if sneering, jest.'

Aiyar also notes that his 'chaiwallah' remark provided a handle to 'elements in the Congress party' to later divert attention from the real causes of the party's humiliating collapse at the 2014 hustings to shift the blame on this one remark put out in what he describes as a 'sarcastic, if sneering, jest.' Aiyar, 83, hints at his political fall when Rahul Gandhi was calling the shots. Five months after Rahul took over as the party president, he was told to relin-

quish his post of national convenor of the Rajiv Gandhi Panchayati Raj Sangathan (RGPRS) in favour. "I, of course, readily agreed electoral victory, told me he had exploited to the full through the 'chai pe charcha' events that he stage managed with a hologram (then unknown and unprecedented) of Modi joining the tea drinkers."

Aiyar also refers to another remark against Narendra Modi that led to his suspension from the grand old party.

This happened on December 7, 2017 when Gujarat assembly polls were underway and a Rahul led Congress was fancying its chances in Modi's home state.

Aiyar told ANI how Modi was a 'neech kism ka aadmi' (a low kind of person), a remark that led to his ultimate downfall from the Congress. "Minutes after my comment was telecast, Modi, who was campaigning in Gujarat (at Limbayat in Surat district), twisted my words to claim I had described him as a 'low-caste' man, that I had said, 'This Modi belongs to a neech caste, this Modi is a neech.' This was completely untrue."

According to Aiyar, he had made no reference to Modi's caste. "I had not called anyone 'low caste'. Yet Modi, it was reported, had referred to me or my remark some twenty times



in his fifty-minute speech - that is, an average of once every two and a half minutes. Modi knew what he was doing: laying a trap into which the Congress would be caught. The desperately anxious Congress leaders swallowed Modi's lie hook, line and sinker."

Instead, unilaterally and without due process, the Congress, Aiyar laments and writes, accepted Modi's word for it that he had described him as a 'low-caste' person. "They had clearly not plumbed the depths of the man who was Prime Minister but preferred to give a dog a bad name and hang it. I was deeply upset, swinging on my emotional pendulum from fury to wonderment that I was being abandoned without explanation."

By this time Aiyar was not only disillusioned but had no illusions.

The speculation is that the selection for the England tour in summers could also throw up some surprises. These three gentlemen have to be reminded that living on past laurels was not enough and they have to either perform or perish. They have a huge fan following but they need to pay more attention to the game. Looking after families and shouldering personal responsibilities is all fine, but they are in the side to play the game and nothing should distract them from this objective if they have to keep their place.

There are many talented youngsters waiting in the wings. Yashvi Jaiswal has come right on top with his exceptional performances and one wonders why young Sarfaraz Khan never got a chance to wield the willow down under. He is also a very promising cricketer with a bright future. It is also evident that Gautam Gambhir has miles to go before he can recreate the dressing room atmosphere which was there under Rahul Dravid's watch. Gambhir perhaps lacks the temperament but this is a call the BCCI needs to take. The worry at present is that Bumrah could be out of action for a prolonged time, if his injury which prevented him from bowling in the second innings persists. This has been virtually caused because of negligence on part of the cricket authorities, who should have been more familiar with the situation.

Sunil Gavaskar, arguably the best batsman India has produced, notwithstanding the claims made by fans of Sachin Tendulkar and Virat Kohli in their support, has cautioned the cricket administration of taking decisions in the best interest of the Indian Cricket. Some others have suggested that the senior players should look at their present form and think things through before offering their services to the team. The youngsters who are knocking on the doors of the selectors need a fair chance to prove their mettle and this is the only way that the Indian side can restore its lost glory. There were high hopes that India would feature once again in the Test championship but it is all over now. However, the preparations for the next round should begin from this moment itself.

PANKAJ VOHRA

PERSPECTIVE

BCCI NEEDS TO HAVE RELOOK AT SENIOR PLAYERS AND COACH

After suffering a humiliating 3-1 loss to Australia in the Gavaskar-Border series down under, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) needs to review its own polices and take a view on the future of senior players as well as the Coach. The Indian side was completely outplayed by their rivals even though, Jasprit Bumrah's eleven did score a remarkable victory in the first test. The selection policy and the match strategy of the Indians came in for a lot of criticism, thereby raising questions regarding both Coach Gautam Gambhir and Chief Selector, Ajit Agarkar. Gambhir was an outstanding player in his hey days but as a Coach, he has a lot to prove and it is a call that the BCCI has to take on whether he should be replaced by someone more experienced and effective. The stepping down by Skipper Rohit Sharma for the final test at Sydney was unprecedented as also was the sudden declaration of retirement from International Cricket by Spin legend R.Ashwin. It is obvious that Ashwin despite serving the country for such a long time was humiliated and had no option but to hang his boots.

He went unsung and without the appearance in the last test. Similar things have happened to other players in the past and till this day, fans wonder why Virendra Sehwag, one of the most swashbuckling openers, had also been given the wrong end of the stick and ignored in the final stages. Gautam Gambhir, Shikhar Dhawan and so many others have been unfairly treated and thus it is the time when fresh policies and guidelines need to be laid. World Cup winner Mohinder Amarnath, who had been shabbily dealt with, had once described the national selectors as a "bunch of jokers". He was perhaps right since over a period of time, there have been decisions that have been taken on team selection, which have foxed fans and cricket lovers round the world. Even during the latest tour, the final eleven were never selected on form but to perhaps maintain a regional balance in the side. It is well known that Indian Cricket has been dominated by West Zone, Bombay in particular, and the South Zone. In the process, many deserving players get overlooked.

The question should never be over zone representation since anyone who wears the Indian Cap, represents the country and is much above such narrow considerations. Only the best should always play even if they are from any zone and merit should be the only criteria. In the just concluded series, Jasprit Bumrah with 32 wickets emerged as the man of the series and rightly so. There is little doubt that at present, he is the best bowler in the world. However, instead of using him sparingly, he was made to bowl over 150 overs since there was no proper support from the other end. The point is that why were bowlers, who could prove effective not picked up and those who were retained, did not justify their presence. The issue is also about the future of star players such as Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and Ravinder Jadeja. With Ashwin gone, it is very clear that the end of the trio is not very far away, unless they do something extraordinary.

Digital gap complicates generation gap

The young investors aren't excited about investment in property because it is an illiquid asset (won't help one buy concert tickets in the black market).

FROWNING PROHIBITED

DR J S KOHLI



equivalent of stone age. Gen Z would find it hard to believe that in the recent past, the booking of railway tickets entailed standing in the queue for time period which was often longer than the time taken for the train journey.

"The younger generation is going haywire." These words have been uttered by parents since times immemorial. But nowadays the youngsters are also miffed at their parents for not keeping pace with the times-like an old computer whose outdated hardware makes it unfeasible to add new software. They get bewildered when seniors get jittery over booking of an app-based cab. For some, making an online payment is as tough as solving The Sunday Times Crossword. I try my best to upgrade my digital skills so as to main-



tain and possibly enhance respectability amongst my son and daughter.

The flash points in the parent child relationship are aplenty. Acquisition of the latest model of 'on the wish list' smartphone every year and getting excited about it for months before its release is thought of as craziness by Mr & Mrs Middle Class who were brought up on second-hand books and discarded clothes of the elder siblings and cousins. Parents also

feel that the solo holiday trips of youngsters to 'off the tourist map' destinations are a bad influence of the travel influencers. Papa ki pari is demoted to papa ki sirfiri beti when she comes home with tattoos got made without parental assent. But the daughter had no choice. If she tried to take permission from papa for getting inked, he would have acted as if black ink had been thrown at his face. The young investors aren't

excited about investment in property because it is an illiquid asset (won't help one buy concert tickets in the black market). On the other hand, some seniors opine that investing in stock market is akin to gambling. Many elders feel that getting money withdrawn from their bank accounts amounts to self-induced robbery. In contrast, most of the youngsters who earn, constantly inject money into the Indian economy.

BEYOND THE BLAST: INDIA'S NUCLEAR LEGACY

India's nuclear legacy, shaped by key tests and visionary figures like Dr. R. Chidambaram, redefined defence, energy, and diplomacy.

India's nuclear journey has been marked by two significant milestones: the first test in 1974, known as "Smiling Buddha," and the series of tests in 1998, referred to as "Operation Shakti." These events not only showcased India's technological advancements but also had profound implications for its defense strategy and international relations.

SMILING BUDDHA (1974): INDIA'S FIRST NUCLEAR TEST

On May 18, 1974, India conducted its first successful nuclear test, codenamed "Smiling Buddha." The test took place at the Pokhran Test Range in Rajasthan, a site chosen for its remote location, which provided the necessary secrecy. The device detonated as a fission-type bomb, with an estimated yield of 6 to 10 kilotons.

The test was officially described by the Indian government as a "peaceful nuclear explosion," aligning with India's stance on using nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. However, the international community viewed it as a significant step towards nuclear weapons capability. The United States, for instance, referred to the operation as "Happy Krishna."

The successful detonation was a culmination of years of research and development by India's nuclear scientists, including the Atomic Energy Commission under the leadership of Dr. Raja Ramanna. The test demonstrated India's capability to develop nuclear weapons, marking a pivotal moment in its defense history.

OPERATION SHAKTI (1998): A SERIES OF NUCLEAR TESTS

After a 24-year hiatus, India conducted a series of nuclear tests in May 1998, known as "Operation Shakti." These tests were carried out at the same Pokhran Test Range, underscoring its strategic importance. The operation included five detonations:

May 11, 1998: Three tests were conducted. The first was a thermonuclear device (fusion bomb), followed by two fission bombs.

May 13, 1998: Two additional fission bombs were detonated.

The total yield of these tests was estimated to be between 54 and 58 kilotons, significantly higher than the 1974 test.

The Indian government, led by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, announced the tests with a statement emphasizing India's right to

DR R CHIDAMBARAM: VISIONARY FOR PEACEFUL NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT

Dr. Rajagopala Chidambaram, a distinguished Indian nuclear physicist, played a pivotal role in shaping India's nuclear program and policy. His technical expertise and strategic insights significantly influenced India's stance on nuclear deterrence and non-proliferation.

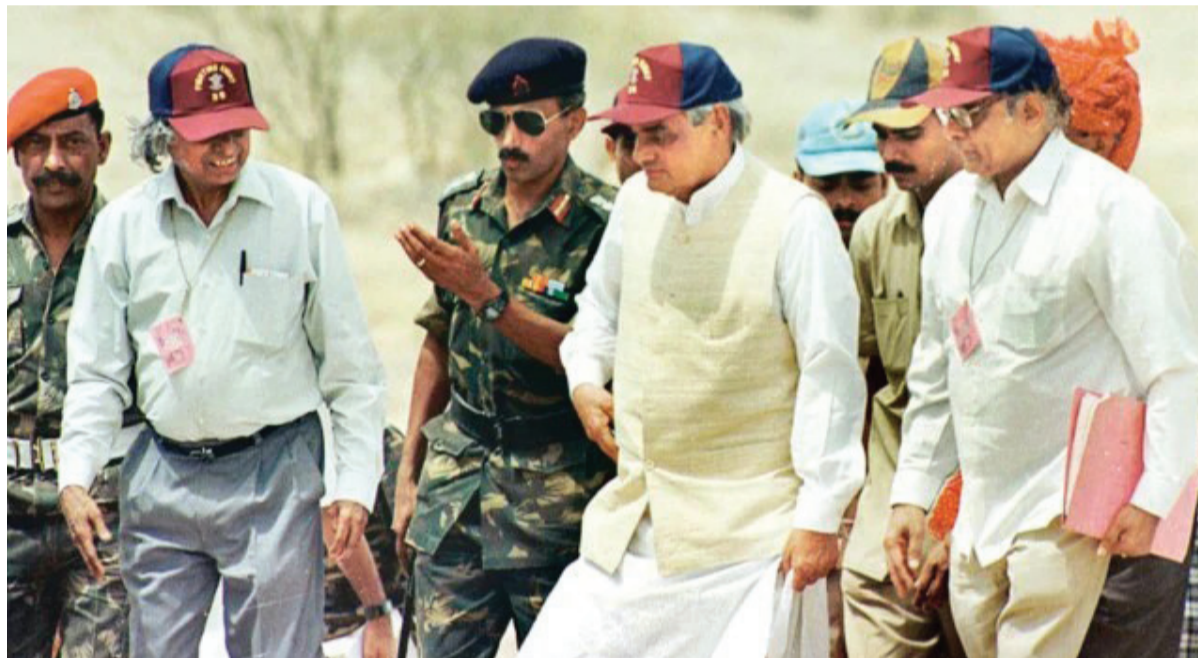
In the mid-1990s, during negotiations on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), Dr. Chidambaram was instrumental in India's decision-making process. He recognized that the proposed "zero-yield" definition of the CTBT would impede India's ability to maintain a credible nuclear deterrent without further testing. Consequently, under his guidance, India withdrew from the negotiations in 1996, emphasizing the necessity of preserving its strategic autonomy.

Dr. Chidambaram was a staunch advocate of India's "No First Use" (NFU) policy regarding nuclear weapons. He believed that this policy underscored India's commitment to responsible nuclear stewardship and deterrence. In 2019, he stated that there was no need to alter the NFU policy, asserting that it was a prudent stance for India to maintain.

He also addressed debates surrounding the efficacy of India's nuclear tests, particularly the thermonuclear device tested during Pokhran-II in 1998. In response to skepticism about the test's success, Dr. Chidambaram affirmed that the tests provided India with sufficient data to design and develop nuclear weapons of varying yields, thereby ensuring a credible minimum deterrent.

Beyond the strategic and defense aspects, Dr. Chidambaram was a proponent of leveraging nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, including energy production, healthcare, and scientific research. He believed that a robust nuclear program was essential not only for national security but also for the country's technological and economic advancement.

Throughout his career, Dr. Chidambaram maintained that India's nuclear policy should be guided by principles of strategic self-reliance, credible deterrence, and responsible stewardship. His contributions have been instrumental in establishing India's position as a nuclear-armed state committed to maintaining regional stability and pursuing peaceful applications of nuclear technology.



Then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, DRDO chief A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, and Dr. R. Chidambaram, AEC Chairman, visiting Pokhran on May 20, 1998. MoD X

self-defense and the peaceful nature of its nuclear program. The statement read, "India has conducted a series of nuclear tests at the Pokhran Test Range in Rajasthan. The tests have confirmed that India has the capability to design, develop, and produce a thermonuclear weapon."

The tests were met with mixed reactions globally. While some countries expressed concern over nuclear proliferation, others acknowledged India's right to self-defense. The United States, for example, condemned the tests, stating that they "pose a serious challenge to the global efforts to halt the spread of nuclear weapons."

IMPLICATIONS AND LEGACY

The 1974 and 1998 nuclear tests marked India's emergence as a nuclear power, altering the strategic dynamics in South Asia. The tests led to the imposition of sanctions by several countries, including the United States and Japan. However, over time, India engaged in



Indian soldiers stand alongside the Agni II missile during the country's 57th Republic Day parade in New Delhi, 26 January 2006. India showcased its military might and cultural diversity in its annual Republic Day parade under high security, as the country celebrated the anniversary of its transition to a republic in 1950 after independence in 1947.

diplomatic efforts to integrate into the global nuclear order, culminating in the 2008 Indo-US nuclear deal, which facilitated civilian nuclear cooperation between the two nations.

Domestically, the tests were a source of national pride, symbolizing India's

scientific and technological prowess. The successful execution of these tests bolstered India's defense capabilities and served as a deterrent in the region.

In conclusion, India's nuclear tests in 1974 and 1998 were pivotal events that shaped its defense policy

and international relations. They demonstrated India's commitment to self-reliance in defense technology and its strategic autonomy on the global stage.

India has nuclear weapons and is developing new systems to deliver them:

Ballistic missiles

and successfully tested ASAT missiles in 2019 and 2022.

India's nuclear arsenal is estimated to be around 164 warheads. India's warheads have plutonium cores and are believed to be stored separately from their delivery systems.



The five chairmen of the Atomic Energy Commission in 1993: From right: Dr. M.R. Srinivasan (1987-1990), Dr. R. Ramanna (1983-1987), Dr. P.K. Iyengar (1990-1993), Dr. H.N. Sethi (1972-1983), Dr. R. Chidambaram (1993-2000). Rakesh Sood Archive



Pokhran-II Tests: A significant moment in India's nuclear history. X

India has several types of land-based ballistic missiles, including the Prithvi-II, Agni-I, Agni-II, Agni-III, and Agni-IV. India is also developing the Agni-V, which has an intercontinental range, and the Agni-VI, which is under development.

Submarine-launched ballistic missiles India has the K-15 submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM), and is developing the K-4 SLBM.

Cruise missiles India is developing new cruise missiles.

Aircraft India has nuclear-capable aircraft, including the Mirage 2000H "Vajra", Jaguar IS/IB "Shamsher", and Rafale fighter-bombers.

Anti-satellite weapons India has anti-satellite weapon (ASAT) capabilities.

India's first nuclear test was in 1974, code-named Operation Smiling Buddha. India has conducted nuclear tests on three occasions:

Pokhran I: India conducted a series of nuclear tests

Pokhran II: India conducted a series of nuclear tests

1998: India conducted a test with a yield of 45 kilotons of TNT

India's policy is to keep its nuclear option open while working for global nuclear disarmament.

CIVILIAN NUCLEAR ENERGY PROGRAM

India's nuclear program is dual-purpose, serving both defense and civilian energy needs. The Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) is responsible for the country's nuclear power generation. As of 2024, India has an installed nuclear capacity of approximately 8 gigawatts, with plans to increase this to 20 gigawatts by 2032.

The Indo-US nuclear deal, finalized in 2008, marked a significant shift in India's civilian nuclear energy landscape. The agreement allowed India to access nuclear technology and fuel from the United States and other countries, ending a three-decade-long technology denial regime.

However, the deal faced challenges, including concerns over nuclear safety and the need for India to separate its civilian and military nuclear facilities. Despite these challenges, the agreement paved the way for increased international cooperation in India's civilian nuclear sector.

IMPACT OF SANCTIONS

Following India's nuclear tests in 1998, several countries, including the United States, imposed economic and military sanctions. These sanctions aimed to deter further nuclear proliferation and were a response to India's decision to conduct nuclear tests outside the framework of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

In response, India pursued a policy of strategic autonomy, focusing on indigenous development of defense and nuclear technologies. This approach led to advancements in missile systems and nuclear reactors, reducing dependence on foreign technology.

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS

India's nuclear program has spurred significant scientific and technological advancements. Institutions like the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) and

the Defense Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) have been at the forefront of developing advanced missile systems and nuclear reactors.

The Agni series of ballistic missiles, for instance, showcases India's progress in missile technology. The Agni-V, with an intercontinental range, represents a significant leap in India's strategic capabilities.

REGIONAL AND GLOBAL REACTIONS

India's nuclear tests have had profound implications for regional and global security. In South Asia, Pakistan conducted its own nuclear tests shortly after India's 1998 tests, leading to an arms race in the region.

Globally, reactions were mixed. While some countries condemned the tests, others acknowledged India's right to self-defense. The United States, for example, imposed sanctions but later engaged in dialogue, leading to the Indo-US nuclear deal.

THE FUTURE OF INDIA'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM

Looking ahead, India aims to enhance its nuclear capabilities while maintaining its commitment to non-proliferation. The focus is on developing advanced nuclear reactors, including small modular reactors, to meet growing energy demands and reduce carbon emissions.

India's stance on disarmament remains consistent, advocating for a nuclear-weapon-free world while emphasizing the need for equitable and non-discriminatory disarmament processes.

PUBLIC OPINION AND DOMESTIC POLITICS

Public opinion in India regarding nuclear weapons is complex. While there is significant support for nuclear deterrence, there are also concerns about safety and environmental impacts. Political debates continue, with discussions focusing on balancing national security needs with global non-proliferation commitments.

In conclusion, India's nuclear journey reflects a complex interplay of technological advancement, strategic autonomy, and international diplomacy. The nation's commitment to self-reliance in defense technology and its strategic autonomy on the global stage continue to shape its nuclear policy and international relations.

Compiled by Ruchira Talapatra



Pokhran II anniversary: Ready the store before lowering it for the nuclear weapons testing. MoD X

NEET-SS VACANCIES: SUPREME COURT URGES UNION GOVT TO TAKE DECISIONS IN 3 MONTHS FOR SMOOTH ADMISSION NEXT ACADEMIC YEAR

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case *Kevin Joy & Ors. v. Government of India & Ors* observed and has directed the Union to conduct a stakeholder meeting with all States or UTs and Private Medical Colleges in relation to the issue of filling vacancies for NEET- Super Speciality Courses for the coming Academic year. The Union is further expected to resolve the issue within the period of 3 months.

Justice BR Gavai and Justice KV Vishvanathan, was hearing the present matter.

In the present matter, the batch of petition is filed which arose out of successful candidates dropping out of such courses.

The bench comprising of Justice Gavai and Justice Vikram Nath in the case observed and has expressed concerns over the vacancies in super speciality medical courses in India, and the failure of the concerned authorities to fill the vacancies.

In April 2023, the bench noted that according to the submissions made by



the law officer, the Union government was set to appoint a committee under the chairmanship of the Director-General of Health Services of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare,

MoHFW to find a solution for the problem. This committee would comprise the representatives of the Indian states, as well as private medical colleges.

On January 3, the counsel,

The Additional Solicitor General, ASG Aishwarya Bhatti in the case stressed that inputs from various stakeholders including the State Government or Union Territories, the National Medical Council and the National Board of Examination would be required, the Union may convene a meeting with all the stakeholders and suggest a proposal before this Court.

Additional Solicitor General, ASG Aishwarya Bhatti appearing for the Union informed the Court that the Expert Committee under the Chairmanship of the Director General of Health Services so appointed has submitted its report on the

issue.

The Additional Solicitor General, ASG Aishwarya Bhatti in the case stressed that inputs from various stakeholders including the State Government or Union Territories, the National Medical Council and the

National Board of Examination would be required, the Union may convene a meeting with all the stakeholders and suggest a proposal before this Court.

The court directed that the Union of India to hold a meeting with all the stake-

holders, including representatives from all the States or UTs and the private medical colleges to consider the report of the Expert Committee.

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case stated that, 'This court would appreciate the Union of India to take a decision on the issue within a period of three months to ensure there are no complications in the admission process for the next academic session.'

Accordingly, the court listed the matter for further consideration in April.

Supreme Court: Petition filed seeking stay on registration of new suits and passing survey orders over Mandir-Masjid disputes

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case *Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay v. UoI And Ors* observed wherein the application is filed seeking vacation of the stay on registration of fresh suits against places of worship as well as surveys of the religious sites in pending mandir-masjid suits.

The Supreme Court on December 12 recalled that no further suits can be registered in the country against places of worship till further orders from it. It was further

The court observed that the Act became a focal point of public discussion recently in view of the violent events which followed the survey of the Sambhal Jama Masjid in Uttar Pradesh.

directed that in pending suits (such as those concerning Gyanvapi mosque, Mathura Shahi Idgah, Sambhal Jama Masjid etc.), courts should not pass effective interim or final orders, including orders for survey.

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

In the present matter, the batch of petitions is filed which relates to the Places of Worship (Special Provi-

sions) Act, 1991 Act, which prohibits the conversion of religious character of places of worship from their status as of August 15, 1947. While some petitions filed challenged the constitutionality of the Act, some others sought its strict implementation.

The court observed that the Act became a focal point of public discussion recently in view of the violent events which followed the survey of the Sambhal Jama Masjid in Uttar Pradesh.

The lead petition in the case

Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay v. Union of India was filed in 2020, in which the Court issued notice to the Union Government in March 2021. Later, few other similar petitions were filed challenging the statute.

Therefore, the several intervention applications were filed by various political parties like CPI(M), Indian Union Muslim League, DMK and RJD MP Manoj Kumar Jha, NCP (Sharad Pawar) MLA Jitendra Awhad etc, seeking protection of the Act.

The single-judge Justice Govind Sanap delivered the ruling on on December 5, 2024, while acquitting two boys, convicted for stalking a minor girl by following her.

The judge in the case stated that a single instance of the boys following the victim will not constitute the offence of stalking.

The court in the case noted that in order to attract the offence of stalking, the prosecution must prove that the accused repeatedly or constantly followed, watched or contacted a child either directly or through electronic, digital media. In view of the said mandatory requirement of the offence of stalking, a solitary instance of following the victim would not be sufficient to make out this offence," the judge held in the judgment pronounced

Further, the bench in the case observed that the said provision in our considered opinion clarifies by implication that such applications which were moved before December 30, 2017, will have to be adjudicated as per the unamended Act.

The bench while considering the facts and circumstances of the case observed and has finds no infirmity in the impugned judgment.

Accordingly, the court dismissed the appeal filed against the judgement of Kerala High Court.

when the 2018 amendment came into force, should be decided as per the unamended regime.

The 2018 amendment introduced significant changes to the Paddy Land Act, which includes a condition to pay a fee in proportion to the fair value of the land for conversions and as per the amendment, the fee was applicable for conversion of 'unnotified lands' as well, which are lands notified as paddy land in the basic tax register but are not notified as paddy lands.

The Supreme Court in the case observed and did not delve deep into the question whether the amendment is retrospective or retroactive for the reason that the amendment act itself specified that it will come into force from December 31, 2017 only.

The bench comprising of Justice Surya Kant and Justice Ujjal Bhuyan was hearing the present matter. The bench in the case observed that the new conditions which are inserted through the 2018 Amendment Act can, therefore, be enforced qua those applicants only, who applied for the conversion of their lands after December 30, 2017 and in other words, all those applications which had been submitted prior to the amended Act coming into force, shall be governed by the conditions contained under the unamended statutory scheme.

The bench also referred to Section 27A(13) of the Amending Act, which mandates that the applications moved after the Amending Act has come into force, shall be decided as per the newly amended provisions.

Further, the bench in the case observed that the said provision in our considered opinion clarifies by implication that such applications which were moved before December 30, 2017, will have to be adjudicated as per the unamended Act.

The bench while considering the facts and circumstances of the case observed and has finds no infirmity in the impugned judgment.

Accordingly, the court dismissed the appeal filed against the judgement of Kerala High Court.

Bombay High Court: Following a girl once will not amount to stalking

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Nagpur bench of Bombay High Court in the case *Amit Chavan vs State of Maharashtra* observed and has held that merely following a girl or a victim once, will not amount to stalking as prescribed under the 354-D of the Indian Penal Code, IPC and the provisions under the Protection Of Children from Sexual Offences, POCSO Act.

The single-judge Justice Govind Sanap delivered the ruling on on December 5, 2024, while acquitting two boys, convicted for stalking a minor girl by following her.

The judge in the case stated that a single instance of the boys following the victim will not constitute the offence of stalking.

The court in the case noted that in order to attract the offence of stalking, the prosecution must prove that the accused repeatedly or constantly followed, watched or contacted a child either directly or through electronic, digital media. In view of the said mandatory requirement of the offence of stalking, a solitary instance of following the victim would not be sufficient to make out this offence," the judge held in the judgment pronounced

Further, the bench in the case observed that the said provision in our considered opinion clarifies by implication that such applications which were moved before December 30, 2017, will have to be adjudicated as per the unamended Act.

The bench while considering the facts and circumstances of the case observed and has finds no infirmity in the impugned judgment.

Accordingly, the court dismissed the appeal filed against the judgement of Kerala High Court.



The counsel, Advocates Jasprit Singh Chilotra and Neerja Chaubey appeared for the Appellants.

on December 5. The judge was hearing appeals filed by two boys, both convicted for stalking a minor girl and subsequently sexually assaulting her. Thus, the judge noted that the victim in her testimony did not attribute any specific role to the second accused in the case. It may also be noted that the second accused only accompanied the first accused boy, while he followed the victim when she went to fetch water from the well.

The judge in the case also noted that the second accused also accompanied the first accused boy, in January 2020, when he visited the house of the girl and forced himself upon her by gagging

her mouth and pressing her breast.

The court also noted that the second accused was only standing outside the victim's house and thus, he could not be convicted either for sexual assault or stalking and therefore acquitted him from all the charges.

Further, the court opined that the offence of stalking is not made out since he followed the girl only once.

The bench while considering the facts and circumstances of the case noted that the evidence of the victim and also her sister, both of whom testified, that the first accused entered her house and gagged the victim's mouth and pressed her breast.

Further, the judge found their testimony to be reliable and trustworthy and therefore, upheld the conviction of the first accused on this count.

The counsel, Advocates Jasprit Singh Chilotra and Neerja Chaubey appeared for the Appellants.

The counsel, Additional Public Prosecutor CA Lokhande represented the State.

The counsel, Advocates Sonali Saware-Gadhwe and SH Bhatia were appointed to represent the Victim.

Supreme Court: 2018 amendment to Kerala Paddy Land Act applicable only to conversion applications filed after Dec 30, 2017

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case *The Tehsildar and Another v. Renjith George* observed and has held that the 2018 amendment made to the Kerala Conservation of Paddy Land and Wetland Act, 2008, which came into effect from December 30, 2017 is only applicable to applications for conversion of land which are filed after December 30, 2017.

The court in the case clarified that the previous application, which were pending

when the 2018 amendment came into force, should be decided as per the unamended regime.

The 2018 amendment introduced significant changes to the Paddy Land Act, which includes a condition to pay a fee in proportion to the fair value of the land for conversions and as per the amendment, the fee was applicable for conversion of 'unnotified lands' as well, which are lands notified as paddy land in the basic tax register but are not notified as paddy lands.

The Supreme Court in the

case observed and did not delve deep into the question whether the amendment is retrospective or retroactive for the reason that the amendment act itself specified that it will come into force from December 31, 2017 only.

The bench comprising of Justice Surya Kant and Justice Ujjal Bhuyan was hearing the present matter.

The bench in the case observed that the new conditions which are inserted through the 2018 Amendment Act can, therefore, be enforced qua those ap-

plicants only, who applied for the conversion of their lands after December 30, 2017 and in other words, all those applications which had been submitted prior to the amended Act coming into force, shall be governed by the conditions contained under the unamended statutory scheme.

The bench also referred to Section 27A(13) of the Amending Act, which mandates that the applications moved after the Amending Act has come into force, shall be decided as per the newly amended provisions.

Supreme Court quashes case: To establish mens rea, something more than vague statements must be produced under Section 354 IPC

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case *Naresh Aneja @ Naresh Kumar Aneja Versus. State Of Uttar Pradesh And Anr.* observed that section 354 of Indian Penal Code, IPC (Assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty) to apply, criminal force must be use.

The court stated that such application of force must be coupled with intention to outrage a woman's modesty.

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

The bench stated that in order to establish mens rea something better than vague statements must be produced before the court. Thus, the mere bald assertions of mental and physical discomfort would not suffice.

Facts of the Case: The appellant and respondent no. 2 were directors in a joint concern namely M/s LAJ-IDS Exports Pvt. Ltd.

The Respondent No. 2 filed a complaint against the appellant of inappropriate behaviour in the workplace.



The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case observed and has set aside the impugned judgment of the High Court and has quashed the criminal proceedings initiated against the appellant.

Subsequently, a complaint was registered under Section 354 and Section 506 (Punishment for Criminal Intimidation) under Indian Penal Code, IPC.

Aggrieved with the same, the appellant approached the High Court for quashing of the complaint.

The High Court in the case observed and has refused to grant any such relief observing that it could not undertake a 'microscopic examination of facts and evidence to thwart the prosecution case'.

The Apex Court in the case observed that while the said court cannot conduct a mini-trial, it must consider whether the alleged offences are prima facie made out.

Adding to it, the court stated that to put it differently, it is to be seen, without undertaking a minute examination of the record, that there is some substance in the allegations made which could meet the threshold of statutory language.

The court also observed that while criminal force is

defined under Indian Penal Code, IPC, there is no such definition of modesty.

The court referred to one of the cases of Attorney General v. Satish for the meaning of modesty.

The court stated that no offence under Section 354 was made out. Thus, no evidence established the appellant's intent.

The court stated that it being a well settled fact for mens rea to be established, something better than vague statements must be produced before the court. As evidenced by the annexures referred to above, i.e. the FIR, the preliminary investigation report as also the concluding portion of the chargesheet, no direct allegation nor any evidence in support thereof can be found attributing intent to the appellant and it cannot be said, then, that a case under section 354 of Indian Penal Code, IPC is made out against the appellant.

The court also referred to the case of Sharif Ahmed v. State of U.P., wherein the court held that an offence of criminal intimidation arises when the accused intendeds to cause alarm to

the victim, though it does not matter whether the victim is alarmed or not. Thus, the intention of the accused to cause alarm must be established by bringing evidence on record. The word 'intimidate' means to make timid or fearful, especially: to compel or deter by or as if by threats

The court in the case stated that the examination of FIR, interim investigation report and the chargesheet, did not disclose any offence. Before allowing the appeal, the court also discussed the High Court's power to quash criminal proceedings.

The court referred to various cases which includes *State of Haryana v. Bhajan Lal*, *Indian Oil Corporation v. NEPC India Ltd* and *State of Karnataka v. L. Muniswamy*, wherein the court held that a complaint can be quashed where there is a clear abuse of the process of the Court.

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case observed and has set aside the impugned judgment of the High Court and has quashed the criminal proceedings initiated against the appellant.

TOP OF THE DAY

42 TERRORISTS CAPTURED IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA

Tel Aviv: The IDF (Israel Defense Forces) reported that during the week Israel's security forces operated throughout Judea and Samaria and arrested 42 wanted terrorists suspected of terrorist activities and confiscated four weapons and tens of thousands of shekels of terrorist funds. Israel's relations with Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) are complex and heavily influenced by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Judea and Samaria, also known as the West Bank, are territories claimed by both Israel and the Palestinians. Israel controls much of the area, while the Palestinian Authority governs parts of it under the Oslo Accords.

180 MILLION PEOPLE DENIED VOTING RIGHTS: B'DESH CEC

DHAKA: Bangladesh's Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) AMM Nasir Uddin on Sunday said that almost 180 million people have been denied their voting rights and the Election Commission wants to end their deprivation. The Dhaka Tribune newspaper reported. The CEC, while addressing the inaugural ceremony of a training programme for election officers ahead of a voter list updating exercise, said the Election Commission (EC) wants to remove the fact that the people have been deprived of the voting right for so long. "We want to remove the pain of their deprivation. We are steadfast in our commitment," he said.

84 INDIAN HINDU PILGRIMS REACH PAKISTAN

LAHORE: Eighty-four Hindu pilgrims arrived in Pakistan from India via the Wagah Border on Sunday to celebrate the 316th birth anniversary of Shiv Avtari Satguru Sant Shadaram Sahib at a shrine in the Sindh province, officials said. The issuance of visas is covered under the framework of the Pakistan-India Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines of 1974. "Some 84 Hindu pilgrims led by Yushishthar Lal arrived here from India to celebrate the birth anniversary of Shri Guru Swami Shadaram, an incarnation of Lord Shiva," Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) spokesperson Ghulam Mohayuddin told media.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH CHINA SEA IN 2025

Taipei: The South China Sea remains one of the world's most volatile geopolitical hotspots, with escalating tensions and territorial disputes involving China and its neighbouring countries. As countries within and outside the region become involved, Radio Free Asia's latest report highlights five key developments to watch in 2025. The Taiwan Strait has seen an intensification of military activities, with nearly 3,000 incursions into Taiwan's air defence identification zone (ADIZ) between January and November 2024.

ISRAEL RAZES GAZA NEIGHBOURHOOD

IDF said that the attack on Hamas took place far from the movement of trucks without affecting the continuity of aid.

AGENCIES
TEL AVIV

Israeli forces in the northern Gaza area of Beit Hanoun demolished a neighbourhood overlooking Israeli territory used by Hamas commanders as a hideout and command center, the Israel Defense Forces said on Saturday.

High rises in the "Officers' Neighborhood" of Beit Hanoun overlooked the nearby Israeli city of Sderot. The neighbourhood contained rocket launching sites, anti-tank firing positions, booby traps, shafts and numerous explosives, the IDF said.

Israel has been fighting Hamas's efforts to regroup in northern Gaza.

Also on Saturday, Israeli forces targeted Hamas terrorists exploiting Gaza's Salah ad-Din Highway. The 45 km road runs the length of the Strip from the Rafah border crossing with Egypt to the Erez Crossing in northern Gaza and is a primary route for humanitarian aid deliveries.

According to the IDF, the attack on Hamas took place far from the movement of trucks without affecting the continuity of aid.

Separately, Israeli aircraft targeted a vehicle in Deir al-Balah in central Gaza carrying four armed Hamas terrorists. The IDF also said on Saturday that soldiers in the elite Yahalom combat engineering unit located and dismantled

HOSTAGE CRISIS



War-torn area and dilapidated buildings in Gaza. File Photo

- Israeli forces demolished a neighbourhood in Beit Hanoun used by Hamas commanders as a hideout and command center.
- The "Officers' Neighborhood" in Beit Hanoun contained rocket launch sites, anti-tank positions, explosives, and booby traps.
- Israeli forces targeted Hamas terrorists on Gaza's Salah ad-Din Highway, avoiding disruption of humanitarian aid.
- An Israeli airstrike hit a vehicle in Deir al-Balah, killing four armed Hamas terrorists.
- The Yahalom unit dismantled a Hamas weapons manufacturing site in a tunnel in central Gaza.
- Over 1,200 people were killed in Hamas attacks on Israel, with 252 hostages taken.

an underground tunnel route containing a Hamas weapons manufacturing site in central Gaza.

The complex contained several lathes, as well as processing and cutting machines used, among other things, for

the production of weapons. Military equipment was also seized.

At least 1,200 people were killed, and 252 Israelis and foreigners were taken hostage in Hamas's attacks on Israeli communities near the Gaza

border on October 7. Of the 97 remaining hostages, more than 30 have been declared dead. Hamas has also been holding captive two Israeli civilians since 2014 and 2015, and the bodies of two soldiers killed in 2014.

'US plans \$8 billion weapons sale to Israel'

AGENCIES
TEL AVIV

The US State Department on Friday informed Congress of its plan to approve USD 8 billion worth of arms sales to Israel, according to the department's office presiding weapons transfers, the New York Times reported.

The proposed sale includes bombs, artillery shells, missiles for fighter jets and helicopters, and GPS guidance systems for bombs, as per a notification sent to two congressional committees. Some weapons systems are expected to enter production pipelines, with deliveries taking up to two years.



Representative Image

However, certain munitions, including 2,800 MK-82 bombs - 500-pound unguided weapons - could be delivered as early as this year if Congress and the State Department provide final approval, a US official said on Saturday.

About USD 6 billion of the USD 8 billion package is made up of four cases, or sets of sales, and those are mainly bombs and GPS guidance systems for unguided bombs, said the official, on the condition of anonymity, the New York Times reported.

Hezbollah leader Nasrallah was killed last year, aide says

AGENCIES
BEIRUT

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah was killed in an Israeli airstrike last year while inside the militant group's war operations room, according to new details Sunday disclosed by a senior Hezbollah official.

A series of Israeli airstrikes flattened several buildings in Beirut's southern suburbs on Sept. 27, 2023, killing Nasrallah. The Lebanese Health Min-



istry said six people died. According to news reports, Nasrallah and other senior officials were meeting underground.

The assassination of Nasrallah, who had led Hezbollah for 32 years,

turned months of low-level strikes between Israel and the militants into all-out war that battered much of southern and eastern Lebanon for two months until a U.S.-brokered ceasefire took effect Nov. 27.

"His Eminence (Hassan Nasrallah) used to lead the battle and war from this location," top Hezbollah security official Wafiq Safa told a news conference Sunday near the site where Nasrallah was killed.

Israeli airstrikes in Gaza kill at least 21, hospital workers say

AGENCIES
DEIR AL-BALAH

Israeli airstrikes killed at least 21 people, including at least two children, on Saturday in Gaza, hospital staff said, while a new effort at ceasefire talks was underway in Qatar after nearly 15 months of war.

Thousands rallied again in Israel to press for a ceasefire deal, hours after Hamas released a video showing one of the hostages still held in Gaza. Such videos, like an uptick in airstrikes, have been seen as attempts to assert pressure during talks.

A small boy cried over his father in southern Gaza's Khan Younis, and a woman draped herself over one of the bodies wrapped in white plastic. Three airstrikes in the city hit a car, a house and people on the street, according to staff at Nasser Hospital.

The Civil Defense, first responders affiliated with the Hamas-run government, said an airstrike destroyed a residential area behind the Saraya complex in Gaza City, killing at least



Palestinians inspect a car targeted in an overnight Israeli airstrike that killed its occupants in the town of Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, Saturday, Jan. 4, 2025.

Thousands rallied again in Israel to press for a ceasefire deal, hours after Hamas released a video showing one of the hostages still held in Gaza.

five people.

And Israeli strikes on Saturday evening killed three people in Bureij and three others in Deir al-Balah in central Gaza, according to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, where the bodies were taken. One child was among the dead. A young man leaned against a hospital wall and wept.

Israel's military said it targeted Hamas militants with a strike near Salah al-Din in southern Gaza over-

night and with a strike on a vehicle in Deir al-Balah in central Gaza. It also said Hamas fired a projectile that hit near the Erez crossing into Gaza.

Gaza's Health Ministry said at least 59 people had been killed and more than 270 others were wounded by strikes in the past 24 hours.

There were no immediate statements on the indirect negotiations toward a ceasefire.

S Korea's presidential security chief defies Yoon arrest bid

AGENCIES
SEOUL

The chief of security for South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said on Sunday he could not cooperate with efforts to arrest the impeached leader, in remarks that could push the political crisis towards another high-stakes confrontation.

With a warrant for Yoon's arrest on grounds of insurrection set to expire at midnight (1500 GMT) on Monday, the official, Park Chong-jun, cited the legal debate surrounding the warrant as the reason for the lack of cooperation.

"Please refrain from insulting remarks that the presidential security service has been reduced to a private army," he said in a statement, adding that it had provided security to all presidents for 60 years, regardless of political affiliation.

The comments came after a Seoul court rejected a complaint from Yoon's lawyers that the arrest warrant was illegal and invalid, the Yonhap news agency said. Telephone calls to the court



South Korean investigators halted as impeached president defies arrest warrant. File Photo

Judging the legitimacy of any legal interpretation and execution is difficult, Seok Dong-hyeon, a lawyer advising Yoon.

to seek comment went unanswered.

"Judging the legitimacy of any legal interpretation and execution is difficult," Seok Dong-hyeon, a lawyer advising Yoon, said on Facebook.

"If there is an error in the legality of law enforcement against the incumbent president, it will be a big problem."

Yoon became the first incumbent South Korean president to face arrest for his botched attempt to de-

clare martial law on Dec. 3, which triggered political chaos in Asia's fourth-largest economy and a key U.S. ally.

In a statement on Sunday, the lawyers threatened to report to prosecutors Oh Dong-woon, the chief of the Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials (CIO) and the investigators for what they called an illegal effort to execute the warrant, in the absence of authority to do so.

B'desh cancels planned training of judges in India

TDG NETWORK
DHAKA

Bangladesh's interim government on Sunday cancelled a planned training programme for 50 judges and judicial officers in India, scrapping a previous notification.

"The notification has been cancelled," a law ministry spokesman said without elaborating.

The Daily Star newspaper, however, reported the cancellation came in compliance with a directive from Bangladesh's Supreme Court.

These judicial officers will participate in the training from February 10 to February 20.

Assistant Judges, Senior Assistant Judges, Joint District and Sessions Judges, Additional District and Sessions Judges, District and Sessions Judges and officers of equivalent rank have been nominated for the training.

China slams US over proposed Chinese drone ban

AGENCIES
BEIJING

After US President Joe Biden's administration announced on Thursday its consideration of a new rule that could restrict Chinese-made drones in the United States, China condemned the move as an "overstretching" of the concept of national security.

The US Department of Commerce had initiated a rulemaking period to evaluate the possibility of banning or restricting drones

manufactured in China.

China's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Mao Ning during a regular press briefing on Friday said that such actions disrupt normal economic and trade exchanges.

Mao said, "China firmly opposes the US overstretching the concept of national security, which disrupts and restricts normal economic and trade exchanges, and undermines the security and stability of the global industrial and supply chains."

She warned that China would take all necessary



China's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Mao Ning. ANI

measures to protect its legitimate rights and interests. "We will take all measures

The US Department of Commerce had initiated a rulemaking period to evaluate the possibility of banning or restricting drones manufactured in China.

necessary to firmly safeguard our lawful rights and interests," China's Foreign

Ministry spokesperson said.

Notably, the move by US to restrict Chinese-made drones followed a bipartisan inquiry led by the House Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party, which raised alarm over the potential national security threats posed by these foreign-made drones, particularly those from Chinese manufacturer DJI.

The inquiry, launched in June, underscored con-

cerns about the increasing presence of Chinese drones near sensitive US military installations, with implications for espionage and surveillance.

According to the Select Committee, these drones pose "significant risks" to US security and the privacy of American citizens. In response to the inquiry, the Commerce Department has begun the process of considering actions to restrict drones made in China under its authority over information and commu-

nications technology and services (ICTS).

Following the announcement, Chairman John Moolenaar (R-MI) and Ranking Member Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL) of the House Select Committee issued a joint statement expressing strong support for the move. "Drones made in the People's Republic of China, including those made by DJI, pose acute risks to our national security and the privacy of all Americans," the statement read.

TYNE AND WEAR



Snow surrounds the Angel of the North in Tyne and Wear. Heavy overnight snow is causing disruption across the country in Gateshead, UK. SOURCE: OWEN HUMPHREYS

UKRAINE LAUNCHES NEW ATTACK IN KURSK REGION OF WESTERN RUSSIA

The head of Ukraine's official Centre Against Disinformation said that Russian troops were attacked in several places.

**TDG NETWORK
MOSCOW**

Russia said on Sunday that Ukraine had launched a new attack in the Kursk region, an area of western Russia from which Russian troops have been trying to eject Ukrainian forces for the past five months.

Ukrainian troops broke across the border in a surprise incursion on Aug. 6 and have managed to hold on to a chunk of territory there which could provide Kyiv with an important bargaining chip in potential peace talks.

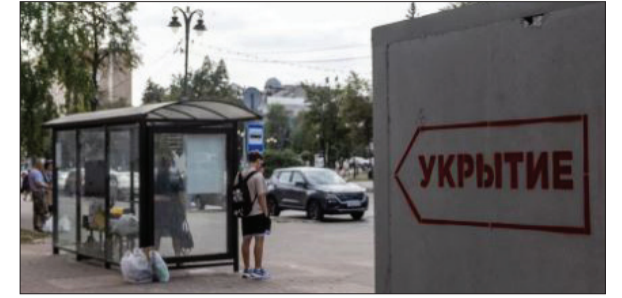
Russia's defence ministry said its forces were beating back the Ukrainian forces

but some reports from Russian military bloggers suggested the Russian side had come under heavy pressure.

Andriy Yermak, the head of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy's office, posted on Telegram that there was "good news" from Kursk, adding: "Russia is getting what it deserves."

Andriy Kovalenko, the head of Ukraine's official Centre Against Disinformation, wrote on Telegram that Russian troops were attacked in several places.

The Russian statement said Ukraine attacked around 0600 GMT near the village of Berdin with two tanks, a mine-clearing vehicle and 12 armoured



People wait at a bus stop next to a reinforced concrete bomb shelter installed in a street in the course of Russia-Ukraine conflict, in Kursk, Russia August 28, 2024. File Photo

combat vehicles with paratroops. "Artillery and aviation of the North group of (Russian) forces defeated the assault group of the Ukrainian Armed Forces," it added.

The statement said two Ukrainian attacks had been repelled. Reuters could not independently verify the

situation on the ground.

Reports from Russia's widely read war bloggers, who support Moscow's war in Ukraine but have often reported critically on failings and setbacks, indicated that the Ukrainian assault had put Russian forces at least temporarily on the defensive.

Austria's ruling conservatives elect Christian Stocker as interim leader

**AGENCIES
WIENNA**

Austria's ruling conservatives on Sunday appointed Christian Stocker, the secretary-general of the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP), as their interim leader after former Chancellor Karl Nehammer stepped down following the collapse of coalition talks.

His announcement on Saturday came a day after the liberal Neos party withdrew from the negotiations with Nehammer's conservative People's Party (ÖVP) and the Social Democrats (SPÖ).

Nehammer said, "After the breakoff of the coalition



Christian Stocker

Karl Nehammer announced that he would enable "an orderly transition" and railed against "radicals who do not offer a single solution to any problem but only live from describing problems".

talks I am going to do the following: I will step down both as chancellor and party chairman of the People's Party in the coming days."

In a video shared on social media accounts, he said that "long and honest" nego-

tiations with the centre-left were not successful despite a shared interest in fending off the gaining far right. He said that his party would not back steps which it believes would harm the economy or new taxes, according to Al Jazeera reported.

Karl Nehammer announced that he would enable "an orderly transition"

and railed against "radicals who do not offer a single solution to any problem but only live from describing problems".

Sharing the video statement on X, Nehammer wrote, "We have negotiated long and honestly. No agreement is possible with the SPÖ on key points. The People's Party stands

by its promises: We will not agree to measures that are hostile to performance and the economy or to new taxes. We are therefore ending negotiations with the SPÖ and will not continue them."

In September last year, the far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ) won the first parliamentary election in its history by getting close to 30 per cent of the vote. However, other parties did not agree to govern in a coalition with the eurosceptic, Russia-friendly FPÖ and its leader Herbert Kickl. In October, Austria's President Alexander Van der Bellen asked Nehammer to form a coalition.

**AGENCIES
WEST PALM BEACH**

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni made a surprise trip to Florida to meet with Donald Trump late on Saturday, as the key European leader sought to buttress ties with the president-elect before his inauguration on Jan. 20.

Members of Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort welcomed Meloni with applause after an introduction by the president-elect, according to videos shared on social media by reporters and others.

"This is very exciting. I'm here with a fantastic woman, the prime minister of Italy," Trump told the Mar-a-Lago crowd, according to a media pool report. "She's really taken Europe by storm."



Donald Trump, Giorgia Meloni, Mar-a-Lago, Palm Beach, Florida, January 4, 2025. File Photo

Meloni is seen as a potentially strong partner for Trump given her conservative credentials and the stability of the right-wing coalition she has led in Italy since late 2022.

She has also forged a close relationship with billionaire tech CEO Elon Musk, a close Trump ally who spent more than a quarter of a bil-

lion dollars to help him win the election.

Tommaso Foti, Italy's EU and regional affairs minister, said on Sunday that the meeting, which had not been announced in advance, showed that Italy could act as "a diplomatic bridge between two worlds: the European Union and the USA".

Presidential Medal of Freedom to Hillary Clinton

**AGENCIES
WASHINGTON**

President Joe Biden awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom to former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, chef Jose Andres, actor Michael J. Fox and conservationist Jane Goodall on Saturday in one of his final official acts in office.

Biden, a Democrat who leaves the White House on Jan. 20, when President-elect Donald Trump is inaugurated, also gave what is considered the highest U.S. civilian honor to humanitarian and U2 singer Bono, fash-



President Joe Biden, right, presents the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Nation's highest civilian honor, to former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, in the East Room of the White House, on January 4, 2025.

ion designer Ralph Lauren,

Denzel Washington, basketball star Earvin "Magic"

Johnson and Vogue editor-in-chief Anna Wintour.

Others receiving the honor at the White House included Tim Gill, an LGBT activist; David Rubenstein, a philanthropist and co-founder of The Carlyle Group; and George Stevens Jr., a writer and director who founded the American Film Institute.

International soccer star Lionel Messi, who did not attend the ceremony, also received the award. White House officials said the Argentinian player had a scheduling conflict. Investor and philanthropist George Soros also received

the award but did not attend the ceremony. His son Alex accepted it in his place.

Biden also awarded the Medal of Freedom posthumously to Fannie Lou Hamer, a civil rights activist; Ash Carter, a former secretary of defense; Robert F. Kennedy, a former attorney general and U.S. senator and brother of President John F. Kennedy; and George Romney, a businessman and former governor of Michigan and secretary of Housing and Urban Development. His son, Senator Mitt Romney, accepted on his behalf.

Russia's FSB thwarts bomb attack

**AGENCIES
MOSCOW**

Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) said on Saturday it had thwarted a large attack in the Urals city of Yekaterinburg and detained four teenagers it said had been planning to detonate a bomb in a crowded area, Reuters reported. The FSB said it had seized components for a homemade explosive device and that investigators in the Sverdlovsk region had opened a criminal case. The four teenagers are Russian citizens born in 2007 and 2008, the FSB said. It did not name them.

FSB is the principal security and intelligence agency in the country, responsible for domestic security, counterintelligence, and law enforcement.

It was formed in 1995 as a successor to the Soviet KGB, retaining key domestic and intelligence functions. The FSB handles counterterrorism, counterespionage, and cyber operations, and it plays a significant role in political surveillance and suppression of opposition.

The agency also has authority over border security, organized crime, and various national security concerns.

The FSB reports directly to the President of Russia and has been a central part of Vladimir Putin's political power structure.

Blinken to visit South Korea, Japan and France from January 4 to 9

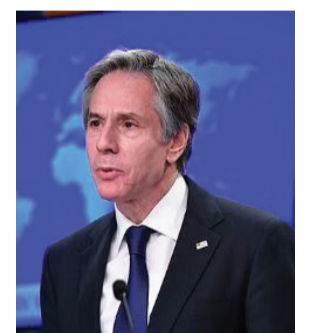
**AGENCIES
WASHINGTON**

Amid the ongoing political turmoil in South Korea, United States secretary of State Antony Blinken is set to visit the nation and will discuss how both the countries can boost efforts to promote a "free, open, and prosperous Indo-Pacific."

Blinken will also travel to Japan, France along with South Korea from January 4-9.

In a press release, the US Department of State said, "Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken will travel to the Republic of Korea (ROK), Japan, and France January 4-9. In the ROK, Secretary Blinken will meet with senior ROK government officials to reaffirm the ironclad US-ROK alliance and discuss ways our two nations can build on our critical cooperation on challenges around the world based on our shared values. The Secretary will also discuss how the United States and the ROK can strengthen key efforts to promote a free, open, and prosperous Indo-Pacific, as well as trilateral efforts with Japan," the US Department of State said.

It added, "In Japan, Secretary Blinken will meet with senior Japanese government officials to review the tremendous progress the US-Japan alliance has made over the past few years. Secretary Blinken will reaffirm



the importance of the alliance in addressing a range of bilateral, regional, and global issues and continue to build on the momentum of US-Japan-ROK trilateral cooperation."

In France, Secretary Blinken will meet with senior French officials as part of our vital partnership to address challenges in Europe, the Middle East, and beyond.

Meanwhile, Blinken on Saturday also spoke with Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty. The US State Department said that the Secretary and Foreign Minister discussed the latest developments in ongoing efforts to reach a ceasefire in Gaza that secures the release of the hostages, increases the flow of humanitarian aid into Gaza, and brings an end to the war.

"They further discussed the situation in Syria. The Secretary reaffirmed US support for an inclusive, Syrian-led and Syrian-owned peaceful political transition to a representative and accountable government.

Nine civilians killed in car attack, Mali rebels accuse Russian army

**TDG NETWORK
BAMAKO**

Nine civilians including women and children were killed in an attack on a vehicle in Mali's Segou region last week, a civil society group and a rebel coalition said late on Saturday, accusing the army and Russian mercenaries of being responsible.

The vehicle was travelling from the town of Niono to a refugee camp in Mauritania on Thursday when it came under fire, said Mohamed Elmaouloud Ramadane, spokesperson for the coalition of Tuareg groups that are fighting for an independent homeland in northern Mali.

He and local civil society association Kal Akal said Malian armed forces and allied fighters from Russia's Wagner private military contractor group had carried out the attack. In a separate statement, the head of Kel Ansar, one of the largest



A CSP-DPA fighter secures the perimeter during a meeting of Tuareg rebels army leaders in Tinzaouaten, Mali November 27, 2024. File Photo

The vehicle was travelling from the town of Niono to a refugee camp in Mauritania on Thursday when it came under fire, said Mohamed Elmaouloud Ramadane, spokesperson.

Tuareg groups, called for an investigation but said Malian troops were not behind the bloodshed. The Malian army did not respond to a request for comment. Wagner could not immediately be reached.

Wagner fighters have been in Mali since the army seized power in two coups in 2020 and 2021 and kicked out French and U.N. troops. They have been supporting Malian forces in their battle with Islamist insurgents and the Tuareg separatists.

Massive winter storm to clobber U.S. from Plains to East Coast

**AGENCIES
WASHINGTON**

Millions of Americans from the Plains to the East Coast faced the threat of blizzards, heavy snow, treacherous ice and freezing rain through Monday, the National Weather Service said on Saturday.

Governors in Kentucky and Virginia declared states of emergency ahead of the winter storm.

"The storm is still taking shape," meteorologist Rich Bann of the NWS's Weather Prediction Center said Saturday evening. "But this thing has multiple hazards from heavy snows in the Plains to significant icing covering roads farther south."

He added that more than 60 million people in the U.S. were affected by winter weather warnings, watches or advisories this weekend.



A woman shovels out the driveway at his home in Westmont Borough as cold temperatures and snowfall hits the region in Johnstown on Friday, January 3, 2025. File Photo

HANIA AAMIR DANCES IN TEAL LEHENGA CHOLI FROM INDIAN BRAND



TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

It's very easy to understand why Hania Aamir is the latest talk of town. The Pakistani actress, accompanied by Yashma Gill, recently shook up the internet by performing some stunning Bollywood tracks at the wedding of Yashma's sister Arooba Gill. Videos of her performance went viral,

mani Lampi Lehenga from ITRH gave her a divine look in soft, heavenly hues and a flowy silhouette. She paired the look with a contrast choker, matching bangles, and a dainty maang tikka. Half-updo hair, and minimum, dewy makeup, underlined her beauty.

Hania was not only sporting an Indian brand but also grooving to Jazzy B's "Dil Lutiya," Katrina

Hania was not only sporting an Indian brand but also grooving to Jazzy B's "Dil Lutiya," Katrina Kaif's "Chikni Chameli," and other Bollywood numbers.

and she became a subject of discussion owing to her breath-taking teal lehenga.

She is the second Pakistani actress within a week after Mahira Khan who, for her appearance at a wedding guest, resorted to Indian fashion inspiration through designer ITRH's lehenga choli.

Hania's gorgeous Aas-

Kaif's "Chikni Chameli," and other Bollywood numbers. ITRH, founded by designer Ridhi Bansal and creative director Mohit Rai, has dressed some of Bollywood's biggest stars in the past, including Khushi Kapoor, Mrunal Thakur, Sonakshi Sinha, Ananya Panday, and Bhumi Pednekar.

'I'LL KEEP WORKING HARD': AKSHAY SPEAKS ON RECENT BOX OFFICE SETBACKS



TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

In a candid moment at the trailer launch event of his upcoming patriotic film 'Sky Force', Akshay Kumar addressed the media about the challenges he has faced at the box office in 2024.

Despite experiencing setbacks with several of his recent films, including 'Bade Miyan Chote Miyan', 'Sarfire', and 'Khel Khel Mein', the actor remains undeterred, emphasizing his unshakable work ethic.

Akshay, who is gearing up to play a courageous Indian Air Force officer in 'Sky Force', said that his more than three-decade-long career has been built on one principle: "working hard".

He acknowledged that he has faced tough times before and knows how to bounce back.

"It hasn't happened for the first time, this has happened before as well... and the best part is to keep working hard... that's what I tell myself," said Akshay, reflecting on the fluctuations in his career.

The actor expressed that despite advice from many

to scale back and do fewer films or focus solely on mass entertainment, he wants to continue working at his own pace.

"Many people tell me that I should do just 1 or 2 films in a year, but I feel that if I can work, then why not keep doing it," he said.

He also spoke fondly about 'Sarfire', a Hindi adaptation of the Tamil hit 'Soorarai Pottru', stating, "I still say that it (Sarfire) was one of my best films, even though it didn't perform well at the box office."

Akshay's latest project, 'Sky Force', promises to be an electrifying experience for moviegoers.

Set to release on January 24, 2025, just ahead of Republic Day, the film features Akshay as an Indian Air Force officer who embarks on a mission of vengeance after the death of several soldiers.

The high-stakes thriller, directed by Sandeep Kewlani and Abhishek Kapur, promises breathtaking aerial combat, intense action sequences, and a gripping narrative that showcases the bravery of Indian soldiers.

PICTURE PERFECT

Priyanka and Nick express gratitude for their family, sharing a heartfelt message: 'So grateful for my family'. (Instagram)



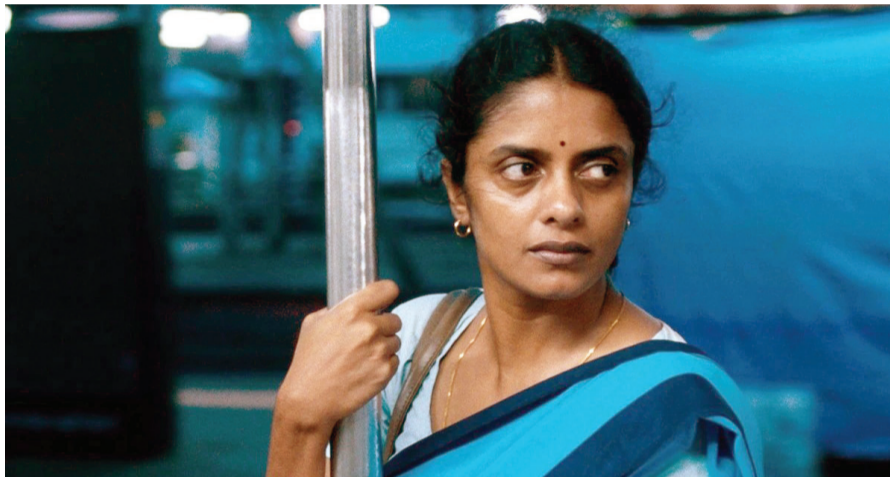
GOLDEN GLOBES 2025: INDIA SHINES WITH TWO NOMINATIONS FOR PAYAL KAPADIA'S FILM

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON DC

The excitement is building as the 82nd Annual Golden Globe Awards approach, and all eyes are set on the prestigious ceremony taking place at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Los Angeles.

This year's Golden Globes are not just about Hollywood heavyweights, as India also has a chance to make its mark, thanks to 'All We Imagine As Light', a film directed by Payal Kapadia that has earned two significant nominations.

The ceremony, airing live on January 5, 2025 (US time), promises a star-studded evening, with comedian Nikki Glaser taking the stage as the first-ever woman to host the Golden Globes solo.



The night will honour the best in film and television, while Netflix leads the nominations across both mediums.

The awards ceremony, however, holds special significance for India, with 'All We Imagine As Light' securing nominations in the Best Director category for Kapadia and Best Mo-

tion Picture in a Non-English Language.

Kapadia, who has already captured the attention of international audiences with her thought-provoking storytelling, faces tough competition in the Best Director category.

She will compete with notable filmmakers such as Jacques Audiard (Emilia

Perez), Sean Baker (Anora), and Edward Berger (Conclave).

In the Best Motion Picture - Non-English Language category, 'All We Imagine As Light' will battle against other acclaimed films like 'Emilia Perez', 'The Girl with the Needle', 'I'm Still Here', and 'The Seed of the Sacred Fig'.

Taimur Ali Khan's sweet 'Maa Ki Seva' moment

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Kareena Kapoor Khan's recent family vacation with her husband Saif Ali Khan and their sons, Taimur Ali Khan and Jeh Ali Khan, has become the talk of social media, thanks to a heartwarming moment involving her eldest son.

While the actress has been sharing snippets from their holiday, one particular post has captivated fans. The images show a tender moment where Taimur, dressed in a stylish black suit, is seen walking ahead of his mother in a hotel corridor, carrying her high heels.

The sweet gesture quickly caught the attention of netizens, who praised the young Nawab for his gentlemanly conduct.

Captioning the photos on Instagram, Kareena shared her pride with her followers, "MAA ki seva iss saal and forever. Happy new year friends. More Pictures



coming soon. Stay tuned."

The post has since garnered widespread admiration, with followers expressing their delight at Taimur's gentle behaviour. Fans couldn't stop gushing over his maturity and grace.

One user commented, "What a handsome little man," while another

wrote, "He is turning into a true blue Pataudi Gentleman."

Some fans also praised his dashing looks, with one remarking, "Chote Nawab," in the comments section.

Earlier this year, in a candid conversation, Kareena opened up about her role as a mother and how her

children, especially Taimur, view her career and public life.

When asked if her son was aware of her achievements, including the film festival named after her, Kareena shared a funny story about how Taimur is still too young to grasp such concepts.

'Sky Force' trailer: Akshay, Veer lead high-octane aerial action

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Jio Studios and Maddock Films have officially unveiled the much-awaited trailer for 'Sky Force', set to release on January 24, 2025, just in time for Republic Day week.

This patriotic thriller promises to deliver a compelling mix of high-octane air combat sequences, emotionally charged moments, and a gripping narrative centred around one of India's most daring military operations.

Starring Akshay Kumar and debutant Veer Pahariya in lead roles, 'Sky Force' offers an exhilarating glimpse into India's first and one of



its deadliest airstrikes on Pakistan.

The trailer sets the stage for a thrilling journey filled with brave soldiers, heart-wrenching sacrifice, and stirring patriotism.

Directed by Sandeep Kewlani and Abhishek Kapur, 'Sky Force' follows the story of an Indian Air Force (IAF) officer, played by Akshay Kumar, who embarks on a mission of vengeance after several Indian soldiers are killed. As tensions escalate, Akshay's character challenges the conventional mindset, urging his superiors to take action and execute the country's first-ever airstrike in retaliation.

BRAIN PICKING



Age is just a number, and your talent will never fail you. It has no expiry date.



- MADHURI DIXIT
(Indian Actress)

'DEVA' TEASER UNLEASHES SHAHID KAPOOR'S ACTION-PACKED, COP AVATAR

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

The much-anticipated teaser for Shahid Kapoor's upcoming film 'Deva' has finally been revealed, and it's everything fans hoped for and more.

Produced by Zee Studios and Roy Kapur Films, this high-voltage action thriller promises to be a rollercoaster ride of intense stunts, exhilarating dance moves, and an adrenaline-pumping storyline.

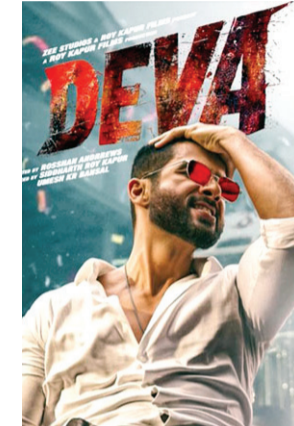
Shahid Kapoor is all set to break new ground with his portrayal of the titular character, Deva.

The teaser, which has already set social media abuzz, reveals the actor in a powerful new light.

From jaw-dropping car chases to explosive fight sequences, Kapoor's intense cop avatar has left fans eagerly awaiting the film's release.

The 'Deva' teaser showcases Shahid's raw, unfiltered action performance, complemented by his electrifying dance skills.

Whether it's high-speed chases, hand-to-hand com-



bat, or stunning choreography, the teaser promises an unforgettable cinematic experience for the audience.

Shahid shared the teaser on social media with a caption, "D day is here. Machana chalu," which translates to "The day is here. Let's begin."

Directed by acclaimed Malayalam filmmaker Rosshan Andrews, 'Deva' is set to be a game-changer in the action genre.

The film revolves around Shahid Kapoor portraying a rebellious police officer tasked with solving a high-profile case that unravels layers of deceit, betrayal, and a dangerous conspiracy.

RAM CHARAN'S DAUGHTER'S HEARTWARMING REACTION



TDG NETWORK
HYDERABAD

In an emotional moment, Upasana Kamineni, Ram Charan's wife, shared a video of their daughter, Klin Kaara, watching her father on screen for the first time. In the video, Klin Kaara eagerly points at the TV, clearly recognizing her father.

Upasana shared her pride in the moment by writing, "When she watches her naana on screen for the first time. @alwaysramcharan sooo proud of you. All set for Game Changer now."

Despite being the daughter of one of India's biggest film stars, Klin Kaara has remained mostly out of the public eye, as her parents prefer to keep her away from media attention.

Ram Charan is currently immersed in promoting his upcoming film Game Changer, which is set for release on January 10. Directed by Shankar and starring Kiara Advani alongside him, the film generates a lot of buzz in Indian cinema. During a recent press conference in Mumbai on January 4,

Ram Charan spoke about the opportunity of working with director Shankar. He highlighted the influence of both Shankar and RRR director S.S. Rajamouli, praising them for their demanding nature that encourages actors to give their best performances. "Both Mr. Rajamouli and Shankar Sir are taskmasters. There's no day you get to relax with them," Ram Charan stated.

Ram Charan expressed how working with Shankar was a dream come true for him. He fondly recalled how Rajamouli had called Shankar the "epitome of commercial films," emphasizing his impact on global cinema. Ram Charan added, "It's a blessing to work for five years with Rajamouli Garu and then Shankar Garu. It's so enriching as an actor. There's so much to learn." At the event, Ram Charan and the Game Changer team, including producer Dil Raju and actor SJ Suryah, talked about the film's powerful messages, stunning visuals, and family-friendly narrative.

MOUNTAIN ESCAPES IN INDIA: TREKKING ROUTES

TDG NETWORK

India, with its diverse geography, is a treasure trove of mountain escapes, offering unparalleled experiences for trekking enthusiasts and those seeking solace in nature. From the majestic Himalayas in the north to the verdant Western Ghats in the south, these trekking routes promise adventure, tranquility, and breathtaking landscapes.

TREKKING ROUTES IN INDIA

1. Roopkund Trek, Uttarakhand

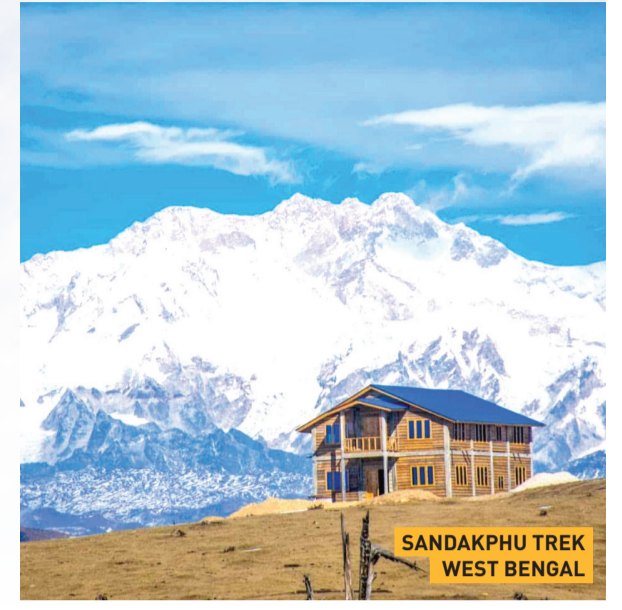
The Roopkund Trek is famous for its eerie yet fascinating "Skeleton Lake," a glacial lake surrounded by ancient human remains. Situated at an altitude of 16,499 feet, this trek is a thrilling journey for seasoned adventurers. The trail takes trekkers through



**ROOPKUND TREK
UTTARAKHAND**



**KUDREMUKH TREK
KARNATAKA**



**SANDAKPHU TREK
WEST BENGAL**



**MARKHA VALLEY TREK
LADAKH**

dense oak forests, expansive alpine meadows, and snow-covered terrains. The panoramic views of the Trishul and Nanda



**DZONGRI TREK
SIKKIM**

Ghunti peaks add to its allure, making it a must-visit for those seeking a mix of mystery and natural beauty.

2. Markha Valley Trek, Ladakh

Known as the "Tea House Trek," the Markha Valley route offers a unique blend of rugged terrain and Ladakhi culture. Trekkers traverse dramatic landscapes, cross high-altitude passes, and visit traditional villages adorned with prayer flags. This trek also passes through the Hemis National Park, home to the

elusive snow leopard. The route's cultural richness and natural splendor make it one of India's most iconic trekking experiences.

3. Kudremukh Trek, Karnataka

Nestled in the lush Western Ghats, the Kudremukh Trek is a haven for nature lovers. The trail winds through rolling hills, dense forests, and sparkling streams, offering panoramic views of the region's verdant beauty. This moderately challenging trek is ideal for beginners and seasoned trekkers alike. Its rich biodi-

versity, including sightings of exotic flora and fauna, coupled with its serene ambiance, makes it a unique escape into nature.

4. Sandakphu Trek, West Bengal

Sandakphu, the highest point in West Bengal, is a trekker's paradise. This trail offers unmatched views of four of the world's tallest peaks—Mount Everest, Kanchenjunga, Lhotse, and Makalu. The trek combines challenging ascents with scenic beauty, taking trekkers through rhododendron forests and charming Himalayan villages. The serene environment and stunning vistas make Sandakphu a dream destination for adventure seekers and nature enthusiasts.

5. Dzongri Trek, Sikkim

For those seeking a shorter Himalayan adventure, the Dzongri Trek in Sikkim is an excellent choice. Start-

ing from Yuksom, the trail ascends to Dzongri Top, offering spectacular views of Kanchenjunga and other snow-clad peaks. This moderately challenging trek is perfect for those looking to experience the Himalayas' beauty without committing to a long expedition. The route also provides an immersive glimpse into Sikkim's pristine natural landscapes and vibrant culture.

CONCLUSION

India's trekking routes offer something for everyone, from challenging trails for seasoned adventurers to serene pathways for beginners. Whether it's the rugged beauty of Ladakh, the lush greenery of Karnataka, or the snow-capped peaks of Sikkim, these treks provide unforgettable experiences. Beyond adventure, they allow travelers to connect with nature, explore diverse cultures, and create memories that last a lifetime.

Weaving Local Culture into Global Hospitality Trends



GYANENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT

As global travel becomes more accessible, the hospitality industry has undergone a profound transformation, evolving in response to shifting consumer preferences and broader cultural trends. In particular, contemporary travellers are increasingly prioritising experiences that are not only aligned with but also deeply reflective of the local culture and heritage of their destinations.

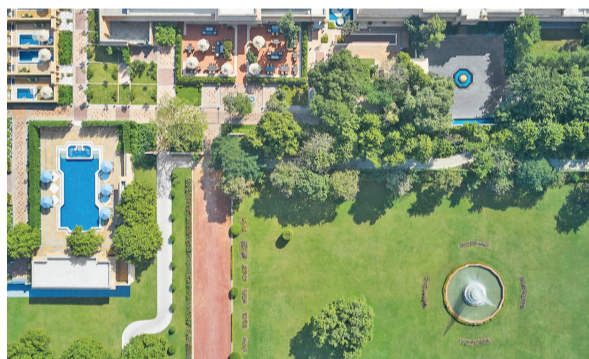
At the heart of this transformation lies a growing desire for authenticity. In an age dominated by social media, where every experience is amplified through digital narratives, travellers are no longer content with generic or standardised accommodations. Rather, they seek environments that resonate with the essence of place, that immerse them in the textures, stories, and rituals of the locales they visit. The emphasis is on creating spaces that transcend mere functionality, instead weaving a rich tapestry of cultural significance into every design element—from architecture and interior decor to culinary offerings and service traditions.

The trend of adaptive reuse in the hospitality industry—particularly in the repurposing of old palaces and historical buildings—

has emerged as a critical strategy to minimise environmental impact while simultaneously preserving and enhancing the cultural identity of a region. In this context, hotels that undergo restoration and reimagination not only serve as functional spaces but also as custodians of the architectural and cultural legacy of their locales. This practice speaks directly to the rising demand from eco-conscious travellers, who seek accommodations that respect both the environment and the heritage of the areas they visit.

In the pursuit of blending local culture with modern design, architects and designers are increasingly drawing from the wealth of indigenous materials, regional craftsmanship, and traditional design elements to imbue their projects with a sense of place. Every aspect of the design—whether it be textiles, ceramics, lighting, or furniture—presents an opportunity to showcase local artistry, with each detail thoughtfully curated to reflect the history and spirit of the community. Simultaneously, modern elements are seamlessly integrated to provide the luxury and comfort that discerning global travellers expect, creating spaces that strike a harmonious balance between tradition and contemporary sophistication. This fusion of old and new ensures that the experience is not only rooted in cultural authenticity but also caters to the expectations of today's sophisticated clientele, resulting in spaces that feel timeless yet profoundly relevant.

At the heart of this evolu-



For instance, our redesign of the Marble Arch restaurant in Jaipur's Jai Mahal Palace draws from Rajasthan's rich architectural history, using Makrana marble—evoking a sense of timelessness and grandeur.

tion in hospitality design lies the fundamental integration of local culture, which serves as a cornerstone for the creation of distinctive, meaningful spaces. In our work, we strive to marry traditional architectural elements with modern luxury, offering guests an immersive experience that connects them to the region's historical and cultural heritage while providing the refinement and comfort of contemporary settings. For instance, our redesign of the Marble Arch restaurant in Jaipur's Jai Mahal Palace draws from Rajasthan's rich architectural history, using Makrana marble—evoking a sense of timelessness and grandeur.

In the case of Sawai Man Mahal, a historic palace transformed into a modern hotel in Jaipur, our approach to adaptive reuse exemplifies the delicate interplay between heritage preservation and contemporary design standards. By retaining the property's

original Rajasthani architectural motifs and incorporating traditional crafts such as thikri mirrorwork and araiash plastering, we have created a space where history and modernity coexist. This restoration process was not merely about conserving a building but about reimagining it in a way that respects its past while meeting the needs of the present, offering guests a unique, sustainable experience that honours both the structure's history and the region's cultural narrative.

Looking toward the future, it is evident that the integration of local culture will become a pivotal differentiator within the hospitality industry. As more hotels and resorts recognise that their guests seek not just luxury but a deeper connection to the places they visit, the fusion of cultural heritage and modern design will become a hallmark of hospitality.

The author is the Founder & Principal Architect at IDEAS.

TIPS FOR TRAVELLING

TDG NETWORK

Traveling with children can be an enriching experience, but it also requires careful planning to ensure a smooth journey. Here are some tips to help make your trip enjoyable and stress-free:

BEFORE THE TRIP

- ❖ **Plan Ahead:** Choose destinations and accommodations that are family-friendly, with amenities like play areas, kid-friendly meals, and nearby attractions.
- ❖ **Pack Wisely:** Bring essentials like diapers, wipes, snacks, toys, and extra clothes. Include a first-aid kit with child-specific medications.
- ❖ **Involve Kids in Planning:** Let older children help plan activities. It keeps them excited and engaged.
- ❖ **Prepare Travel Documents:** Ensure passports, visas, and other documents are ready. Carry copies for safety.
- ❖ **Check Travel Policies:** Understand airline or train policies for children, including seat requirements and baggage allowances.

DURING THE JOURNEY

- ❖ **Arrive Early:** Allow extra time for check-ins, security, and boarding to avoid last-minute stress.
- ❖ **Pack Entertainment:** Bring books, puzzles, coloring sets, or tablets loaded with games and movies to keep kids occupied.
- ❖ **Bring Snacks:** Carry a mix of healthy and favorite treats to manage hunger and mood swings.
- ❖ **Stay Comfortable:**

with Children



SAFETY TIPS

❖ **Child-proof Accommodations:** Check for hazards in hotel rooms and vacation rentals, like sharp edges or unlocked windows.

❖ **ID Bands:** Have kids wear identification wristbands with your contact details in case they get separated.

❖ **Teach Safety Rules:** Educate kids about staying close in crowded areas and what to do if they get lost.

❖ **Carry Essentials:** Always have water, sunscreen, hats, and weather-appropriate clothing on hand.

GENERAL TIPS

❖ **Be Patient:** Kids can be unpredictable. Stay calm and adapt to their needs.

❖ **Capture Memories:** Take photos and videos to cherish the moments and involve kids in documenting the trip.

❖ **Reward Good Behavior:** A small treat or praise can encourage kids to cooperate during the journey.

❖ **Stay Positive:** Focus on the joy of exploring new places together, even if things don't go perfectly.

With these tips, traveling with children can be a fun and memorable adventure for the whole family.

Dress kids in comfortable layers to adjust to changing temperatures.

❖ **Take Breaks:** During long drives or layovers, let kids stretch, walk, or play to burn off energy.

AT THE DESTINATION

- ❖ **Stick to Routines:** Try to maintain regular sleep and meal schedules to keep kids comfortable and less cranky.
- ❖ **Opt for Kid-Friendly**



NAYAN NAVELI GALLERY PRESENTS 'SKETCH TO STORY' – A TRIBUTE TO THE TIMELESS ART OF DRAWING

TDG NETWORK

Nayan Naveli Gallery recently held the group art exhibition "Sketch to Story" at Shridharni Art Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam. This one-of-a-kind exhibition celebrated the power of drawing as the foundation of artistic expression. Featuring works from some of India's most iconic artists alongside contemporary visionaries, the event opened with a huge gathering of art enthusiasts and promised a visual and emotional delight for all attendees.

The exhibition showcased a stellar lineup, including artists such as Laxma Goud, Jatin Das, Vrindavan Solanki, Sanjay Bhattacharya, Ramesh-

war Broota, and Jogen Choudhury, among others. "Drawing is the soul of art. It all begins with a line – a simple yet powerful element that gives birth to stories, emotions, and entire worlds," said Amrita Kochhar, the curator of the exhibition. "Sketch to Story captured this essence, offering a glimpse into the minds and souls of the artists."

The event was more than just an art display; it provided an opportunity to engage with the creative process itself. Through the timeless works of senior masters and the innovative creations of accomplished contemporary artists, visitors discovered how a single line could evolve into profound visual narratives.



SAMARPAN UTSAV, A CLASSICAL DANCE FESTIVAL ORGANISED BY SAMARPAN KALA KENDRA

TDG NETWORK

Recently Samarpan Utsav, a classical dance festival held at Kamani Auditorium, Delhi organized by Samarpan Kala Kendra in Gurugram, brought together over 100 students under the guidance of Founder and Guru Ritu Gupta. The event showcased the collective effort of the institute, with senior students volunteering to ensure the program's success and leaving a lasting impression on the audience.

The event featured distinguished chief guests, including Pt. Jaikishan Maharaj, Smt. Ruby Mishra (renowned Kathak gurus), and Dr. R. R. Kasudhan (HOD of Performing Arts, Mewar University).

The students performed captivating Kathak and Bharatanatyam pieces, demonstrating their dedication to classical dance forms. Chairman Mr. Brijesh Gupta shared that the vision behind Samarpan Kala Kendra is to provide the finest classical dance and music training to future generations, fostering cultural heritage and artistic excellence.

The event showcased the collective effort of the institute, with senior students volunteering to ensure the program's success and leaving a lasting impression on the audience.

GALLERY ART INCEPT BRINGS INDIA'S SOUL TO LONDON ART FAIR 2025

TDG NETWORK

Art Incept, a purpose-driven gallery based in Gurugram, is all set to mark its international debut at the London Art Fair 2025, slated to take place from January 22 to 26, 2025. Founded in November 2020, Art Incept has quickly established itself as a platform dedicated to nurturing and showcasing emerging contemporary South Asian talent in the visual arts.

For its debut, the gallery will participate in the PLAT-FORM 2025 Section, focusing on the theme MOTHER EARTH. The exhibition explores the importance of living in harmony with nature and fostering emotional connections with the world around us.

"Today for you, tomorrow for me is an invitation to live in harmony with Mother Earth and with each other. If we start with giving, rather than taking, everything might look different. The artists exhibiting here explore themes of the earth, nature, spirituality, and emotional connections, ultimately seeking to understand what love for all beings looks like," explains Becca Pelly-Fry, curator of PLAT-



RAM DONGRE, Faded narratives, 2024, Oil on canvas, 183 x 91 cms



RAM DONGRE, Fragments of Legacy, 2024, Oil on canvas, 183 x 137 cms



VISWANATH KUTTUM, Ajanta caves series-VI, 2024, Paraffin and Bees wax, resin, Double Boiled Linseed Oil, Brown Powder on Paper Board, 50 x 38 cms



VISWANATH KUTTUM, Ritual Carnival-II, 2024, Paraffin and Bees wax, resin, Double Boiled Linseed Oil, Brown Powder on Paper Board, 23 x 23 cms

and modernity, inspired by fading frescoes and the essence of rural landscapes. Gavara Satyanarayana uses intricate woodblock prints to depict the struggles faced by India's agrarian communities, drawing from his personal experiences with food scarcity and inequity. Viswanath Kuttum creates textured monochromatic paintings that pay homage to tribal rituals and the fragile beauty of life in the Andaman Islands, highlighting the profound connection between land and memory. "What makes this presentation particularly distinctive is not just its thematic resonance but also the use of unique mediums—engraved woodblocks, layered oil paintings, and innovative materials like beeswax, paraffin, and linseed oil.

These elements amplify the emotional depth of the stories, transcending regional boundaries and offering universal reflections on resilience, identity, and our connection to place" shares Virginia Damtsa.

"This is our debut at the London Art Fair, and we are thrilled to bring these voices to a global audience, spotlighting narratives that are both intimate and profoundly relevant. This exhibition reflects our commitment to nurturing talent and creating pathways for South Asian artists to thrive on the world stage." Says Gayatri Singh, Founder, Art Incept.

While this marks Art Incept's first showcase outside India, the gallery has already made significant strides with initiatives like its Art in Residence program, organized in collaboration with the German Ambassador in India, now gearing up for its 4th edition in January 2025.

As the gallery steps onto this global platform, its debut promises to celebrate the enduring connection between art, identity, and community, spotlighting the rich cultural tapestry of South Asia.



Geetanjali International Foundation hosts the 5th edition of Sant Shiromani Surdas Mahotsav

TDG NETWORK

The 5th edition of the Sant Shiromani Surdas Mahotsav, hosted by the Geetanjali International Foundation, took place at the C.D. Deshmukh Auditorium, India International Centre. This grand event celebrated the legacy of the 16th-century Bhakti poet Sant Surdas, blending Indian classical dance and music to honor his spiritual and artistic contributions.

The evening began with a dynamic performance by Diksha Rawat and Karthika Unnikrishnan, both disciples of the renowned Kathak maestro Vidushi Uma Dogra. Their energetic and precise recital set an inspiring tone for the night, showcasing the rich tradition of Kathak.

Following this, the audience was enthralled by a captivating solo performance by Rani Khanam, accompanied by an esteemed ensemble of musicians: Pranshu Chaturtal on tabla, Jaywardhan Dadhich on vocals, Nasir



Khan on sarangi, and Nisha Kesari on padhant. Khanam's performance began with the evocative bhajan by Sant Surdas, "सुख बदन सुख सदन श्याम को, नरिख नयन मन थाक्यो," which tells the tale of a devotee mesmerized

by Lord Krishna's divine beauty. The performance culminated in a vibrant Kathak recital, set to Taal Teentaal, featuring intricate elements like tukde, tihai, paran, ladi, and jugbandi, which left the



Diksha Rawat and Karthika Unnikrishnan Rani Khanam

audience spellbound.

Renowned Bharatanatyam exponent Rama Vaidyanathan followed with a deeply emotive solo performance, presenting a traditional Varnam that embodied Sringar Bhakti. Through her performance, she portrayed the narrative of a Nayika longing for Lord Vishnu. Her expressions of love, yearning, and divine connection transported the audience

into a realm of spiritual beauty, demonstrating the power of Bharatanatyam to convey profound emotions. A unique highlight of the evening was the duet by Rama Vaidyanathan and Rani Khanam, which interpreted a playful poem by Sant Surdas. The piece depicted two gopikas warning another about Lord Krishna's mischievous ways, comparing him to a flirtatious



art forms will take place to honor the enduring legacy of Sant Surdas.

Geetanjali Sharma, the founder of the Mahotsav, shared her thoughts on the festival: "The Surdas Mahotsav is not just a celebration; it is a heartfelt tribute to the timeless wisdom and devotion of Sant Surdas. Through the universal language of music and dance, we strive to bring his poetic legacy closer to audiences of all generations. This Mahotsav celebrates India's spiritual richness and aims to inspire a deeper connection to our cultural roots."

The 5th edition of the Surdas Mahotsav was a resounding success, reaffirming the Geetanjali International Foundation's commitment to preserving and promoting India's cultural and spiritual heritage. The event not only showcased the artistic brilliance of renowned performers but also reinforced the Foundation's dedication to keeping the legacy of Sant Surdas alive through music, dance, and poetry.

AUSTRALIA CRUISE TO SIX-WICKET VICTORY

India knocked out of WTC final

TDG NETWORK
SYDNEY

An out-of-sorts India was knocked out of the World Test Championship final as Australia cruised to a six-wicket victory in the fifth Test here on Sunday to reclaim the Border-Gavaskar Trophy after 10 years, leaving the visitors with several points to ponder in a difficult transition phase. Australia won the five-match series 3-1 and also qualified for the World Test Championship final against South Africa slated at the Lord's from June 11 to 15.

A target of 162 could have been trickier had new Test captain Jasprit Bumrah been in a position to bowl despite painful back spasms but once Virat Kohli led the team out, it was as clear as the Sydney skyline that defending the total would be next to impossible.

Bumrah deservedly claimed the player of the series honour for his astonishing haul of 32 wickets in five matches but that was hardly a consolation for the shambolic team performance that India managed.

"Little frustrating but sometimes you have to respect your body, you can't fight your body. Disappointing, probably missed out on the spiciest wicket of the series," Bumrah said of his inability to bowl in the second innings during the post-match presentation ceremony.

Prasidh Krishna (3/65 in 12 overs) and Mohammed Siraj (1/69 in 12 overs) were not a patch on Bumrah and despite multiple breakthroughs, they bowled too many poor deliveries to



Australian players celebrate with the trophy after winning the Border-Gavaskar Trophy against India, at the Sydney Cricket Ground, in Sydney on Sunday. ANI

make it easy for the hosts to canter home in just 27 overs.

Usman Khawaja (41), Travis Head (34 not out) and debutant Beau Webster (39 not out) completed the formalities, putting an end to India's misery in a tour that has exposed all of the team's batting frailties and an unhealthy reliance on Bumrah.

Once Bumrah was ruled out after he tried some shadow bowling during the morning warm-up session and didn't feel comfortable, the writing was on the wall.

The magnificent Scott Boland (6/45) and the ever-reliable Pat Cummins (3/44) polished off the Indian tail for just 157 in 39.5 overs. If one takes out Rishabh Pant's feisty 61 and Yashasvi Jaiswal's 22, the other nine players collectively contributed

a mere 74 runs.

The series would leave the men who matter in Indian cricket establishment with a lot on their minds when they deliberate on ways to get the house back in order.

With six of the completed innings yielding less than 200 runs, one doesn't need a soothsayer to tell what went wrong on the tour.

Regular skipper Rohit Sharma and batting talisman Virat Kohli flopped with technical issues troubling them throughout the season.

Jaiswal (391 runs) was the top-scorer despite three ducks followed by rookie Nitish Kumar Reddy (298 runs), KL Rahul (276 runs) and Pant (255 runs).

As much as one wants to take a nuanced view of Ro-

hit and Kohli's poor form but it is undeniable that both veterans are finding it increasingly difficult to stem the rot that has set in their batting.

There are a few good youngsters in the fringes and the new World Test Championship cycle would demand that they be given a chance to develop over time.

While a tough call on Kohli and Rohit is awaited, the BCCI brass also needs to seriously look at whether coach Gautam Gambhir is the right man to be in-charge across formats.

Under Gambhir, India have lost six Tests out of 10 during the season going by apart from being defeated in an ODI series in Sri Lanka. If Kohli and Rohit are held accountable, Gambhir can't

be left off merely because the team is in transition. The head coach's head-strong approach is an open secret and it is not earning him too many friends in the dressing room.

Ravichandran Ashwin's retirement after Brisbane and Rohit's eventual call to drop himself happened in a manner that can best be described as abrupt. Messing with a player's game-plan isn't the best way to manage as Rishabh Pant demonstrated by oscillating between too careful at times that only disrupted his natural rhythm.

But more than batting, it would be the bowling – both pace and spin that would be a huge concern for the national selection committee as well as the team management.

Bumrah's absence showed what India missed on the final day even though it was heavily tilted towards Australia.

As Glenn McGrath put it, had Bumrah not taken 32 wickets, there was no chance that India would have managed a 1-3 margin.

In Brisbane, they were saved by Rohit and in Melbourne, Rohit let the game drift away during the final session on day four. It has taken Mohammed Siraj 36 Test matches to complete 100 wickets and these are not exactly great figures.

Akash Deep is still raw but has potential while Prasidh Krishna can swing between bowling unplayable deliveries and pedestrian work. Harshit Rana is simply not prepared for this level and would need to play loads of Ranji Trophy, Duleep Trophy and India A games to get ready for big Tests.

Australia reclaims Border-Gavaskar Trophy after 10 years

SUNIL YASH KALRA
UAE

Australia defeated India by 6 wickets in the Sydney Test on Sunday, clinching the Border-Gavaskar Trophy with a 3-1 series win. This loss not only ended India's hopes in the series but also knocked them out of the race for the ICC World Test Championship (WTC) 2023-25 final. Meanwhile, Australia secured a place in the WTC final for the second consecutive time.

This victory marks the first time in 10 years that Australia has won a Test series against India. The last time they achieved this feat was during the 2014-15 season under MSDhoni's captaincy.

On Day 3, India set a target of 162 runs, which Australia chased down with ease, losing just 4 wickets in their second innings. Travis Head (34*) and Beau Webster (39*) remained unbeaten. Earlier, Usman Khawaja scored 41, and Sam Konstas added 22. For India, Prasidh Krishna delivered an excellent performance, picking up 3 wickets.

India's second innings ended at 157 runs earlier in the day, following their first innings score of 185. Australia had managed 181 in their first innings, giving India a slim lead of just 4 runs.

Former UAE cricketer Shahzad Altaf praised Jasprit Bumrah's exceptional performance on the Cricket Predicta Show, presented by



SERIES SCORECARD

- First Test, Perth: **INDIA WON** by 295 runs
- Second Test, Adelaide: **AUSTRALIA WON** by 10 wickets
- Third Test, Brisbane: **DRAWN** (Rain)
- Fourth Test, Melbourne: **AUSTRALIA WON** by 184 runs
- Fifth Test, Sydney: **AUSTRALIA WON** by 6 wickets

ixBat. He said, "Even though India lost the series, Jasprit Bumrah created history with his remarkable bowling. He took 32 wickets in the series, equalling Harbhajan Singh's record and setting a new benchmark for the most wickets by a bowler in a single series in Australia." Altaf added, "Bumrah is the first Indian bowler to win the 'Player of the Tournament' award in Test series in England, South

Africa, and Australia. This is an extraordinary achievement unmatched by any Indian bowler or batter." Bumrah bowled 151.2 overs in the series, taking 32 wickets at an incredible average of 13.06, with three five-wicket hauls and two four-wicket hauls.

Former Indian cricketer Noel David, also speaking on the show, criticized India's batting lineup: "The Indian batting order failed again. Rishabh Pant was the top scorer in both innings, while no other batsman managed even 30 runs. Yashasvi, Rahul, Shubman, and Virat all failed to convert their starts into big scores. Pant's 61 gave India hope in the second innings, but after his dismissal, the innings collapsed, with the last five wickets falling for just 33 runs. Australia was given a modest target of 162 runs."



Gavaskar upset after not being invited to present BGT with Border

AGENCIES
SYDNEY

The legendary Sunil Gavaskar on Sunday expressed his displeasure after not being invited to present the trophy, named after him and Allan Border, to Australia following their win over India in the high-voltage five-match rubber.

Australia reclaimed the Border-Gavaskar trophy after 10 years with a six-wicket win over India in the fifth and final Test.

Border presented the trophy to the home team but Gavaskar, despite being at the venue at the same time, was inexplicably ignored.

"I certainly would have loved to have been there for the presentation. After all it is the Border-Gavaskar Trophy and it is about Australia and India," Gavaskar



"I certainly would have loved to have been there for the presentation. After all it is the Border-Gavaskar Trophy and it is about Australia and India"

was quoted as saying by Code Sports.

"I mean I am here on the ground. To me it should not matter that Australia won when it comes to the

presentation. They played better cricket so they won. That's fine.

"Just because I am an Indian. I would have been happy to present the trophy

with my good friend Allan Border," he added.

Had the Indian team won the trophy, Gavaskar would have been invited to present it to the victorious side.

Cricket Australia (CA) later confirmed that Gavaskar was aware he would have presented the award to Indian captain Jasprit Bumrah if the tourists had won the Sydney Test and retained the trophy.

"We acknowledge it would have been preferable if both Allan Border and Sunil Gavaskar had been asked to go on stage," a CA spokesperson said in a statement.

Both India and Australia have been competing for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy since 1996-1997 and the rivalry has grown to become one of the biggest in Test cricket.

Ricky Ponting praises Jasprit Bumrah

AGENCIES
SYDNEY

ICC Hall of Famer Ricky Ponting believed that Jasprit Bumrah's exploits are not only the best he's seen of a visiting bowler in Australia but probably the best fast-bowling display of all time.

In his third Test tour Down Under, Jasprit Bumrah made an incredible shift with the ball to make India's case for a fiercely-contested Border-Gavaskar Series.

The 31-year-old finished as the leading wicket-taker in the five-Test series with an incredible tally of 32 scalps. During his iconic run, Bumrah also overtook former India captain Kapil Dev to hold the record for most Test wickets by an Indian in Australia - 64



wickets at 17.15 compared to Kapil's 51 at 24.58.

"No doubt, it's probably the best series of fast bowling I've ever seen. Yes, they had good conditions, the fast bowlers, for most of this series. But when you watched him (Bumrah) bowl compared to anyone else in the series, he made

batting look so much harder. There's a lot of quality batting in that Australian top-order as well but he made all of them at different times look silly," Ponting said as quoted by the ICC.

Bumrah, who had captained India to a win in Perth at the beginning of

the series, didn't bowl in the final day of the series in Sydney after experiencing back spasms on Saturday.

Dejected on missing out on having a go in the second innings, Bumrah conceded post-match, "Little frustrating but sometimes you have to respect your body, you can't fight your body," Bumrah said. "Disappointing, probably missed out on the spiciest wicket of the series. I felt a bit of discomfort during my second spell in the first innings."

Coming to the SCG Test, 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.

Changla, Sham shine in Ice Hockey League opener

TDG NETWORK
LEH

In an action-packed opening day of the Ice Hockey League Season 2 on Saturday Changla Blasters cruised past United Nubra with a commanding 6-2 victory. Sham Wolves followed up with a 4-1 win against Maryul Spawo, thanks to a stellar performance by Urgan, who also scored twice.

Changla Blasters, entering the game as the visiting team, set the pace early with relentless offensive pressure, netting four goals in the first period while conceding just one. J Motup broke the deadlock, and Tunatup quickly followed with two



successive goals, establishing a commanding lead. Tsewang T added the fourth to put the Blasters in control by the end of the period. United Nubra's lone response came from Opadam M, who found the net in the same period but could not shift the game's momentum. The second period

witnessed intense competition, with United tightening their defence and preventing Changla Blasters from scoring. However, despite their efforts, United couldn't break through the Blasters' defence either. The period ended goalless, with the scorecard reading 4-1 in favour of Chan-

gla Blasters.

In the third and final period, Changla Blasters once again asserted their dominance, with Dorjey M and Aangchuk W finding the back of the net to extend their team's lead. United Nubra's Tamim R managed to pull one back, but his effort wasn't enough to spark a comeback. Ultimately, Changla Blasters wrapped up the game in style, clinching a convincing 6-2 win.

Game 2 of the Ice Hockey League began slowly, with Sham Wolves taking an early lead in the first period through a goal by Naway G, while their defence ensured that Maryul Spawo couldn't find the net.



A worker clears snow from a sidewalk in front of the stadium of the premier league Soccer club FC Liverpool, England. AP