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INDIA'S DIASPORA KEY TO GLOBALISATION: JAISHANKAR AT PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIVAS



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ISRAELI STRIKES KILL DOZENS IN GAZA AMID STEPPED UP CEASEFIRE PUSH



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LAKSHYA SEN CRASHES OUT OF MALAYSIA OPEN 2025

PM LAYS STONE FOR PROJECTS WORTH RS 2 LAKH CRORE

It includes a railway zone and NTPC's green hydrogen hub in Andhra Aiming to produce 5 mn tons of Green Hydrogen by 2030: PM Modi

AGENCIES
VISAKHAPATNAM (ANDHRA PRADESH)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday laid the foundation stone of various projects worth over Rs 2 lakh crore in Andhra Pradesh.

He laid the foundation stone for a railway zone here and NTPC's integrated green hydrogen hub at Pudimadaka in Anakapalli district. PM Modi also dedicated to the nation various projects in the rail and road sectors.

Andhra Pradesh chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan were also present at the event.

The NTPC project entails an investment of about Rs 1,85,000 crore. This will include investment in 20 GW renewable energy capacities, making it one of India's largest integrated green hydrogen production facilities with a capacity of producing 1,500 TPD Green Hydrogen and 7,500 TPD Green Hydrogen derivatives including Green Methanol, Green Urea and

Sustainable Aviation Fuel, primarily targeting the export market.

The project will contribute substantially in achieving India's non-fossil energy capacity target of 500 GW by 2030.

Prime Minister dedicated to the nation and laid the foundation stone and inaugurated various railway and road projects worth over Rs 19,500 crore in Andhra Pradesh which includes foundation stone laying of South Coast Railway Headquarters at Visakhapatnam among various other projects. These projects will reduce congestion, improve connectivity and enhance regional social and economic growth.

Furthering his vision of accessible and affordable healthcare, the Prime Minister laid foundation for the Bulk Drug Park at Nakkapalli in Anakapalli district.

The Bulk Drug Park will create thousands of jobs while helping accelerate economic growth due to its proximity to the Visakhapatnam-Chennai Industrial Corridor (VICIC) and



PM Modi along with Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan holds a roadshow, in Visakhapatnam on Wednesday. (ANI Photo) REPORT ON P4

Z-Morh Tunnel in J&K set to open on January 13

AJAY JANDVAL
SRINAGAR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to visit Jammu and Kashmir on January 13 to inaugurate the much-anticipated Z-Morh Tunnel on the Srinagar-Sonamarg road. The tunnel is expected to transform Sonamarg into an all-weather tourist destination by ensuring year-round access to the picturesque hill station. Official sources confirmed that the

Prime Minister will personally inaugurate the 6.5-km, two-lane tunnel, which bypasses the avalanche-prone Gagangir-Sonamarg stretch that often remains blocked for months due to heavy snowfall and avalanches. Named after the Z-shaped stretch of road it replaces, the Z-Morh Tunnel significantly reduces travel time, taking only 15 minutes compared to the hours-long journey on the old zigzag road. This engineering marvel is

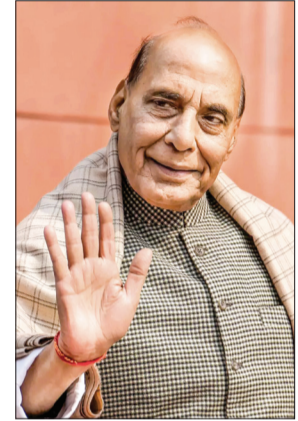
India, Maldives to boost defence ties: Rajnath

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India on Wednesday conveyed to the Maldives its readiness to support the island nation in boosting its defence preparedness as Defence Minister Rajnath Singh hosted his Maldivian counterpart Mohammed Ghassan Maumoon for wide-ranging talks focusing on maritime security cooperation.

In their meeting, the two defence ministers reasserted their firm commitment to work closely in realising the joint vision for India-Maldives comprehensive economic and maritime security partnership, according to an Indian readout.

Maumoon is on a three-day visit to India, nearly eight months after New Delhi completed pulling out its military personnel from the Maldives following a demand by its pro-China President Mohamed



Muizzu.

The overall episode had significantly frayed the ties between the two nations.

The defence ministry said the two ministers comprehensively reviewed various aspects of bilateral defence and security cooperation.

"During the talks, both sides reasserted the firm commitment to work closely in realising the joint vision for India-Maldives Comprehensive Economic and Maritime Security Partnership," it said.

4 killed in stampede at Tirupati temple

AGENCIES
AMARAVATI

Four people were killed in a stampede that broke out at the Tirupati temple in Andhra Pradesh on Wednesday evening, officials said.

According to officials, the incident occurred near Vishnu Niwasam at the Tirumala Srivari Vaikuntha Dwara ticketing counter during the distribution of 'darshan' tokens.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu expressed his deep shock over the death of four devotees in the stampede that took place near Vishnu Niwasam in Tirupati for 'darshan' tokens at Tirumala Srivari Vaikuntha Dwara, the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said in a statement.

As per the statement, CM Naidu said that he was deeply disturbed by the loss of four lives in the incident that

Cong promise: Rs 25 lakh free medical treatment for all in Delhi

TIKAM SHARMA
NEW DELHI

Ahead of the Delhi Assembly elections scheduled for February 5, the Delhi Congress has announced its second key guarantee, the 'Jeevan Raksha Yojana, aimed at providing free medical treatment worth up to Rs 25 lakh for every resident of Delhi. This follows the party's first guarantee, the 'Pyari Didi Yojana,' which promises Rs 2,500 per month to every woman in Delhi.

Addressing the media at the DPCC office, Rajiv Bhawan, former Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot promised that, if elected, the Congress government in Delhi would take responsibility for the health of its citizens.

Headed by BJP MP PP Chaudhary, the 39-member

Rajasthan cabinet rejig likely after Makar Sankranti

AJIT MAINDOLA
JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma is expected to carry out his first cabinet reshuffle after Makar Sankranti festival on January 14. Sources within the party suggested that CM Sharma has been given full discretion by the BJP high command regarding the reshuffle. This exercise is likely to involve the reassignment of some ministers to different portfolios. One or two ministers may also get replaced.

The reshuffle comes as the BJP high command has expressed satisfaction with CM Sharma's leadership style and governance in the state. As a result, the party is allowing him significant influence over the reshuffle



process, giving him the freedom to make decisions based on his assessments.

CM Sharma's regular visits to Delhi are seen as a sign that not only political appointments but also organizational changes could be made, with adjustments in both the state government and the BJP's organizational structure.

SKM seeks White Paper on MSP, rejects current formula

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

Demanding that Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan issue a white paper on the Minimum Support Price (MSP) and procurement system, the Samyukta Kisan Morcha has alleged that the current formula adopted by the government to fix the MSP causing huge losses to farmers and over 90 per cent of the agriculture produce are not being procured on the MSP.

Current MSP for paddy is Rs 2,300 per quintal, while it should be Rs 3,012 per quintal

— Samyukta Kisan Morcha

In a statement, the SKM leaders claimed that the current formula of MSP (A2+FL+50%) offers prices 30 per cent lower compared to the (C2+50%) recommended by the National Farmers Commission.

Current MSP for paddy is Rs 2,300 per quintal, while it should be Rs 3,012 per quintal based on the MSP @C2+50% formula, it said, adding that this results in a loss of Rs 712 per quintal for farmers. The SKM alleged

One Nation, One Poll: Panel holds first meet

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The Parliamentary panel constituted to scrutinise the two bills on simultaneous elections held its first meeting on Wednesday, with BJP members lauding the concept, and Opposition MPs questioning it.

Officials of the Ministry of Law and Justice made a presentation on the provisions of the proposed laws during the meeting, citing support to the idea of simultaneous Lok Sabha and Assembly

polls by various bodies, including the Law Commission of India, sources said.

BJP members batted for the 'one nation, one election' proposal, saying it is in the interest of the country, they said.

A Congress member said the idea is against the basic fabric of the Constitution, while a Trinamool Congress MP said it negates people's democratic rights, they added.

Headed by BJP MP PP Chaudhary, the 39-member

Pot-bellied cops in Haryana get 40 days to flatten tummy

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

Haryana Police have started a special plan to help their officers who are overweight, especially those with big bellies. They will go through a 40-day fitness programme to get back in shape. This idea came from DGP Shatruej Kapoor, who told the police to find out which officers need to lose weight in the next ten days.

The programme has already started in Gurugram, where they are picking out the officers who need to get fit. These officers will do exercises like yoga, go to the gym, and run in the



morning every day. This is to make them healthier and better at their jobs. This plan follows what the Punjab and Haryana High Court said in June 2022, asking both states to make their police officers fitter. Before, they tried moving some officers to work in ar-

reas where they could focus on fitness, but it didn't work very well.

Former Home Minister Anil Vij also wanted police officers to be fit before doing their regular work but those plans didn't go as expected either. Being too heavy can make it hard for officers to catch criminals or do their jobs well. This new program wants to fix that problem so the police can work better.

The overweight officers will have to undergo a special 40-day plan with lots of exercise and a special diet to help them lose weight. DGP Kapoor says everyone has to take part and take it seriously.

Showdown over 'Sheesh Mahal'

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

A drama unfolded Wednesday outside the 6, Flagstaff Road bungalow which was once occupied by former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, as AAP leaders attempted to enter it but were stopped by the police. The party workers later tried to reach the Prime Minister's official residence on Lok Kalyan Marg, but were stopped by police again, following which they staged a "dharna".

In its turn, BJP also took media to the AB17 Mathura Road bungalow allotted to Chief Minister Atishi.

"Why did AAP leaders Sanjay Singh and Saurabh Bhardwaj not visit the Sheesh Mahal earlier?"

Virendra Sachdeva of BJP

"BJP's lie has been exposed before the entire nation today"

Sanjay Singh of AAP



School students dressed in the traditional attire perform 'Giddha' a folk dance of Punjab during an event to celebrate the Lohri festival, at a school in Amritsar on Wednesday. ANI

DETAILS P5

SP EXTENDS SUPPORT TO DALLEWAL, CALLS FOR UNIFIED ACTION ON MSP

SP delegation led by Muzaffarnagar MP Malik visits Khanauri border

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

A delegation of the Samajwadi Party, led by Muzaffarnagar MP and National General Secretary Harendra Malik, visited farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal at the Khanauri border. The delegation came to inquire about Dallewal's health and conveyed the message from SP President and former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav who promised them to convince opposition parties to raise the issues of farmers strongly.

Due to Dallewal's deteriorating health, Akhilesh Yadav spoke to farmer leader Kaka Singh Kotda over the phone, assuring

AKHILESH SPEAKS TO DALLEWAL

- Due to Dallewal's deteriorating health, Akhilesh Yadav spoke to farmer leader Kaka Singh Kotda over the phone, assuring that he will bring all political parties together to work toward a unified law guaranteeing Minimum Support Price (MSP), aiming to put an end to farmer suicides

- Meanwhile, the fast unto death of the Dallewal completed 44 days as the medical bulletin revealed that his health continues to deteriorates as his blood pressure drops significantly.

- Dallewal has made a special request that no visitors enter his cart as he was unable to talk with anyone.



that he will bring all political parties together to work toward a unified law guaranteeing Minimum Support

Price (MSP), aiming to put an end to farmer suicides. Meanwhile, the fast unto death of the Dallewal

completed 44 days as the medical bulletin revealed that his health continues to deteriorates as his blood

pressure drops significantly. Dallewal has made a special request that no visitors enter his cart as he was unable to talk with anyone.

Farmer leaders criticized the government for its lack of action. They pointed out that Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan recently held meetings in Delhi with farmers, claiming that government schemes aren't reaching the intended beneficiaries, yet they have not shown support for Dallewal's 44-day hunger strike. Farmer leaders stressed that the central government must take serious steps to address the struggles of farmers, especially in light of Dallewal's deteriorating health.

TDG NETWORK
AYODHYA

Uttar Pradesh Congress President Ajay Rai on Tuesday announced that his party will extend full support to the Samajwadi Party (SP) for the upcoming Milkipur Assembly by-elections, scheduled to be held on February 5.

Ajay Rai said, "In Milkipur, we will extend full support to our ally Samajwadi Party's candidate."

Meanwhile, Ayodhya Mayor Girish Pati Tripathi highlighted that the bypolls provide the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) with an opportunity to "right the wrongs" of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections in Ayodhya. "We were waiting for the Milkipur bypolls. It is an opportunity to right the wrongs of Lok Sabha polls in Ayodhya. The people are also waiting

Ajay Rai said, "In Milkipur, we will extend full support to our ally Samajwadi Party's candidate."

to support the BJP and send the correct message through Milkipur bypolls," Tripathi said.

Tripathi also emphasized that the BJP's agenda for the bypolls would focus on the development and employment opportunities in Ayodhya. "The agenda for the election will be development and employment opportunities of Ayodhya. The opposition only worked for their families and did nothing for Milkipur. So this time, the people will answer," he added. The election on the Milkipur

seat was necessitated after the resignation of Samajwadi Party MP Awadhesh Prasad, who left the seat to fight Lok Sabha Election from Faizabad Lok Sabha Constituency. He notably defeated BJP's Lallu Singh, adding to the setback NDA suffered in Uttar Pradesh.

The INDIA alliance won 43 seats with SP spearheading 37 seats, while the NDA alliance was kept on hold at 36 seats out of the 80 seats.

However, BJP saw a resurgence in assembly bypolls where they won six seats and its ally Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) won one seat, while the Samajwadi Party only managed to win two seats out of nine contested.

As per the Election Commission of India (ECI), Milkipur will be voting on February 5 and the result will be announced on February 8.

Rising trust in Gehlot boosts chances of return to playing key role

AJIT MAINDOLA
NEW DELHI

Amid growing speculation, the Congress high command's increasing trust in former Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has sparked discussions about his potential return to the organization. Gehlot has long maintained a close relationship with the Gandhi family, and recent developments suggest he may play a key role in upcoming party changes. Following the defeat in Rajasthan, the high command's confidence in Gehlot remains strong, with Rahul Gandhi reportedly planning changes within the party this month. As part of this trust, Gehlot has been tasked with securing the Amethi Lok Sabha seat in the upcoming elections.

Ashok Gehlot, the former Chief Minister of Rajasthan, has become a prominent figure in Congress's election strategies, following the party's increasing reliance on his leadership and his widely discussed schemes. After playing a key role in Congress's victory in the Amethi Lok Sabha seat, Gehlot has gained further prominence. He camped with his team for a month in Amethi and played an instrumental part in the victory. Subsequently, his role expanded, and he was assigned as a senior



observer for Haryana and Maharashtra elections. The Congress party now seems to be pushing Gehlot forward in the upcoming Delhi elections as well, using his popular schemes as part of their campaign.

Gehlot's flagship healthcare initiative in Rajasthan, the Chiranjeevi Scheme, which provides free treatment up to Rs. 25 lakhs, is now being replicated in Delhi. The Congress has renamed it "Jeevan Raksha Yojana" in the national capital, underscoring the importance of this scheme to the party's electoral strategy. This scheme was included in the party's significant announcements during elections in various states, including the Lok Sabha elections, highlighting the trust the party has placed in Gehlot's ideas. In Delhi, Congress has introduced the scheme along with other guarantees, such as Rs. 2500 for women, a move that draws directly from Gehlot's earlier campaigns in Rajasthan.

Assam mining accident: One dead, 8 trapped as rescue ops continue

TDG NETWORK
DIMA HASAO

One dead body has been recovered from the collapsed coal mine at 3 Kilo, Umrangso, where nine miners were trapped on January 6.

According to a statement from an NDRF official, one body has been recovered by the divers of NDRF, the Indian army.

The joint rescue operation led by the Indian Army, Assam Rifles, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), and other agencies resumed early morning to rescue nine miners trapped in a coal mine in the 3 Kilo area of Umrangso, Dima Hasao.

The operation had to be temporarily halted the previous evening but resumed with full force today, January 6. According to NDRF Deputy Commandant, N. Tiwari, the efforts are continuing round-the-clock with an expanded team.

"The operation was closed yesterday evening, and we have resumed the operation again this morning. We expect and hope to reach our



miners as soon as possible and rescue them," he said. Tiwari added that the combined forces of the NDRF and the Army are working on the ground, with support expected from the Navy in the coming hours.

"Everyone from our commandant, our team, the army are here. Later, the

officials from the Navy will also join the rescue operation," he said.

A miner who worked in the mine said, "A lot of people were in the mine and suddenly people started shouting that water is filling, around 30-35 people came up and nearly 15-16 were still trapped."

Meanwhile, as the rescue operation continued in Umrangso, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had announced the registration of an FIR and the arrest of one individual in connection with the incident.

In a post on X, Sarma informed, "The police have registered an FIR under Umrangso PS Case No: 02/2025, citing Sections 3(5)/105 BNS, r/w Sec-

tion 21(1) of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, to investigate the incident. Prima facie, it appears to be an illegal mine. One Punish Nuisa has been arrested in connection with the case."

The CM had also discussed the rescue operation with Union Coal Minister G Kishan Reddy and sought assistance.

"I also spoke to Hon'ble Union Coal Minister, Shri @kishanreddybjp, seeking assistance for our rescue operation in Umrangso. He has promptly issued directions to @CoalIndiaHQ to extend full support to the Assam government in this mission. My sincere gratitude to him for his swift response and support," CM Sarma posted on X.

Kangana asks Priyanka to watch 'Emergency' as they cross paths

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI



Priyanka Gandhi Vadra complimented Kangana Ranaut on her work and her hair when they crossed paths in Parliament and responded with an "okay, maybe" when the actor and BJP MP asked the Congress leader to watch her new film "Emergency".

The much in the news film sees Ranaut playing the late Indira Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi's grandmother. Directed and produced by Ranaut, it documents the 21 months of Emergency imposed in 1975 by then prime minister Indira Gandhi.

"I met Mrs Priyanka Gandhi in Parliament and she complimented me on my work and my hair. So I was like, 'You know, I made this film Emergency and maybe you should see it'. And she was like, 'Okay, maybe'. And I think if they have a little bit of acceptance for what has been, they will appreciate the film," Ranaut said in an interview to the media about her brief interaction with the Wayanad MP.

Kumaraswamy meets Gadkari to discuss Karnataka highway projects

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel HD Kumaraswamy met with Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari in Delhi on Wednesday to discuss various highway projects in Karnataka.

During the meeting, Kumaraswamy submitted several proposals, urging prompt action on priority projects.

Meeting Gadkari at his residence in New Delhi, Kumaraswamy presented over ten proposals aimed at accelerating highway development in the state. Gadkari assured immediate personal attention to some of these projects, a release said.

According to the release, Kumaraswamy held detailed discussions with Gadkari about road development in districts such as Mandya, Kolar, Chikkaballapur, Chamarajanagar, and Mysuru. "Minister for Road Transport responded positively to our requests and assured close attention to all proposed projects," Kumaraswamy stated.

For the first time, CBI posts three officials in INTERPOL for effective criminal tracking

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

For better coordination between the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the agency has deployed three senior officers in two different countries. This marks the first time the agency has stationed officers at INTERPOL for enhanced criminal tracking.

A senior official confirmed that for timely redressal of issues related to transnational crimes and tracking fugitives, they have stationed three CBI officers - two in France and one in Singapore for better coordination. It has been done for the first time. As earlier only senior officers used to be deployed at INTERPOL.

"These officers help in facilitating extradition, coordination and other legal issues related to fugitives involved in transnational crimes," the officer added.

In 2024, more than 170 notices under various categories have been issued.

There are seven types of INTERPOL notices - Red Notice, Yellow Notice, Blue Notice, Black Notice, Green Notice, Orange Notice, and Purple Notice.

INTERPOL issues these notices at the request of a member country's National Central Bureau and shares them with all member countries.

On Tuesday, Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched the 'Bharatpol' portal to facilitate faster international assistance for agencies.

All preparations made: UP minister on Mahakumbh

TDG NETWORK
PRAYAGRAJ

Days before the commencement of the Mahakumbh festival, Uttar Pradesh Minister Nand Gopal Gupta assured that all necessary preparations have been completed for the grand event.

The minister stated that around 40-45 crore people are expected to visit during the Mahakumbh festival.

Gupta stated that as the 2019 Kumbh was a success under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Mahakumbh 2025 will also be a massive success.

Speaking to ANI, Nand Gopal Gupta said, "Under the leadership of PM Modi and CM Yogi Adityanath the 2019 Kumbh was a success. The people who went from here were satisfied



with the preparations we made... This time also it will be a massive success... All the preparations have been made. Around 40-45 crore people are expected to visit the Mahakumbh. The world is watching Prayagraj..."

Abhilasha Gupta, Former Mayor of Prayagraj, emphasised that the celebration of Mahakumbh will spread the message of unity in India.

"Prayagraj is a Kumbh Nagri and a city of Sana-

tani... Under this Maha Kumbh celebration, the message that will be spread is how to unite people under one roof... Our motive is to spread the message of Lord Ram..." Abhilasha Gupta told ANI.

Speaking on the All India Muslim Jamaat president Maulana Shahabuddin Razvi Barelvi reportedly supporting the claim that the Mahakumbh is being organised on Waqf land, the former mayor stated that the judiciary will look after this matter.

"The Judiciary will look into this matter and will do justice in the matter..." she said.

On Tuesday, Uttar Pradesh Police launched an intensive checking campaign under the leadership of Deputy Inspector General of Police Vaibhav Krishna (IPS) to ensure the smooth and secure conduct of Ma-

hakumbh 2025.

The campaign focused on heightened surveillance of suspicious individuals and activities at key locations such as Sangam Ghat, pontoon bridges, and major intersections.

The Deputy Inspector General instructed all station in-charges to enhance vigilance in their respective jurisdictions and maintain a proactive approach to security. Special measures were implemented to prevent any untoward incidents and ensure public safety.

As part of the campaign, teams led by the Additional Superintendent of Police, Circle Officers, and Station In-charges conducted rigorous inspections of suspicious individuals, vehicles, and potential encroachments. Additional security reinforcements were deployed on pontoon bridges to bolster safety measures.

MAHAKUMBH 2025 PROCESSION



Akhil Bharatiya Akhara Parishad sadhus take part in a 'Chawani Pravesh' or royal entry procession toward Sangam ahead of the Mahakumbh Mela 2025, in Prayagraj on Wednesday. ANI



Sadhus take part in procession ahead of Mahakumbh Mela 2025, in Prayagraj on Wednesday. ANI



Sadhus take part in a procession toward Sangam ahead of the Mahakumbh Mela 2025, in Prayagraj on Wednesday. ANI



Sadhus take part in royal entry procession toward Sangam ahead of the Mahakumbh Mela 2025, on Wednesday. ANI

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON ST MARTIN ISLAND OF BANGLADESH

41% BELIEVE BANGLADESH SHOULD ENGAGE IN NEGOTIATIONS TO RECLAIM ST MARTIN ISLAND

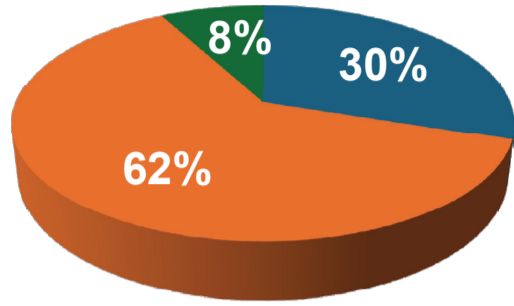
Reports suggest Arakan Army fighters have occupied parts of Bangladesh's Teknaf region, a sensitive area near Rohingya refugee camps and

Saint Martin Island. The powerful militia, involved in recent shootouts with Bangladesh forces, reportedly controls Myan-

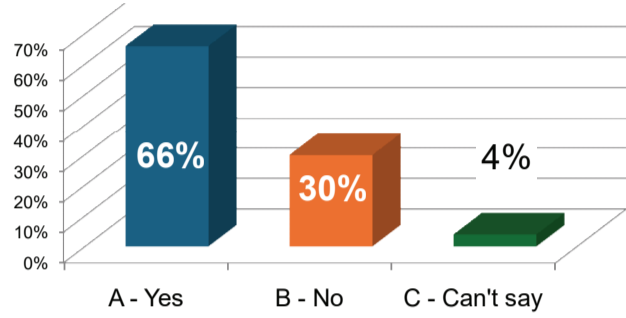
mar's Rakhine state and now poses a potential threat to Bangladesh's sovereignty by eyeing border areas along Myanmar.

Q1. ▶

It is reported that the Arakan Army has captured Bangladesh's St Martin Island. Who could be behind this?

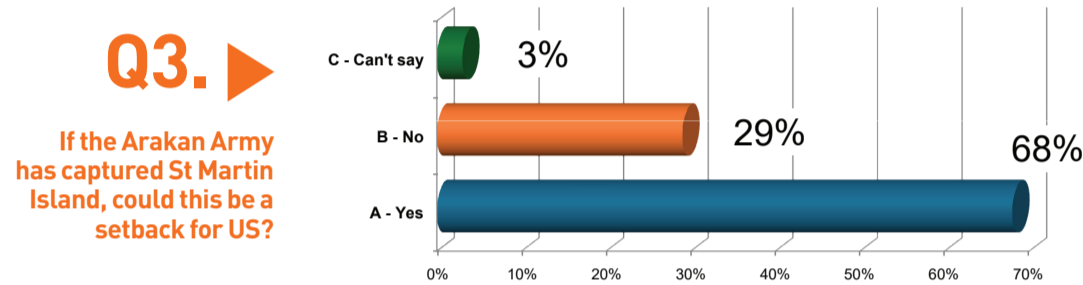


- A - Arakan army captured the island by own means
- B - China's hand in the conspiracy
- C - Can't say



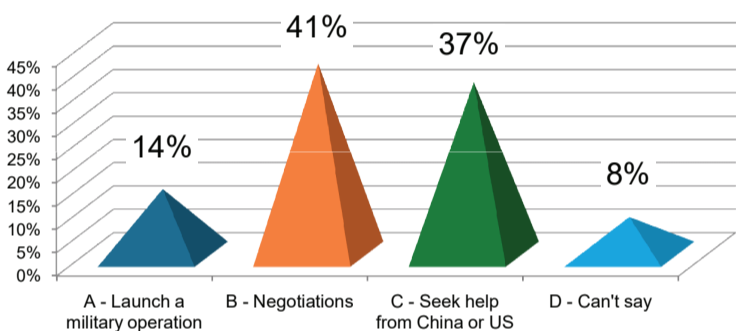
Q2. ◀

Sheikh Hasina lost power due to St Martin Island, can Yunus go through the same?



Q3. ▶

If the Arakan Army has captured St Martin Island, could this be a setback for US?



Q4. ◀

What should Bangladesh do to reclaim St Martin Island?

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON KHALEDA ZIA LEAVES BANGLADESH

58% believe General Aziz Ahmed betrayed Sheikh Hasina.

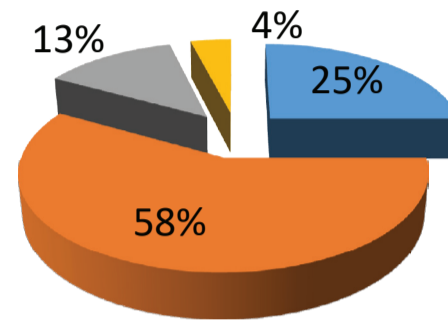
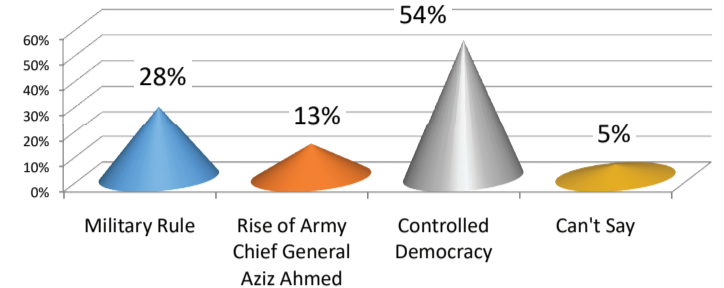
A recent survey on Bangladesh's political situation revealed intriguing insights. While 54% foresee controlled democracy after Sheikh

Hasina and Khalida Zia's exit, 58% believe Khalida left due to fear of assassination. Moreover, 58% think General Aziz Ahmed betrayed

Sheikh Hasina. Opinions are divided on the country's future, with 39% predicting elections and 35% expecting military rule.

Q1. ▶

After Sheikh Hasina, Khalida Zia also left Bangladesh. Which of the following paths seems open for the country?



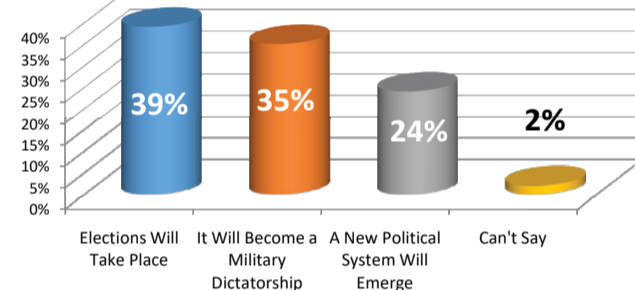
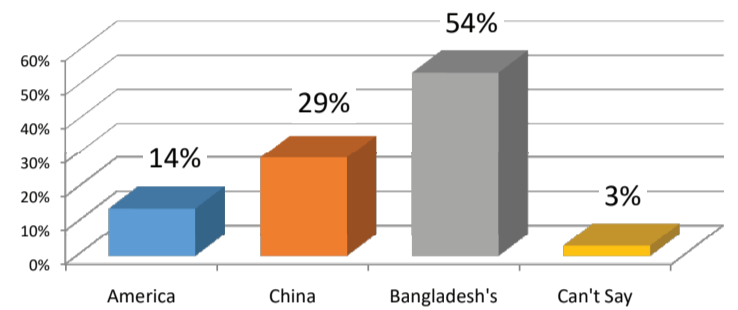
Q2. ◀

What is the reason Khalida Zia left Bangladesh?

- Health Issues
- Fear of Assassination
- Declining Popularity
- Can't Say

Q3. ▶

Under whose influence are leaders like Sheikh Hasina and Khalida Zia being targeted?



Q4. ◀

Will elections take place in Bangladesh, or will it turn into a military dictatorship?

Projects worth Rs 2 lakh crore

CONTINUED FROM P1

Visakhapatnam-Kakinada Petroleum, Chemical and Petrochemical Investment Region.

PM Modi also laid the Foundation Stone of Krishnapatnam Industrial Area (KRIS City) under the

Chennai Bengaluru Industrial Corridor, in Tirupati District of Andhra Pradesh.

The Krishnapatnam Industrial Area (KRIS City), a flagship project under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme, is envisioned as a greenfield industrial smart

city.

The project is set to attract significant manufacturing investments of approximately Rs 10,500 crore and is also projected to create around 1 lakh direct and indirect jobs, significantly enhancing livelihoods and driving regional progress.

Z-Morh Tunnel to open on Jan 13

CONTINUED FROM P1

not just a boon for tourism but also enhances military logistics and connectivity to key geostrategic locations such as Baltal, Kargil, and Ladakh.

The Z-Morh Tunnel, along with the under-construction Zoji-La Tunnel, forms a critical part of the Srinagar-Leh Highway project, ensuring weather-proof connectivity to the Ladakh region and improving accessibility to the

Amarnath Cave pilgrimage route.

Beyond connectivity, the project is poised to stimulate the local economy by creating employment opportunities for youth and boosting tourism and allied activities in the area. The tunnel is one of 31 road tunnels planned in the region—20 in Jammu and Kashmir and 11 in Ladakh. Construction of the Z-Morh Tunnel began in 2018, and its completion marks a significant milestone in infrastructure de-

velopment for the region. However, the project also faced challenges, including a terror attack on October 20, 2024, when militants targeted a workers' camp at Gagangir. The attack claimed the lives of seven civilians, including six non-local workers and a local doctor.

The inauguration of the Z-Morh Tunnel underscores the government's commitment to enhancing connectivity, boosting tourism, and fortifying the region's strategic infrastructure.

SKM seeks White Paper on MSP

CONTINUED FROM P1

that such losses are reducing farmers' incomes and pushing them deeper into debt. SKM also rejected the claim made by Chouhan during a virtual meeting with agricultural ministers of states and Union territories held on

January 4, where he stated that "arrangements are in place to buy all wheat and rice at MSP. Farmer leaders argue that this claim is far from the truth. In reality, only 10 per cent of crops are procured at the MSP @ A2+FL+50%, while over 90 per cent of the produce is

sold below this rate, leaving farmers at a significant disadvantage.

Farmer leaders also raised concerns about the first report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Food Processing, tabled on December 17, 2021.

Panel holds its first meet

CONTINUED FROM P1

joint committee of Parliament comprises members from all major parties, including Priyanka Gandhi Vadra from Congress, Sanjay Jha from JD(U), Shiv Sena's Shrikant Shinde, AAP's Sanjay Singh, and Kalyan Banerjee from Trinamool Congress.

Chaudhary is a former minister of state for law.

The Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill were introduced in the Lok Sabha during the recent Winter Session and referred to the committee.

The government decided to increase the committee's strength from 31 to 39, as more political parties expressed their desire to

be part of the exercise to examine the two draft legislations on simultaneous elections.

Former Union ministers Anurag Thakur, Parshotam Rupala and Manish Tewari, along with several other lawmakers, including Anil Baluni, Bansuri Swaraj and Sambit Patra, are also members of the committee.

Four killed in stampede at Tirupati temple

CONTINUED FROM P1

took place when devotees had gathered in large numbers for tokens.

The CM spoke to officials over the phone about the treatment being provided to the injured in the incident, the CMO said.

The CM is keeping abreast of the current situation by speaking to district and Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) officials from time to time.

The CM has ordered higher officials to go to the scene of the incident and take relief measures to ensure that the injured get better treatment, the CMO added in its statement.



A stampede-like situation occurred at Vishnu Nivasam during the distribution of Tirumala Srivari Vaikuntha Dwara Darshan tokens, in Tirupati on Wednesday. Reportedly, four devotees died in the incident.

Rajasthan cabinet rejig likely after Makar Sankranti

CONTINUED FROM P1

It is understood that the BJP central leadership is eager to complete the elections for state presidents in more than half the states by January 15 so that they can announce the schedule for elections to the party's National President soon. With this timeline, it is expected that the new National President will be announced by January 30. This will allow Chief Ministers in the states to make decisions about reshuffles and cabinet reorganisations in a way that aligns with both state and national political plans.

There are several key vacancies that need to be filled in the state cabinet. As CM Sharma has now been in office for more than a year, his government is ready to address pending cabinet positions, including those for boards and corporations.

Political appointments are also high on the agenda after the cabinet reshuffle.

Sources suggest that many appointments to various positions, including in government corporations and boards, will be made in the coming weeks. This reshuffle and the subsequent political appointments are expected to play a crucial role in consolidating CM Sharma's hold on power and ensuring smooth governance in the state.

Despite the anticipated changes in Rajasthan, BJP state president Madan Rathore's position remains secure. Rathore, who assumed the role of state president only last year, will not be replaced. There is ongoing pressure for him to announce district and division-level BJP presidents soon, and he has started taking steps toward this.

However, sources said while Rajasthan's

political leadership may undergo adjustments, the focus for now remains on organizational restructuring and filling vacant political positions rather than changes at the top of the state BJP leadership.

Additionally, while changes in Delhi's central leadership are expected, they are not expected to affect CM Sharma's position in the state. Although some BJP leaders based in Delhi may be appointed to national positions, it is expected that Rajasthan will continue to maintain its leadership dynamics. A few leaders from the state could be given roles in the new national executive of the BJP.

CM Sharma has been praised for his ability to manage both the government and the organization effectively in the past six months. His initiative to divide ministers by districts has helped ensure that the common man's voice is heard. This strategy of decentralizing power has also contributed to smoother governance, as it allowed the people to feel more connected to the government.

The reshuffle, along with the expected political appointments, will mark an important turning point for CM Sharma's government in the year ahead.

With the completion of the cabinet reorganization and political appointments, CM Sharma is expected to continue his efforts to strengthen both the state's governance and the BJP's position in Rajasthan. Political analysts believe that the reshuffle, while focused on governance, will also serve as a strategic move to position the state BJP leadership for future challenges.

Misri meets Afghan foreign minister

Affirms India's support for assistance, discusses Chabahar, cricket cooperation



Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri meets Afghanistan Acting Foreign Minister Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, in Dubai on Wednesday. (ANI Photo)

AGENCIES

DUBAI

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri met Acting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi in Dubai on Wednesday, and affirmed India's commitment to provide further humanitarian and development assistance to the Afghan people. India agreed to promote trade and commerce, including through Chabahar port. It will also extend its support to the health sector and rehabilitation of refugees in the country.

Sharing the picture of the meet, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal wrote on X, "Foreign Secy @Vikram-Misri met Acting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi in Dubai today.

Both sides discussed ongoing humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, bilateral issues and security situation in the region. "India reiterated its commitment to continue to provide humanitarian & development assistance to the Afghan people. Agreed

to promote trade and commerce, including through Chabahar port.

India will also extend its support to the health sector & rehabilitation of refugees in the country," the post added.

During the meet, the Foreign Secretary underlined India's historic friendship with the Afghan people and the strong people to people contacts between the two countries. In this context, he conveyed India's readiness to respond to the urgent developmental needs of the Afghan people.

The two sides evaluated the ongoing Indian humanitarian assistance programmes.

The Afghan Minister appreciated and thanked the Indian leadership for continuing to engage and support the people of Afghanistan.

"In view of the current need for development activities, it was decided that India would consider engaging in development projects in the near future, in addition to the ongoing humanitarian assistance programme," the MEA statement read.

PM MODI HOLDS ROADSHOW IN VISAKHAPATNAM

Andhra Pradesh CM Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan accompany PM during roadshow

TDG NETWORK
VISAKHAPATNAM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday held a roadshow in Andhra Pradesh's Visakhapatnam. During the roadshow PM Modi was accompanied by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan. Visuals of the roadshow showed people standing in longlines on either side of the road cheering and waving at the Prime Minister's convoy. Earlier today, PM Modi arrived in Visakhapatnam and was received by Andhra Pradesh CM at the airport. "PM Narendra Modi ar-

rived in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh a short while ago. He was received by Governor, S. Abdul Nazeer, Chief Minister, N Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan and other dignitaries," Prime Minister's Office stated. The Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone for the state-of-the-art NTPC Green Energy Limited Green Hydrogen Hub Project at Pudimadaka near Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh, which is the first Green Hydrogen Hub under the National Green Hydrogen Mission. The project entails an investment of approx. Rs 1,85,000 Crore. This will include investment in 20

TO LAY FOUNDATION STONE OF PROJECTS

- "PM Narendra Modi arrived in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh a short while ago. He was received by Governor, S. Abdul Nazeer, Chief Minister, N Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan and other dignitaries," Prime Minister's Office stated.
- The Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone for the state-of-the-art NTPC Green Energy Limited Green Hydrogen Hub Project at Pudimadaka near Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh, which is the first Green Hydrogen Hub under the National Green Hydrogen Mission.



GW renewable energy capacities, making it one of India's largest integrated green hydrogen production facilities with a capacity of producing 1500 TPD Green Hydrogen and 7500 TPD Green Hydrogen derivatives including Green Methanol, Green Urea and Sustainable Aviation Fuel, primarily targeting the export market. The project will contribute substantially in achieving India's non-fossil energy capacity target of 500 GW by 2030. Prime Minister will also

dedicate to the nation, lay the foundation stone and inaugurate various railway and road projects worth over Rs. 19,500 crore in Andhra Pradesh which includes foundation stone laying of South Coast Railway Headquarters at Vi-

sakhapatnam among various other projects. These projects will reduce congestion, improve connectivity and enhance regional social and economic growth. Furthering his vision of accessible and affordable healthcare, Prime Minister will lay the foundation for the Bulk Drug Park at Nakkapalli in Anakapalli district. The Bulk Drug Park will create thousands of jobs while helping accelerate economic growth due to its proximity to the Visakhapatnam-Chennai Industrial Corridor (VCIC) and Visakhapatnam-Kakinada Petroleum, Chemical and Petrochemical Investment Region. PM Modi will also lay the

ANDHRA CM HIT ALL SIXERS IN HIS SPEECH: MODI PRAISES NAIDU

VISAKHAPATNAM: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday praised Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's speech and said that Andhra CM has hit all the sixers in his speech. "After a gap of 60 years, a government has been elected for the third time in the country and after the formation of the government, this is my first official program and the wonderful welcome you gave me, the way people were blessing me on the way and today and N Chandrababu Naidu has hit all the sixers in his speech.

Foundation Stone of Krishnapatnam Industrial Area (KRIS City) under Chennai Bengaluru Industrial Corridor, in Tirupathi District of Andhra Pradesh. The Krishnapatnam Industrial Area (KRIS City), a flagship project under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme,

is envisioned as a green-field industrial smart city. The project is set to attract significant manufacturing investments of approximately Rs 10,500 crore and is also projected to create around 1 lakh direct and indirect jobs, significantly enhancing livelihoods and driving regional progress.

Andhra development our vision, says PM Modi at Visakhapatnam

TDG NETWORK
VISAKHAPATNAM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday praised Andhra Pradesh as a state of "possibilities and opportunities" and reaffirmed the Centre's commitment to its development. Speaking at a public rally in Visakhapatnam, PM Modi emphasized that the state's growth is integral to India's path towards becoming a developed nation. "Our Andhra Pradesh is a state of possibilities and opportunities. When these possibilities in Andhra are realized, Andhra too will become developed, and only then will India become a developed nation. The development of Andhra



"Our Andhra Pradesh is a state of possibilities and opportunities. When these possibilities in Andhra are realized, Andhra too will become developed, and only then will India become a developed nation. The development of Andhra is our vision and serving the people of Andhra is our resolve," Modi said.

is our vision and serving the people of Andhra is our resolve," he said. He also mentioned that Andhra Pradesh has set a goal to become a USD 2.5 trillion economy by 2047.

with Andhra Pradesh to achieve this goal. The central government is fully supporting this vision with special priority to projects worth lakhs of crores. Today, over Rs 2 lakh crore worth of projects were inaugurated and foundation stones were laid. This will take Andhra Pradesh's development to new heights," PM Modi said. PM Modi further said that Visakhapatnam will become a major hub for green hydrogen production, helping create numerous job opportunities and a robust manufacturing ecosystem. He also laid the foundation for the Bulk Drug Park in Nakkapalli, one of the three such parks being set up in India.

'Will stand with victim to get justice'

TDG NETWORK
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin announced that his government will stand with the victim of the Anna University alleged sexual assault case.

Stalin highlighted that the accused was arrested shortly after the incident to drive his message home, repeating the government's commitment to get justice for the victim.

Speaking in the Tamil Nadu assembly during the first session of the new year, Stalin said, "Members have spoken here by mentioning one University's name. But I don't want to mention that name and don't want to defame that name. Because he only made us all. With that emotion, I am leaving aside that name. No one can



"This government has only one intention that it will stand with the victim to get justice legally. After the crime, if the accused was not arrested immediately or if the accused was saved, the government could have been blamed.

accept what happened to a student in Chennai. Sexual assault on a student is cruel. Legislature members have

spoken here on the issue. Except one, all have spoken here with real concern. This one member has spoken to show this government in a bad light..." Stalin remarked.

He also took a dig at the opposition for politicising the incident.

"This government has only one intention that it will stand with the victim to get justice legally. After the crime, if the accused was not arrested immediately or if the accused was saved, the government could have been blamed. Even after arresting the accused within a short period of time and collecting evidence, blaming the government only has political benefits," he said.

"Opposition asks who is that sir? If you really have

evidence, please give that to the SIT that is investigating the case. Don't indulge in cheap activities for short-term political benefits," he asked the opposition.

CM Stalin reaffirmed his government's commitment towards the safety of women and said one incident can't be passed off to indicate that women are unsafe.

"This government has an iron fist on crimes against women. With this one incident, many are trying to show that women are unsafe. Definitely, this won't work among people," he said.

Various political parties have cornered the government on the Anna University alleged sexual assault case, accusing the DMK government of going slow on the case.

'Great responsibility bestowed by PM Modi'

TDG NETWORK
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

V Narayanan was appointed as the new chief of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), on Wednesday, taking on a role he described as a great responsibility entrusted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Reflecting on ISRO's remarkable legacy since 1969, Narayanan honoured the leaders who shaped its journey, including Vikram Sarabhai and K. Sivan. He shared his vision for the future, emphasizing key projects like the SpaDex experiment, the G1 rocket, and the PSLV mission. Drawing



from his 41 years of experience, Narayanan expressed confidence in ISRO's ability to achieve even greater milestones, contributing to India's growth as a developed nation.

The new chief of ISRO, V Narayanan said, "This is a great responsibility bestowed by PM Narendra Modi.

Malegaon: SIT to probe allegations of fake birth certificates of illegal immigrants

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis has ordered a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the allegations made by BJP leader Kirit Somaiya regarding the issuance of fake birth certificates to illegal Bangladeshi immigrants in Malegaon. According to the Maharashtra Home Department, the SIT, which will be headed by Director Inspector General (DIG) Nasik, will include officers from both the district administration and police. The team has been tasked with investigating the matter and submitting a report



along with recommendations to address the issue. Afterwards, BJP leader Kirit Somaiya posted on X and thanked Maharashtra CM for forming a SIT on the issue. "Birth certificate scam for Bangladeshi/Rohingya infiltrators in Malegaon. I thank Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis for appointing a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to investigate.

This committee will investigate the illegal issuance of birth certificates to Bangladeshi/Rohingya infiltrators in Malegaon," he said. Notably, the anti-terror squad (ATS) of Maharashtra has arrested 60 illegal Bangladeshi immigrants across the entire state in the year 2024. In December 2024 alone, the ATS managed to arrest 43 Bangladeshi nationals residing illegally. In 2025, to date, four cases have been filed against the illegal Bangladeshi nationals and six accused have been arrested. Most Bangladeshis have been arrested from Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Thane.

Kerala actress complaint: Businessman taken into custody

TDG NETWORK
WAYANAD

Boby Chemmanur, a Kerala-based businessman, has been taken into custody by Wayanad police in connection with a sexual harassment complaint filed by Malayalam actress Honey Rose, police said on Wednesday. According to officials, the complaint was lodged at the Ernakulam Central Police Station in Kochi. Based on the complaint, a case was registered against the businessman under Section 75 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, and Section 67 of the IT Act. "Subsequently, the businessman was taken into



According to officials, the complaint was lodged at the Ernakulam Central Police Station in Kochi.

custody from Kalpetta in Wayanad and is being questioned," the police said. He is expected to be brought to Kochi for further investigation, they added. Further details are awaited.

Lokayukta raids irrigation official's houses in Karnataka

TDG NETWORK
BIDAR

Lokayukta officials conducted raids at multiple locations linked to Karnataka Minor Irrigation Department official AE Ravindra on Wednesday as part of an ongoing investigation. The raids were carried out at Ravindra's residence in Basavakalyan, a house in Chikkapet in Bidar city, and a house in Donagapur village in Bhalki taluk. Additionally, the Minor Irrigation Department office in Basavakalyan was also searched, with officials currently examining relevant documents.

India's diaspora key to globalisation: Jaishankar at Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

TDG NETWORK
BHUBANESHWAR

At the Joint Business Session held on the sidelines of the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar highlighted the significant economic potential of Odisha and its role in India's global growth. In his address, Jaishankar referred to the concept of a "double engine" driving development, positioning Odisha as a key player in the nation's progress, an official press release by the Ministry of External Affairs stated. He expressed the importance of India's diaspora, calling it a "living bridge" that connects India to the world, saying, "India will be unique in terms of a major power rising which



has actually used, is using, and will continue to use its diaspora as a very important pathway of its globalisation and for its rise in the international order." Jaishankar focused on the three pillars of economic growth that he termed the "3Ts": Trade, Technology, and Tourism, urging Odisha to leverage its resources, talent, and strategic location for future development. The first of the 3Ts, Trade, was underscored as a critical sector. He noted that Odisha is rich in resources but that these need invest-

ments, infrastructure, and connectivity to unlock their full potential. "Resources need investments, resources need facility, resources need connectivity," he remarked, highlighting the importance of adding value to raw materials and utilising Odisha's prime location along India's eastern seaboard to strengthen trade ties, especially with Southeast Asia. On the topic of Technology, Jaishankar pointed out Odisha's growing young population and its robust educational system as assets in developing a tech-driven economy. In the digital era, he emphasised the importance of trust in technology and its link to skilled talent. "Technology is increasingly associ-

ated with trusted talent," he said, calling for Odisha to tap into its local talent pool to foster collaborations in the tech sector, the press release stated. Tourism, the third "T", was described as a transformative sector that can drive job creation and inclusive growth in Odisha. Jaishankar recognised the state's rich cultural and natural heritage, urging investment in tourism as a means to promote sustainable economic development. "Tourism is the biggest employer generator and multiplier in the world," he asserted, noting that investments in tourism not only contribute to the economy but also create long-term development opportunities for local communities.

PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIVAS



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar meets Malaysia Minister of Digital Gobind Singh Deo during the 18th Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, in Bhubaneswar on Wednesday. ANI



Jaishankar and Malaysia Minister of Digital Gobind Singh Deo jointly interact with a diaspora delegation from Malaysia participating in the 18th Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, in Bhubaneswar on Wednesday. ANI



Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Mansukh Mandaviya addresses during the 18th Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, in Bhubaneswar on Wednesday. ANI



People during the 18th Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, in Bhubaneswar on Wednesday. ANI

AAP, BJP TAKE TO STREETS OVER 'SHEESH MAHAL', 'RAJ MAHAL'

AAP leaders were blocked by police while attempting to enter Kejriwal's former residence.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A drama unfolded Wednesday outside the 6, Flagstaff Road bungalow which was once occupied by former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, as AAP leaders attempted to enter it but were stopped by the police.

The party workers later tried to reach the Prime Minister's official residence on Lok Kalyan Marg, but were stopped by police again, following which they staged a "dharna".

In its turn, the BJP also took media to the AB 17 Mathura Road bungalow allotted to Chief Minister Atishi to show that she already had a government residence and sought to know why she was asking for a separate bungalow.

AAP leaders Sanjay Singh and Saurabh Bhardwaj staged a sit-in outside the Flagstaff bungalow after they were not allowed to enter it, which they had invited the media to tour with them in a bid to counter the BJP's "Sheesh Mahal" jibes. Police set up barricades

AAP VS BJP



AAP leaders Sanjay Singh and Saurabh Bhardwaj outside Delhi Chief Minister Atishi's official residence, in New Delhi, PTI

- AAP leaders staged a sit-in near the PM's residence.
- BJP showcased Atishi's official residence, questioning why she wanted another bungalow.
- AAP invited media to inspect Flagstaff Road bungalow, disputing BJP's luxury allegations.
- AAP accused the PM's house of being built at a cost of ₹2,700 crore, demanding transparency.

and deployed personnel in front of the bungalow, preventing the AAP leaders from entering the premises.

They then moved to the PM's house, and when stopped, staged a sit-in near the Tughlak Road Police

Station. The party leaders accused the BJP-led central government of running away from the challenged inspection of the PM residence, which they alleged had been renovated at an inordinate cost.

"BJP's lie has been ex-

posed before the entire nation today. They claimed that there is a mini bar, a swimming pool, and a commode made of gold at the former Chief Minister's residence. However, they did not allow us to enter and show the truth to the

public.

"Now, they are also preventing us from revealing the reality of the Prime Minister's residence, which has been built at a cost of 2,700 crore," Sanjay Singh said at the protest near the PM's residence.

Asked if they had sought permission to visit the residence, Singh told reporters earlier, "Why should we need permission to enter the chief minister's residence?"

Singh and Bhardwaj were seen requesting officials to allow them inside. "Who has instructed you to stop us? I am a minister and I am here for an inspection. How can you stop me and on whose orders? Have you received directions from the lieutenant governor? He is the only authority above my position," Bhardwaj was heard telling an official.

Addressing a press briefing earlier, Bhardwaj said, "As promised, we will visit the chief minister's official residence at 6, Flagstaff Road, at 11 am and try to find the golden commode, swimming pool, and mini

bar that the BJP claims are present there."

He added, "It should be noted that both these properties are government residences. They were built with taxpayers' money and came up during the Covid pandemic. If there are allegations of misappropriation of funds, both should be investigated."

The party also said it would take reporters to the prime minister's residence, which it has dubbed "Raj Mahal".

In response, Delhi BJP

BJP slams Bharadwaj, Sanjay Singh for 'forcing entry' to CM's residence

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

AAP leaders' attempt to take a media tour to former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence here in a bid to counter "Sheesh Mahal" jibes has earned the BJP's wrath which said Sanjay Singh and Saurabh Bha-

hanshu Trivedi said.

He slammed Singh and Bharadwaj for resorting to such a "shameless" act and said no matter how much they try they cannot get away from the "disgusting display of corruption" in building Kejriwal's "Sheesh Mahal".

Kejriwal's 'Sheesh Mahal' has become a "monument of his extravagance" and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) cannot hide from this truth, he said.

"What AAP leaders did today was a glaring example of their irresponsible, insane and anarchic behaviour". They tried to enter the (former CM's residence) forcibly," Trivedi told a press conference at the BJP headquarters here.

With this, it has become clear that they have seen their defeat in the Delhi assembly polls clearly written on the walls.

FIGHT FOR CAPITAL DELHI ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2025

chief Virendra Sachdeva reached AB 17 Mathura Road bungalow allotted to Delhi Chief Minister Atishi. He accused the AAP of staging a drama at the former CM's bungalow while the model code of conduct was in force ahead of the Assembly polls.

radwaj trying to "forcibly" enter the premises was an example of "irresponsible, insane and anarchic behaviour".

Their conduct was also an example of "political etiquette and ethics" being demolished, BJP national spokesperson Sud-



Members of Sanatana Dharma join the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in the presence of party National Convener Arvind Kejriwal and party leader Manish Sisodia, in New Delhi. ANI

BSP to contest Delhi polls independently

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati announced on Tuesday that the party will contest the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections independently, with full preparation and strength.

Taking to the social media handle on X (formerly Twitter), BSP leader Mayawati wrote, "The general election for Delhi Assembly will be held in one phase on 5 February 2025. The announcement made by the Election Commission in this regard is welcome. BSP is fighting this election on its own strength with full preparation and strength. It is expected that the party will definitely perform well in this election."

Mayawati highlighted the importance of elections in preserving democracy and reaffirmed the party's focus on the welfare of the poor and oppressed sections of



The BSP leader also issued an appeal to the voters, urging them not to be swayed by tempting promises from other parties and to vote wisely for BSP candidates.

society. "Elections are the backbone of democracy, and as a party dedicated to the upliftment of the margin-

alized, we expect the Election Commission to ensure that these elections are free from communalism and other negative influences, including the misuse of government machinery," she posted on X.

The BSP leader also issued an appeal to the voters, urging them not to be swayed by tempting promises from other parties and to vote wisely for BSP candidates.

"It is an appeal to the voters that they should not get swayed by any party's tempting promises and should use their votes wisely and vote only for the BSP party candidates who are dedicated to public interest and public welfare. This is where the public and national interest lies and is safe," read her post.

Earlier on Tuesday, former BSP leader Madan Mohan along with his wife Sudeshwari joined the Aam Aadmi

Party (AAP) in the presence of AAP MP Sanjay Singh.

On January 1, Jasvir Singh Garhi, the former president of the Punjab unit of BSP also joined AAP.

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has announced the dates for polls to the Delhi Legislative Assembly. The elections will be held in a single phase on February 5, while the counting of votes will take place on February 8. The last date for filing nominations is January 17. The date for scrutiny of nominations is January 18. While last date for withdrawal of candidature is January 20. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has accused the AAP leaders of corruption and misgovernance, while the AAP, which is aiming to come to power for the third consecutive time, is focusing on highlighting its achievements in the education and health sector.

'Never spoke about his cheeks': Priyanka slams Bidhuri's remarks

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Wednesday, condemned the statement of Bharatiya Janata Party leader Ramesh Bidhuri's on her 'cheeks', calling it "ridiculous" and "unnecessary."

Speaking to the media, Priyanka emphasized that such comments distract from the real issues and stressed that during elections, the focus should be on addressing the pressing concerns of the people of Delhi. "It is a ridiculous remark. He never spoke about his cheeks. All this is unnecessary. During the elections, we should talk about the important issues of the people of Delhi," the Congress MP said.

This comes amid the controversy over Bidhuri's remarks about BJP making roads like 'Priyanka Gandhi's cheeks' if in power."

Parvesh launches 'Har Ghar Naukari' campaign in New Delhi constituency

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

BJP New Delhi seat candidate Parvesh Verma on Wednesday launched "Har Ghar Naukari" (job for every household) campaign, promising jobs to the youth of the constituency currently held by AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal. Registration has already begun for a job fair that will be held on January 15. More than 50 prominent companies from across the country will participate in the job fair to be held at Constitution Club, said a statement from Verma.

"Har Ghar Naukari is our promise. Through this job fair, we aim to provide jobs to the youth based on their skills and qualifications," Verma said.

The BJP leader said 15 centres have been set up across the constituency for registration.

The initiative is a step toward fulfilling BJP's vision of "Har Ghar Rozgar, Har Ghar Samridhhi" (Employment and Prosperity for Every Household), the statement said.



Verma, a former West Delhi MP, is under attack by the AAP over his distributing Rs 1,100 to women in New Delhi constituency under a "Ladli Yojna".

Verma, a former West Delhi MP, is under attack by the AAP over his distributing Rs 1,100 to women in New Delhi constituency under a "Ladli Yojna".

Voting for the 70-member Delhi Assembly will be held on February 5. Counting of votes will be held on February 8.

'Phir layenge Kejriwal' vs 'Badlaav chahiye'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

As Delhi gears up for the crucial assembly polls on February 5, key players AAP and BJP are using high-energy songs to ramp up their campaigns and strike the right chord among voters.

The Congress is yet to release its campaign song though it has launched its campaign slogan.

The BJP had on January 5 released its 2.26-minute-long campaign song that calls for "Bahane nahin, badlaav chahiye" (No excuses, we need change) while the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) unveiled its 3.29-minute song "Phir Layenge Kejriwal" (Will bring Kejriwal again) Tuesday.

Congress leaders said the party would launch its campaign anthem soon. On Wednesday, at a press conference, the Congress announced a health scheme under the banner of the party's campaign slogan, which reads "Hogi Har Zarurat Puri, Congress Hai Zaroori".

The BJP's song, sung by party MP Manoj Tiwari, emphasizes the need for a "new identity" for Delhi



Celebrating Kejriwal's leadership the song paints a picture of Kejriwal as "Delhi ka laal" (Delhi's beloved leader).

under its governance. The lyrics highlight the alleged failures of the AAP government, accusing it of making "false promises" and engaging in corruption.

Lines like "Jhute vaadon ko taagdi faadkar chahiye, bahane nahin, badlaav chahiye" (We need to tear apart false promises; no excuses, we need change) reflect the BJP's assertion that the AAP government has failed to deliver.

The song also refers to the 2020 Delhi riots and Yamuna river pollution with the line "Dangaon ka daag ab nahin, Yamuna mein jhag ab nahin" (No more stains of riots, no more froth in the Yamuna), calling out the

current government's handling of law and order and environmental issues.

Furthermore, it critiques AAP's infrastructure initiatives, particularly alleged extravagant spending on government facilities, with lines like "Sheesha mahal banaya khuda janata ke paiso se" (A palace of glass built with public money).

By urging voters to usher in "parivartan" (change), the BJP song ties its narrative to its vision of improving governance in Delhi.

emphasizing continuity in governance.

Celebrating Kejriwal's leadership the song paints a picture of Kejriwal as "Delhi ka laal" (Delhi's beloved leader).

It emphasises the party's achievements over the past decade, focusing on free electricity and water, advancements in education, and affordable healthcare.

Lines like "Delhi mein bijli paani muft rakhta hai bas apna Kejriwal" (It's only Kejriwal who ensures free electricity and water in Delhi) highlight AAP's welfare schemes as its key accomplishments. The song also underscores the government's focus on women's safety and public infrastructure, with lyrics praising Kejriwal for building flyovers and saving public funds. It takes a dig at other parties with lines like "Baki saare jhooth failaya, phir bhi rukta na koi bhi kaam" (All others spread falsehood, yet no work ever stops). The song portrays Kejriwal as "jadoogar hai, jhadoo karta hai" (the magician with the broom), referring to the party's electoral symbol and its anti-corruption claims.

CM writes to CEC, seeks meeting over 'voter deletion' allegations

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Atishi on Wednesday wrote another letter to the Chief Election Commissioner, raising the issue of adding and deleting the names of voters in the New Delhi Assembly constituency and seeking an immediate meeting on the issue.

CM Atishi previously wrote another letter to the CEC regarding the same issue on January 5.

"This is regarding my earlier letter dated January 5, highlighting the issue of large-scale voter deletions and additions in the New Delhi assembly constituency. I had sought an appointment from your office for a meeting to apprise you of the issue in person. However, in response to my letter, my office has received a correspondence (attached) from Lalit Mittal, Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Delhi stating that the office is ascertaining the facts mentioned in my letter," she stated in the letter. The Delhi Chief



Minister, further asserted that with only 27 days left for the Delhi elections, it is important to apprise the CEC on the issue.

"Sir, in my letter, I sought an urgent appointment with your good self to personally discuss this matter and seek directions since this matter is beyond the scope of the local CEO. With less than 27 days left for the Delhi Assembly Elections, this matter should be considered at the highest priority. Delhi is the only state going to polls during this time, and the entire country and its media will closely follow the elections and its processes. We place our trust in the Election Commission of India to uphold the principles of free and fair elections," she said. CM Atishi requested the CEC to give an appointment as soon as possible.

CONG VOWS RS 25 LAKH HEALTH COVER UNDER 'JEEVAN RAKSHA YOJANA' IF ELECTED

Provides health coverage for all ages, from birth to old age, modelled after Rajasthan's Chiranjeevi Yojana.

TIKAM SHARMA
NEW DELHI

Ahead of the Delhi Assembly elections scheduled for February 5, 2025, the Delhi Congress has announced its second key guarantee, the "Jeevan Raksha Yojana," aimed at providing free medical treatment worth up to Rs.25 lakh for every resident of Delhi. This follows the party's first guarantee, the "Pyari Didi Yojana," which promises Rs.2,500 per month to every woman in Delhi.

Addressing the media at the DPCC office, Rajiv Bhawan, former Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot promised that, if elected, the Congress government in Delhi would take responsibility for the health of its citizens. He announced that the Jeevan Raksha Yojana would be modeled after Rajasthan's successful Chiranjeevi

WHAT THE SCHEME HOLDS

- Covers over 1,000 medical procedures, including critical illnesses and diagnostics like CT, MRI, and Doppler tests.
- Includes Rs 10 lakh accidental coverage and pre/post-hospitalization expenses.
- Addresses gaps in existing schemes like Ayushman Bharat, reducing out-of-pocket healthcare costs.



AICC in-charge of Delhi Qazi Nizamuddin, Delhi Congress President Devender Yadav, senior Congress leader Ashok Gehlot and others during a press conference at the party office, in New Delhi. PTI

Yojana, offering universal health insurance for all age groups, from birth to old age. The scheme will cover treatment in both government and private hospitals, ensuring free healthcare for all Delhi residents. Gehlot described the initiative as a "game-changer" and a crucial step toward transforming governance in the capital.

Gehlot shared that under

Rajasthan's Chiranjeevi Swasthya Bima Yojana, 55 lakh people benefited from health services, with free treatment up to Rs.25 lakh provided in government and private hospitals. The scheme covered over 1,000 medical procedures, including critical illnesses like COVID-19, and offered accidental coverage of Rs.10 lakh. Benefits included organ transplants

and diagnostic services like CT, MRI, and Doppler tests. Out-of-pocket healthcare expenses were significantly reduced, with the Congress government in Rajasthan bringing it down from 74% to 45% during 2018-19.

Criticizing the Central Government's Ayushman Bharat Yojana, Gehlot highlighted its limited reach, covering only 40% of families eligible under the social,

economic, and caste census for Rs. 5 lakh insurance. He emphasized that a nationwide implementation of the Chiranjeevi Yojana could benefit millions, citing Rajasthan's example where patients received immediate treatment under the scheme, including expenses for five days before and 15 days after hospitalization.

Delhi Congress Chief, Devender Yadav, stressed

Nadda to hold key election management committee meet

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

BJP National President JP Nadda will hold a crucial Delhi election management meeting tomorrow, January 9, at the Delhi BJP office, party sources said.

The key organisational meeting, expected to start around 10:30 am, aims to review Delhi election preparations ahead of the polls.

Approximately 30-32 committees, formed to oversee various aspects of the Delhi election, such as booth management, social media, advertisements, etc.,



Nadda will meet with Delhi BJP core group members, followed by a meeting with the Delhi BJP election management committees, according to sources.

The Delhi BJP election management committees regularly convene at intervals, with BJP Delhi Chief Virendra Sachdeva leading the review meetings. With the Delhi polls approaching, JP Nadda will review progress and share the success mantra with the members.

Delhi assembly elections will be held in a single phase on February 5, while the counting of votes will take place on February 8. The last date of filing nominations is January 17. The date for scrutiny of nominations is January 18. The last date for withdrawal of candida-

Approximately 30-32 committees, formed to oversee various aspects of the Delhi election, such as booth management, social media, advertisements, etc., will provide feedback during the meeting.

ture is January 20.

Incumbent AAP, which won the previous two terms with massive margins--67 and 62 out of 70 seats--is facing a stiff two-pronged challenge against BJP and the Congress and will be seeking a fourth term by showcasing its 'performance' in the areas of education and health as well as the plethora of welfare schemes.

'Thank you, Didi,' says Kejriwal to Mamata as TMC backs AAP in Delhi polls

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party Chief Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday announced that the Trinamool Congress (TMC) has extended support to his party in the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections on February 5.

In a post on X, Kejriwal thanked West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee for extending her support to AAP. "TMC has announced support to AAP in Delhi elections. I am personally grateful to Mamta Didi. Thank you, Didi. U have always supported and blessed us in our good and bad times," the AAP Chief said.

Reacting to Kejriwal's post, senior TMC leader Derek O' Brien said, "We have your back @AamAadmiParty"

On Tuesday, TMC leader



Kunal Ghosh said that the people of Delhi will defeat the BJP in the Assembly polls.

"We hope that AAP government comes back there and BJP is defeated. The people of Delhi will defeat BJP," Ghosh said.

In another tweet, Arvind Kejriwal alleged that the BJP has given 'target' to all its seven Lok Sabha MPs from Delhi to get fake votes in the New Delhi Assembly seat.

"According to sources, the Gaali Galooj Party has given targets to its seven

MPs to get fake votes made in the New Delhi Legislative Assembly in the next few days. Let's see how many applications for making new votes come in the next few days. Everyone should keep an eye on this. Atishi ji has sought time to meet the Chief Election Commissioner. We hope we will get time soon," the AAP chief said.

Delhi Chief Minister Atishi on Tuesday accused the BJP of attempting to manipulate voter data in the New Delhi Assembly by deleting and wrongly adding thousands of voters through fraudulent applications.

"BJP is snatching the right to vote from the citizens. They are doing a huge election scam in the New Delhi Assembly. BJP is attempting to manipulate voter data by deleting and adding thousands of votes incorrectly," she said.

LSR, Tagore School get hoax bomb threats

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Two educational institutes in the national capital received bomb threat e-mails on Wednesday, Delhi Fire Services said.

"We received two different bomb threat calls from Lady Shree Ram College (sic) at 11.40 am. Another bomb threat call was received from Tagore International School in East of Kailash area at 11.17 am," an official said.

He said teams were immediately rushed to the site, but nothing suspicious was found.

A dog squad and bomb disposal squad were part of the teams rushed to the spot, a police officer said.

Police busts mobile theft racket involving juveniles from Jharkhand

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police recently busted a mobile theft racket, where the alleged mastermind in Jharkhand lured juveniles from the state and sent them to the national capital to steal high-end mobile phones from people in busy markets, an official said on Wednesday.

These minors, lured with a payment of Rs 3,000 per theft, travelled ticketless by train to Delhi and targeted busy marketplaces, the official said.

After completing their "task," they handed over the stolen devices to their handler, known as Shiva, and returned to Jharkhand with minimal traceable connections, police added.

The racket came to light when a 13-year-old boy was apprehended for stealing an iPhone from a shopper in Kamla Nagar, Delhi, Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) Raja Banthia said.

"The incident occurred on December 22, when a woman was shopping in Kamla Nagar Market. She reported that a minor boy had sto-



len her mobile phone. A daily diary (DD) entry was lodged at Roop Nagar Police Post and further investigation was launched. CCTV footage revealed the minor committing the theft, providing a key lead for the investigation," said the DCP.

The team then activated local informers and briefed vendors and stakeholders in the market.

During routine patrolling on January 5, the team received information about a minor resembling the suspect seen near Spark Mall in Kamla Nagar and he was apprehended, DCP Banthia said.

During questioning, the juvenile revealed that he was a native of Jharkhand and had no permanent address in Delhi, the DCP added.

He disclosed that he had been recruited by Shiva, a man he met in his hometown.

Yamuna congestion affected 2023 floods: Centre to NGT

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Centre has informed the National Green Tribunal the 2023 flood forecast by the Central Water Commission was inaccurate due to the congestion in River Yamuna between Wazirabad and Okhla barrages.

The green body had taken a suo motu cognisance of a newspaper report and sought a response of the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS), Central Water Commission (CWC) and others over the failure of the commission to predict Delhi witnessing its worst floods in 2023.

In 2023, Delhi witnessed one of its worst flood-like situations in several pockets due to heavy rains and over 25,000 people were evacuated from inundated areas.

The reply filed by the MoJS and CWC on January 4 said the high discharge downstream of Hathnikund Barrage created a flood situation in River Yamuna near Delhi.

"Due to this, the flow of the Delhi Railway Bridge (DRB) site increased con-



In 2023, Delhi witnessed one of its worst flood-like situations in several pockets due to heavy rains and over 25,000 people were evacuated from inundated areas.

tinuously and crossed the previous high flow level (HFL) of 207.49 metre at 13:00 (1 pm) hrs on July 12, 2023, and achieved the highest peak water level of 208.66 metre at 18:00 (6pm) hrs on July 13," it said.

The flood forecast, it said, required the water channel to be in a "free flow state" and changes in flow conditions upstream and downstream of the flood forecasting station could "compromise" accuracy.

It said the free flowing conditions did not exist

between Wazirabad and Okhla barrages because of the non-opening of all the gates of ITO Barrage, the formation of islands of silt deposits, trees in the river's course and muck disposal at various locations due to bridge construction activities across the river.

"All these factors resulted in congestion in the river in Delhi reach and if the free flow condition of the channel is compromised, then, the forecast issued will not match with the actual forecast," the reply said.

7 arrested in Dadri for major theft, weapons seized

TIKAM SHARMA
NOIDA

In a significant breakthrough, Dadri Police successfully dismantled a gang of thieves, arresting seven individuals involved in multiple thefts. The operation resulted in the recovery of illegal weapons, tools used in thefts, stolen cash, a considerable amount of stolen goods, and a vehicle.

The arrests were made near the Samauddinpur village bypass leading to the railway overbridge, following intelligence inputs. During interrogation, the suspects admitted to stealing the recovered chain-link fencing by cutting it



from near the Samauddinpur underpass along the Peripheral Expressway four to five days ago. They were apprehended while attempting to sell the stolen goods. They also confessed to committing a theft in a house in Samauddinpur village the night before, sharing the stolen money among themselves. The accused are linked to multiple criminal cases registered at Dadri Police Station, including violations under Sections

303(2), 317(2), 305, 115(2), 125, 351(2), 352, 61(2) BNS, and 3/4/25 of the Arms Act.

The arrested individuals were identified as Satish (30), son of late Roopchand Jogi from Rithodi, Dadri; Sonu (20), son of late Baljeet from Samauddinpur, Dadri; Sumit (25), son of Veerpal from Samauddinpur, Dadri; Prashant alias Kallan (21), son of late Satpal from Samauddinpur, Dadri; Darshan (21), son of Rakesh from Rithodi.

HC rejects PIL for CAA rehab package, calls it 'govt policy matter'

TIKAM SHARMA
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court, while dismissing the petition seeking a rehabilitation package for individuals granted citizenship under the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), stated that the issue was a policy matter for the government to address, not for judicial

intervention. The court noted, "The question of how extensive a rehabilitation package is required is fundamentally a matter of policy."

It further highlighted that the petitioner had already submitted a representation to the authorities requesting a comprehensive rehabilitation package for those who migrated from Paki-

stan. The petitioner sought a comprehensive rehabilitation package for individuals granted citizenship under the CAA, requesting that it encompass more than just housing. The proposed package included essential services such as access to healthcare, education, clean water, electricity, and sanitation.

PER CAPITA GDP TO SURGE BY RS 35K AMID SLOWDOWN: SBI

The report highlighted that the private consumption has emerged as a key driver of economic growth, registering the highest growth of 7.3 per cent in real terms in FY25.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Despite a slowdown in real GDP growth and stagnant nominal GDP growth, per capita nominal GDP is expected to rise significantly in FY25, according to a report by the State Bank of India (SBI).

The report highlighted that per capita nominal GDP in FY25 is estimated to be nearly Rs 35,000 higher than in FY23. This growth is seen as a positive development even as the broader GDP growth decelerates.

It said, "While the real GDP growth decelerated sharply and nominal GDP

growth is almost stagnant, the per capita nominal GDP is expected to increase significantly. Compared to FY23, the NSO estimate of per capita GDP in FY25 is almost Rs 35,000 more".

The National Statistical Office (NSO) in its first advance GDP estimates, pegged India's real GDP growth at 6.4 per cent for FY25.

The report highlighted that the private consumption has emerged as a key driver of economic growth, registering the highest growth of 7.3 per cent in real terms in FY25.

On a per capita basis, private consumption in-

KEY POINTS

- Per capita nominal GDP expected to rise Rs 35,000 in FY25 despite slower GDP growth, says SBI report.
- Private consumption leads growth with a 7.3% rise in FY25, driven by a 6.3% increase in per capita PFCE.
- Per capita PFCE growth surpasses GDP growth, suggesting consumption may be funded by savings drawdown.
- SBI report questions sustainability of rising consumption amid declining savings rates.



creased by 6.3 per cent, reflecting a robust recovery

in consumer spending. Interestingly, the per capita

Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE)

growth of 6.3 per cent surpassed the per capita GDP growth of 5.3 per cent.

The report noted that this trend suggests a shift in household financial behavior. The higher consumption growth relative to income indicates that households may have dipped into their savings to sustain spending levels.

"Private consumption appears to have been financed by a net drawdown in savings in FY25," the report stated.

The findings highlight the resilience of India's consumption-driven economy even amid challenges. However, the report also

raised questions about the sustainability of this trend, particularly if savings levels continue to decline.

It added "the per capita PFCE growth is higher than per capita GDP growth at 5.3 per cent. At the face of it, if this is true then private consumption has been financed by net draw down in savings in FY25".

The SBI report provided crucial insights into India's economic trajectory, emphasizing the importance of individual economic indicators like per capita income and consumption in shaping the broader narrative of growth.

Gold prices surge to Rs 80,000; silver climbs to Rs 92,500



TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Gold prices in the national capital have surged to Rs 80,000 per 10 grams, marking a one-month high. This increase is attributed to heightened demand from jewelers and stockists, as reported by the All India Sarafa Association. The 99.9% pure gold rose by Rs 300, reaching Rs 80,000 per 10 grams, up from Rs 79,700 in the previous session. Similarly, 99.5% pure gold climbed by Rs 300 to Rs 79,600 per 10 grams.

Silver prices also experienced a significant rise, increasing by Rs 500 to Rs 92,500 per kilogram, the highest in nearly a month. This surge is attributed to increased demand from jewelers and retailers in local markets.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for February delivery appreciated by Rs 43, settling at Rs 77,574 per 10 grams. Silver contracts for March delivery increased by Rs 224, or 0.25%, to Rs 91,097 per kilogram.

Internationally, Comex gold futures slipped 0.09% to USD 2,663.10 per ounce. The rise in gold prices is partly due to strong demand from China, the world's leading gold consumer, which raised its reserves for the second consecutive month in December. Additionally, central banks worldwide added 53 tonnes of gold to their reserves in November 2024, with the Reserve Bank of India contributing eight tonnes.

'Budget should raise personal income tax exemption limit to Rs 5 lakh'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The upcoming union budget 2025-26 should focus on giving personal tax relief to common taxpayers by raising the basic exemption limit in the new tax regime from Rs 3 lakhs to Rs 5 lakhs and reducing tax rates, suggests global consulting and professional services firm Ernst & Young India (EY India).

EY India also asks for deferring tax deduction at source (TDS) on PF interest rate (above 2.5 lakhs) until the withdrawal stage to reduce compliance burden.

In the previous budget TDS rate rationalization was undertaken to a certain extent. To further simplify the entire gamut of withholding tax provisions, the TDS rate structure could be divided into 3-4 broad categories with lower rates and a negative list.

Sameer Gupta, National Tax Leader, EY India, said "While a full comprehensive review of the direct



tax code may take time, we might see some initial steps toward its implementation in this Budget. I also hope for a reduction in personal income tax, particularly for the lower-income groups, to provide relief and stimulate demand."

EY India also asks for the ESOPs tax deferral benefit to be extended to all employers and allow tax payment at the sale stage.

EY anticipates significant reforms to simplify the tax system and improve taxpayer services, reduce litigation, and enhance tax compliance. Measures should be announced to reduce the pendency of tax disputes and avoid further

disputes on a priority basis. In this regard, other dispute prevention options like safe harbours should be made more attractive.

As of 2023-24, more than Rs 31 trillion was locked in Income Tax litigation, amounting to 9.6 per cent of India's GDP for the year.

The cap on the set-off of house property losses against other heads should be removed. In Tier-2 cities like Hyderabad, Pune, Bengaluru, and Ahmedabad the house rent allowance (HRA) exemption should be given at 50 per cent, it will provide tax parity. Currently, only four metro cities get a 50 per cent HRA exemption.

RBI lifts restrictions on Asirvad Micro Finance and DMI Finance

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to lift restrictions placed on Asirvad Micro Finance and DMI Finance, with immediate effect, which was initially imposed in October 2024.

On October 21, 2024, RBI imposed restrictions on the sanction and disbursal of loans on these two entities.

In the times that followed, the two companies initiated remedial action and submitted their various compliances to the RBI.

RBI was satisfied with the remedial actions and with the companies' submissions.

In view of the "adoption of revamped processes, systems, and the companies' commitment" to ensure adherence to the Regulatory Guidelines, RBI lifted the restrictions.

FPIs to remain cautious on India until clarity comes on Q3 FY25 earnings

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) are expected to adopt a cautious stance on Indian equities until there is clarity on the recovery in Q3 FY25 earnings and fair market valuations, says a report by Shriram Mutual Funds.

The report highlighted that despite significant activity, FPIs remain wary of the current economic landscape. It said "FPIs are likely to remain cautious on India until there is clarity on Q3 FY25 earnings recovery and fair valuations"

In 2024, FPIs investment in equities remained positive but it declined around 99 per cent as compared to 2023 and they ended the year on a more cautious note.

Data from the National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) revealed that October witnessed the highest selling by foreign investors, who offloaded equities worth Rs 91,934 crore.

In contrast, domestic in-

In 2024, FPIs investment in equities remained positive but it declined around 99 per cent as compared to 2023 and they ended the year on a more cautious note.

stitutional investors (DIIs) supported the market, purchasing equities worth Rs 89,740 crore during the same period. For the calendar year, DIIs bought equities worth Rs 4.18 lakh crore, while FPIs recorded net sales of Rs 72 crore.

The unwavering support of domestic investors has been a key factor in stabilizing the Indian equity market despite external challenges.

However, the report also noted that the Indian rupee has faced significant pressure, touching a record low

of Rs 85.8 per USD. This depreciation was driven by foreign outflows following China's announcement of new stimulus measures.

India's forex reserves have also seen a decline. As per Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data, the reserves fell by USD 4.112 billion in the week ending December 27, bringing the total to USD 640.279 billion.

The report highlighted that globally, market participants are closely monitoring the US Inauguration Day on January 20, 2025.

Uncertainty surrounding potential policy changes after the Trump administration's tenure could lead to short-term market instability.

It said "All eyes on US Inauguration Day on 20th Jan 25, can lead to short-term instability in market after Trump policies".

Additionally, disruptions in global supply chains are prompting businesses to front-load their orders, further adding to market volatility.

T-Hub launches BIML program

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

New Initiative to Empower Incubation Managers and Drive Startup Growth Across India Program Engages 15 Institutions to Strengthen India's Startup Incubation Network

T-Hub, India's leading startup incubator, has today announced the launch of the Business Incubation Management & Leadership (BIML) program under the AIC T-Hub Foundation. This first-of-its-kind initiative aims to transform India's incubation landscape by equipping managers with the expertise and skills needed to build and scale world-class incubation centers. The program is designed to empower incubators with hands-on training, strategic knowledge, and industry connections, enabling them to foster innovation and drive entrepreneurship across the country.

The BIML program provides incubation leaders and managers with in-depth insights into managing startup-focused processes, stakeholder relationships, and navigating critical frameworks like national policies, financial strategies, and legal compliance. Incubators will receive a certification upon completion, bolstering their credibility as professional

STARTUP CORNER



incubation leaders and managers. Through collaborations with academic institutions and industry leaders, the program leverages T-Hub's extensive network of mentors, corporates, and policymakers to offer unmatched learning opportunities.

AIC T-Hub is creating incubation for edutech, academia, sports, technology, and management incubators across the nation as part of this program. With participation from 15 academic institutions - CVR College of Engineering, Hyderabad; Sphoorthy Engineering College, Hyderabad; Bhargava Ram, Sports Incubator; SRI SAIRAM TECHNO INCU-

BATOR FOUNDATION, Chennai, Tamil Nadu; National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research, Guwahati; Sunil Subrahmanyam Yadavalli, Head of Business Strategy, Information Data Systems; Vignana Bharathi Institute of Technology, Hyderabad; ACE Engineering College, Hyderabad; Kommuri

the nation. Speaking about the initiative, Rajesh Adla, CEO of AIC T-Hub Foundation, said, "Our mission at AIC T-Hub is to cultivate a strong and dynamic incubation ecosystem in India. The BIML program is a significant step in empowering managers with the critical skills required

The program is designed to empower incubators with hands-on training, strategic knowledge, and industry connections, enabling them to foster innovation and drive entrepreneurship across the country.

Pratap Reddy Institute of Technology, Ghatkesar, Telangana; Samskruti College of Engineering & Technology, Hyderabad; Sree Dattha Group of Institutions, Ibrahimpatnam, Telangana; Aditya Institute of Technology and Management, Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh; Stanley College of Engineering and Technology for Women, Hyderabad; Vasavi College of Engineering, Hyderabad; VNR Vignana Jyothi Institute of Engineering and Technology, Hyderabad across Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, and Tamil Nadu, the program is making strides toward building a cohesive and robust incubation framework across

to drive innovation and entrepreneurship. We believe this initiative will play a pivotal role in advancing India's startup ecosystem and supporting the next wave of entrepreneurial growth."

Sujith Jagirdar, Interim CEO of T-Hub, added, "India's startup ecosystem has immense potential to lead globally, and initiatives like BIML are essential to unlocking that potential. By providing training, strategic industry linkages, and access to valuable networks, the program ensures that incubation centres across India are equipped to nurture innovative ideas and enable startups to succeed."

Adani-owned Mumbai airport earns ACI Level 5 Accreditation for customer experience

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Adani Group-owned Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMA) in Mumbai has received Airports Council International's (ACI) prestigious Level 5 Accreditation for customer experience, Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani said on Wednesday.

In a post on X, Gautam Adani said the CSMA is the first airport in India and only the third in the world to receive this distinction.

"There is no greater manifestation of business success than a company's ability to serve its customers. Every moment, it is this guiding principle that I urge all members of Adani Airports to dedicate their hours to. And there can be no greater feeling of gratitude than to have our@CSMA_Officialreceive@ACIWorld's prestigious Level 5 Accreditation for Customer Experience," Gautam Adani wrote in his.

"Not only are we the first airport in India but also only the third in the world to do so. It is my promise on behalf of AAHL to keep serving all our passengers who walk through our airports. Thank you my passengers. Thank you my colleagues at AAHL," he added.

ACI's Airport Customer Experience Accreditation program builds airports' long-term capacity to enhance customer experience management.

According to the ACI, this is the only accreditation program in the airport industry to provide a 360-degree view of customer experience management.



Solar capacity to grow 2.6x by 2030: Report



TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India's solar sector is poised for exponential growth over the next decade, as the country aims to reach 500GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030. A report by Kotak Institutional Equities says that India's solar energy capacity will reach 214 GW by 2030 from 82GW now.

Solar capacity addition will be driven by PM Surya Muft Biji Yojana (rooftop solar), PM-KUSUM scheme (solar pumps), captive industrial additions and utility level additions.

"We expect India's solar capacity to reach 214GW by FY2030 from 82GW in FY2024, driven by (1) utility level additions, (2) rooftop solar, (3) solar pumps and (4) captive industrial addition," says the report.

India's total energy capacity addition is expected to reach 641GW by FY2030 from 442GW, as of FY2024. The report estimates that approximately 66% of the incremental addition will

come from solar energy.

India has 70GW of installed capacity of solar modules and 7GW of solar cell capacity, as of FY2024. Solar cell capacity worth 84GW is expected to be added over the next three years. However, given the longer lead time requirement the actual capacity could be substantially lower than what has been announced.

With the government's focus on renewable energy additions, India's installed capacity will double over the next 11 years and 90 per cent of the incremental addition will come from renewables. Additionally, any pickup in the National Green Hydrogen Mission will provide a further upside to the demand estimates.

The measures taken by the union government like multiple trade and non-trade barriers and production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes have benefitted increased domestic production of solar cells and modules by Indian solar manufacturing companies.

INDIA-NEPAL: A BOND BEYOND BORDERS

OPINION

KAMANA MAGAR &
SUMIT KAUSHIK

India and Nepal share more than just 1,850-kilometre open border. These two nations are intertwined by threads of culture, history, and spirituality that transcend political boundaries, creating a unique and enduring relationship. This connection, rooted in shared traditions, values, and beliefs, continues to be a testament to the power of cultural harmony in fostering bilateral ties.

A BORDERLESS BROTHERHOOD

Five Indian states—Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand—share borders with Nepal, but the bond goes far deeper than geography. For centuries, the open border has been a symbol of trust, facilitating seamless interactions and exchanges. This frontier without restriction is not just a testament to mutual understanding but also a living example of how shared

heritage binds two nations together.

The open border allows for the free movement of people, fostering an unparalleled level of interaction. Festivals like Dashain, Tihar, Chhath, and Holi are celebrated with equal fervour on both sides, emphasising the shared cultural ethos. Families straddle borders, languages overlap, and cuisines intermingle, creating a mosaic of unity that is both vibrant and organic.

CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL CONNECTIONS

The shared cultural history of India and Nepal is rich and profound. Both nations are deeply rooted in Hinduism and Buddhism, with iconic spiritual landmarks such as Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha, and Pashupatinath Temple in Kathmandu forming an integral part of this bond.

The shared reverence for



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli.

FILE PHOTO

the Ramayana and the stories of Lord Shiva strengthens the ties further. The pilgrim routes that connect the Char Dham in India with the Mukthinath in Nepal are a testament to the seamless blending of spiritual journeys between the two nations.

Language, too, plays a pivotal role in this connection. Hindi, Maithili, Bhojpuri, and Awadhi are widely spoken on both sides of the border, ensuring that communication and cultural exchange remain effortless. These linguistic links

enhance the sense of unity and belonging between the people of India and Nepal.

India's Initiatives: Nurturing Bonds Through Culture India has consistently worked to strengthen these ties through initiatives that celebrate and promote cultural and people-to-people connections:

Cultural Programs and Festivals: The Government of India organises cultural events in Nepal, celebrating the shared heritage through music, dance, and art. For instance, the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav in 2022

saw enthusiastic participation from Nepal, showcasing how shared celebrations can deepen bonds.

Academic and Literary Exchanges: Conferences in Hindi and Sanskrit, along with symposia on shared histories and traditions, have brought scholars and academicians together to explore the depth of India-Nepal relations.

Youth and Start-up Engagement: Development conclaves and start-up events have introduced the next generation to collaborative opportunities, fostering an environment of mutual

growth and innovation.

THE UNIQUE FABRIC OF BILATERAL RELATIONS

The relationship between India and Nepal is much more than a series of treaties and agreements. It is an organic bond shaped by centuries of interaction. The principles of peaceful coexistence, sovereign equality, and mutual respect form the cornerstone of this partnership.

Nepal has consistently demonstrated its commitment to fostering cordial ties by ensuring that its territory is not misused for activities inimical to India's interests. In return, India has extended unwavering support, recognising Nepal as an invaluable neighbour and partner in the region.

A SHARED FUTURE ROOTED IN A SHARED PAST

The deep-rooted people-to-people ties between India and Nepal are a shining example of how culture can serve as the strongest bridge between nations. In an era where borders often divide, the India-Nepal relationship stands as a beacon of unity, underscoring the power of shared history, values, and traditions.

As we look to the future, this cultural symbiosis will remain the bedrock of bilateral relations, ensuring that India and Nepal continue to thrive together as neighbours, partners, and, above all, family.

Kamana Magar, Operative Director, and Sumit Kaushik, Visiting Fellow at the Asian Institute of Diplomacy and International Affairs (AIDIA).

PERSPECTIVE
ELON VS KEIR

KEIR STARMER SHOULD BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE

There is much commotion over the stand that tech billionaire Elon Musk has taken on the Keir Starmer government in Britain. He is vocal in his criticism of the Labour government for the refusal to act against the sexual abuse of vulnerable and underage white girls by groups of Pakistani Muslim men, and wants the Starmer government to resign and Britain to have fresh elections. He is going after Starmer and Co with as much as firepower as possible, leading to screams of electoral interference coming not just from Britain, but also other countries that are in the crosshairs of Musk, who wields worldwide influence courtesy his social media platform X and now has the backing of incoming US President Donald Trump.

There is reason for Musk to be outraged. The scale of the crimes committed in Britain is horrendous. There are claims of anything between 250,000 to half a million girls falling prey to horrific torture and abuse by these Pakistani gangs over the decades. Even if there is no confirmation of these numbers, even one case is one too many. A 2014 report estimates that at least 1,400 girls were sexually abused in Rotherham alone between 1997 and 2013 by the Pakistani grooming gangs. In fact "grooming gangs" is actually a misnomer, because these are actually rape gangs. Another 1,000 girls were found to have been abused in Telford. Amid this, the behaviour of the British political class and the media is shocking. They are guilty of covering up the crimes and downplaying the scale of the torture and abuse that the victims faced. Many of them died because of such torture. From politicians to media, the constant refrain has been, these rapes were committed by Asian men. This has angered many Asian communities, because from Japan to India, they have been branded as rapists, when the truth is that this is a problem related to Pakistani men. This extreme political correctness has even impacted governance, with Starmer being accused of diluting policy against child sexual abuse between 2008 and 2013, when he served as director of Public Prosecutions for the Crown Prosecution Service. He is also being accused of being lenient with the criminals who perpetrated such crimes. While Starmer has denied these charges, what is roiling Britain is that till date no national inquiry has been ordered into these horrific incidents.

This unwillingness has to be seen in the context of the widespread support that Keir Starmer's Labour party enjoys from the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities—over 80% of these communities vote for Labour en masse. It is a captive vote bank, of which the Labour is unwilling to let go. This should explain why there is so much reticence not only to name the Pakistani criminals, but also to shield them.

In this context, it would be wrong to accuse Elon Musk of interference in a sovereign country's internal affairs. Extreme situations are bound to evoke extreme reactions. Keir Starmer won with a full majority. He in fact led the Labour to victory by sweeping the UK general election last year. To advocate his removal may come across as fundamentally undemocratic. The decision should ideally be left to the people, not to tech billionaires. However, Starmer's alleged actions are reprehensible and there must be an inquiry into his conduct. No amount of crying "interference" can take away from this fact. The lives of too many young girls have been destroyed forever and if Starmer is found complicit, there must be consequences. That's what democracy is all about.

Meanwhile, Elon Musk may come across as overzealous in this matter and may be accused of making efforts towards government change, but to call him the George Soros of the right—as many are doing—is not correct. Musk is openly advocating a cause, which should get the world's attention. Justice must be done to the victims. No amount of deflecting attention will take away from the fact that horrific sexual crimes against children were committed. In comparison, George Soros operates from behind the scenes, through his innumerable fronts, with money making being one of his primary motives, apart from his zeal to remake the world according to his own worldview. There is no comparison between the two. In fact, Elon Musk is doing a service to the world. If his outpourings on X can make the UK government take action against Britain's Pakistani rape gangs, it will be a good deed done.

India's startup journey is not just a story of economic transformation—it is a narrative of hope, ambition, and a vision of Viksit Bharat where every individual, regardless of their background, has the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from the nation's progress.

As India marches toward its vision of becoming a developed nation by 2047, the Startup India initiative



JOYEETA BASU

Building a strong foundation for Viksit Bharat: India's startup ecosystem as a catalyst for growth

OPINION

TUHIN A. SINHA



India, with its rich entrepreneurial spirit and innovative mindset, is paving the way toward a Viksit Bharat (Developed India). Recognising the critical role startups play in economic growth, job creation, and fostering innovation, the Government of India launched the Startup India initiative on January 16, 2016. This initiative was designed to create a robust ecosystem that nurtures innovation, encourages investments, and propels startups to be key contributors to India's socio-economic development.

The Startup India Action Plan, unveiled to ensure the initiative's success, encompasses 19 targeted action items. These span three core pillars: Simplification and Handholding, Funding Support and Incentives, and Industry-Academia Partner-

ship and Incubation. By addressing challenges faced by startups and fostering collaboration across stakeholders, this comprehensive plan serves as a roadmap to transform India into a global startup hub.

TRANSFORMATIVE SCHEMES DRIVING INNOVATION

To support startups at various stages of their lifecycle, the government has introduced flagship schemes such as:

- Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS): This initiative ensures that startups have access to capital for growth and scaling.
- Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS): Targeting early-stage startups, this scheme provides crucial seed funding.
- Credit Guarantee Scheme for Startups (CGSS): It offers financial security and helps startups secure credit.

Complementing these financial measures are initiatives like the States' Startup Ranking, National Startup Awards, and Innovation Week, which collectively aim to build a vibrant and inclusive startup ecosystem.

Furthermore, platforms like the Startup India Hub

portal and Bharat Startup Knowledge Access Registry (BHASKAR) have digitized resources and fostered collaborations across stakeholders. These efforts ensure that the ecosystem benefits reach tier-2 and tier-3 cities, encouraging inclusive growth.

Empowering India's Workforce and Economy The impact of these initiatives is evident. Over 16.6 lakh direct jobs have been created by DPIIT-recognized startups across more than 55 industries. These industries span beyond technology into areas like agriculture, healthcare, and education, showcasing the diversity and potential of India's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Startups are not only transforming India's economic landscape but also contributing to gender inclusivity. Women now constitute nearly 64% of the agricultural labor force, and targeted programs aim to bring more women into leadership roles in entrepreneurship, thus bridging gender disparities.

HOLISTIC ECOSYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

Building an ecosystem that supports entrepreneurs from every corner of the country has been a cornerstone of the Startup India initiative. Efforts to achieve this include:

1. Capacity Building and Handholding: Workshops under the States' Startup Ranking Framework (SRF) and targeted sessions for incubators in non-metro regions have equipped entrepreneurs

with knowledge, mentorship, and tools to scale their ventures.

2. Outreach and Awareness: Programs aimed at increasing visibility and access to resources have been organized in collaboration with State and UT administrations. Initiatives like startup showcases allow budding entrepreneurs to pitch their ideas to investors, opening doors to funding and partnerships.

3. Ecosystem Development Events: Flagship events like the Startup Mahakumbh bring together entrepreneurs, investors, and mentors from across the nation to foster collaboration. Similarly, ASCEND workshops in the North-Eastern states focus on nurturing local talent and innovation.

4. International Linkages: With the institutionalization of the Startup20 Engagement Group under India's G20 Presidency, startups gained access to global markets, resources, and collaborative opportunities. This initiative positions India as a thought leader in the global startup ecosystem, driving cross-border partnerships and investments.

COLLABORATION AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Collaboration remains central to the success of the startup ecosystem. Platforms like the Startup India Hub and BHASKAR have enabled seamless interaction among entrepreneurs, investors, and policymakers.

ers. These digital tools ensure startups from tier-2 and tier-3 cities can access the same opportunities as their metropolitan counterparts, leveling the playing field for innovation.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ROAD AHEAD

While the Startup India initiative has achieved remarkable progress, the journey toward Viksit Bharat requires sustained efforts. Recommendations for enhancing the ecosystem include:

- Strengthening Regional Ecosystems: Establish localized incubation hubs to provide targeted support in tier-2 and tier-3 cities.
- Enhancing Global Collaborations: Expand international bridges to more countries, enabling startups to access diverse markets and technologies.
- Promoting Deep Tech and Sustainability: Encourage startups in emerging areas like artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and renewable energy to address critical challenges of the future.
- Facilitating Grassroots Innovations: Empower rural entrepreneurs through specialized programs and funding opportunities, fostering grassroots innovations.

STARTUP INDIA: A PATHWAY TO VIKSIT BHARAT

As India marches toward its vision of becoming a developed nation by 2047, the Startup India initiative

DIGITAL PRIVACY GETS LEGAL BOOST

India's Digital Personal Data Protection Act (2023) balances privacy with business needs, creating new roles like Consent Managers to empower users.

TDG EXPLAINER

The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, enacted on August 11, 2023, governs the processing of digital personal data in India. It balances individuals' rights to data privacy with the legitimate need for businesses and the state to process personal data. Its scope includes:

Processing digital personal data within India. Overseas processing connected to goods or services for individuals in India.

Exemptions for purely domestic or publicly available personal data.

The Act operationalizes these principles through a Data Protection Board and related enforcement mechanisms.

APPOINTMENT PROCESS OF DATA PROTECTION BOARD

A Search-cum-Selection Committee recommends candidates for the Chairperson and members. The committee includes:

- The Cabinet Secretary as chair.
- The Secretary of MeitY (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology).
- The Secretary of the Department of Legal Affairs.
- Two subject matter experts.

KEY COMPONENTS OF THE ACT AND RULES

1. Rights and Duties of Data Principals

Individuals, termed as Data Principals, are granted rights such as:

- **Access to Information:** Data Fiduciaries must provide details on personal data processing.
- **Correction and Erasure:** Individuals can request updates or deletion of their data.
- **Withdrawal of Consent:** Similar ease as granting consent is mandated for withdrawal.
- **Grievance Redressal:** Mechanisms to file complaints against non-compliance.

In turn, Data Principals are expected to provide authentic information, avoid frivolous grievances, and adhere to legal processes.

2. Obligations of Data Fiduciaries

Organizations handling data, referred to as Data Fiduciaries, must:

- Obtain clear and informed consent.
- Implement security safe-

guards (e.g., encryption, access control).

- Notify authorities and affected individuals promptly in case of a data breach.

3. Consent Management

Consent Managers, a novel feature, act as intermediaries enabling individuals to manage, review, or withdraw consent.

Consent Managers, as defined under India's Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDP Act), serve as intermediaries that empower individuals—referred to as Data Principals—to effectively manage their consent regarding the processing of their personal data. These entities provide accessible, transparent, and interoperable platforms through which individuals can give, review, and withdraw consent for data processing activities.

BENEFITS OF HAVING CONSENT MANAGERS:

1. Enhanced User Control and Transparency:

- Consent Managers enable Data Principals to have a clear understanding of how their personal data is being used. They facilitate informed decision-making by providing detailed information about data processing activities, thereby enhancing transparency.

Streamlined Consent Management:

- These platforms offer a centralized interface for individuals to manage their consents across various services and platforms. This streamlining simplifies the process of granting, reviewing, or withdrawing consent, making it more user-friendly.
- **Compliance Assurance for Organizations:** By utilizing Consent Managers, organizations can ensure that they obtain and manage user consent in compliance with the DPDP Act's requirements. This reduces the risk of non-compliance penalties and builds trust with users.

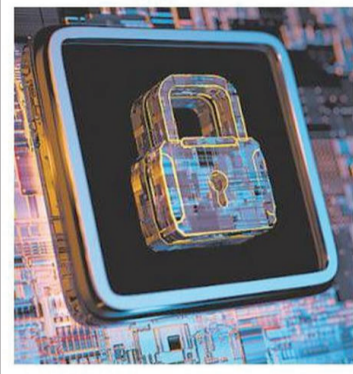
Empowerment of Data Principals:

- Consent Managers empower individuals by providing them with enhanced control over their personal data, aligning with the rights granted under the DPDP Act. This empowerment fosters a sense of security and trust in digital interactions.

Facilitation of Verifiable

Bill's ambit

The draft Bill narrows the scope of the data protection regime to personal data protection — a move welcomed by the industry



THIS ACT APPLIES TO:

- Personal data collected from users online
- Data collected offline, but later digitised

THE ACT EXCLUDES:

- Personal data processed by an individual for personal or domestic purpose
- Recorded personal data in existence for at least 100 years

tional security. Research and statistical purposes.

KEY PLAYERS

1. Data Principals

The primary beneficiaries, individuals enjoy enhanced rights to control their digital data. They can:

- Hold organizations accountable.
- Request remedies in case of breaches or misuse.

2. Data Fiduciaries:

Data Fiduciaries are entities that determine the purpose and means of processing personal data. This category includes organizations such as tech companies, financial institutions, and e-commerce platforms.

Imagine **FinServe Ltd.**, a financial services company that offers online banking and investment services. To provide personalized financial advice, FinServe collects and processes customers' personal data, including income, spending habits, and investment preferences.

OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE DPDP ACT:

Data Processing Principles:

FinServe must adhere to principles of purpose limitation (using data only for specified purposes), data minimization (collecting only necessary data), and ensuring data accuracy.

Consent Management: Before processing personal data, FinServe is required to obtain clear and informed consent from its customers.

Data Security Measures: Implementing appropriate technical and organizational measures to safeguard personal data against unauthorized access, loss, or destruction is mandatory.

Data Breach Notification: In the event of a data breach, FinServe must notify the Data Protection Board and the affected customers promptly.

Significant Data Fiduciaries: If FinServe processes data on a large scale, it may be classified as a Significant Data Fiduciary, requiring it to conduct Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) and annual audits.

Consider **Paytm**, a prominent digital payment platform in India. As a Data Fiduciary, Paytm collects and processes vast amounts of personal data, including transaction histories and financial details. Under the DPDP Act, Paytm is obligated to ensure data protection measures are in place, obtain user consent for data processing, and comply with data breach notification requirements.

GOVERNMENT AND ITS INSTRUMENTALITIES:

Government entities process citizens' personal data for various public programs and services.

The Ministry of Health

What is the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023?

- Aimed to safeguard personal data.
- Applies to both public and private sectors.
- Ensures data is used ethically and responsibly.

Key Features at a Glance

- Consent Requirement: Explicit consent needed for data processing.
- Rights of Individuals: Access, correction, and deletion rights.
- Penalties: Strict fines for data breaches and non-compliance.

Your Rights Under the Act

- Right to Access: Individuals can view their data held by entities.
- Right to Correction: Correction of inaccurate or incomplete data.
- Right to Be Forgotten: Deletion of data upon request.

Compliance Checklist for Businesses

- Implement robust data security measures.
- Regularly update privacy policies to reflect current practices.
- Conduct data protection impact assessments for new projects.

DPDP Act, 2023 vs. GDPR

- Similarities: Both acts prioritize consent and individual rights.
- Differences: DPDP for India, GDPR for EU.
- Breach Notifications: Both require prompt reporting, with potential differences.

Consequences of Non-Compliance

- Breaches: Unauthorized access, data theft, data loss.
- Penalties: Up to 4% of annual revenue or specific fines.
- Remedial Steps: Notify authorities, affected individuals, take corrective actions.

Data Handling Process Under the Act

- Collection: Collect data with clear consent.
- Consent: Ensure informed, specific, voluntary consent.
- Processing: Process data for its intended purpose.
- Storage: Store data securely and only as long as needed.
- Deletion: Responsibly delete unnecessary data.

Consent:

- These entities assist in obtaining verifiable consent, which is particularly important for processing data related to children and persons with disabilities.

Disability: The rules mandate the implementation of robust age verification processes to ensure that only individuals above the specified age threshold can access certain online services.

Data Minimization: Organizations are required to collect only the necessary data from children, avoiding the collection of sensitive information unless absolutely essential.

Enhanced Security Measures:

The rules stipulate that data processing entities must implement stringent security protocols to protect children's data from unauthorized access and breaches.

Transparency and Notice: Organizations must provide clear and accessible notices to children and their parents about data collection practices, ensuring informed consent.

MEASURES TO PROTECT CHILDREN'S PERSONAL DATA:

Parental Consent Requirement: Organizations must obtain verifiable parental consent before processing personal data of children under 18.

Age Verification Mechanisms:

Organizations must provide clear and accessible notices to children and their parents about data collection practices, ensuring informed consent.

2. State Processing and Exemptions

The Act allows government agencies to process personal data for benefits, services, or legal compliance under strict conditions. Exemptions are granted for:

- Public interest tasks like na-

Seven Principles of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023

01

Lawful Usage

Personal data should be used by organizations in a manner that is lawful, fair to the individuals concerned, and transparent to individuals.

02

Purpose Limitation

Personal data should be used for the purposes for which it was collected.

03

Data Minimization

Only those items of personal data that are required for attaining a specific purpose must be collected.

04

Accuracy of Personal Data

Reasonable effort should be made to ensure that the data of an individual is accurate and kept up to date.

05

Storage Limitation

Personal data is not to be stored perpetually by default. The storage should be limited to such duration as is necessary for the stated purpose for which personal data was collected.

06

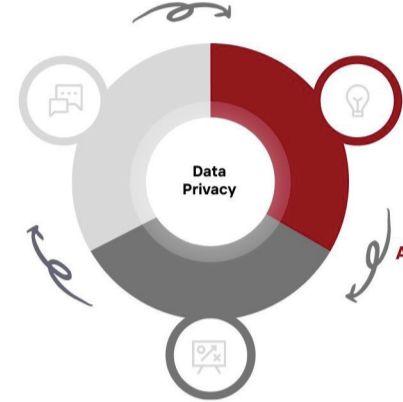
Reasonable Safeguards

Reasonable safeguards are to be taken to ensure that there is no unauthorized collection or processing of personal data. This is intended to prevent personal data breaches.

07

Accountability

The person who decides the purpose and means of processing personal data should be accountable for such processing.



launches a nationwide vaccination program and collects personal data, including names, contact information, and health records, to manage appointments and track vaccination coverage.

FRAMEWORK FOR DATA PROCESSING:

Lawful Processing: The Ministry can process personal data without obtaining consent when it is necessary for providing public health services, as per the DPDP Act.

Transparency and Security: The Ministry must process personal data in a lawful, transparent manner and implement necessary safeguards to protect data integrity and confidentiality.

Exemptions: Certain exemptions are provided for government processing, especially concerning matters of national security, law enforcement, and public order.

The **Aadhaar** program, managed by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), collects biometric and demographic data to issue unique identification numbers to residents. While facilitating various public services, UIDAI must ensure data protection, transparency, and security measures in compliance with the DPDP Act.

4. Data Protection Board

This adjudicative body ensures compliance, investigates breaches, and imposes penalties.

WHO BENEFITS MOST?

Consumers and Individuals: Enhanced Control: Individuals gain greater authority over their personal data, including rights to access, correction, and erasure.

Legal Recourse: In cases of data misuse or breaches, individuals have clear avenues for grievance redressal.

A user of a social media platform can request the deletion of their data if they choose to discontinue using the service, ensuring their personal information isn't retained unnecessarily.

Businesses with Strong Compliance:

Companies that implement robust data protection measures are

likely to build and maintain consumer confidence.

Risk Mitigation: Adherence to the DPDP Act helps businesses avoid substantial penalties associated with non-compliance.

An e-commerce platform that transparently manages user data and promptly addresses data protection concerns can attract more customers, knowing their information is secure.

Government: By adhering to transparent data handling practices, the government can enhance citizens' trust in public welfare schemes and services.

Efficient Service Delivery: Structured data processing frameworks enable more efficient and secure delivery of public services.

A government health portal that securely manages patient data can improve healthcare delivery while assuring citizens of their data's confidentiality.

Tech Solution Providers: Increased Demand: The need for compliance solutions, such as consent management platforms and cybersecurity services, is expected to rise.

Market Growth: Providers offering data protection tools are poised to experience growth as businesses seek to comply with the DPDP Act.

A company specializing in consent management solutions may see increased adoption of its services by organizations aiming to streamline user consent processes in line with the new regulations.

INTERESTING COMPARISONS

India vs. Global Standards: Alignment with GDPR: The DPDP Act shares similarities with the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in areas like consent requirements and data subject rights.

Key Differences: India's law is comparatively lenient regarding cross-border data transfers and provides certain exemptions for public interest tasks.

Unlike the GDPR, which imposes strict conditions on data transfers outside the EU, the DPDP Act permits cross-border data transfers unless restricted by the Indian gov-

ernment.

Penalties: DPDP Act: Penalties are capped at Rs 250 crores (approximately \$30 million) per breach.

GDPR: Fines can reach up to 4% of a company's global annual revenue, potentially amounting to billions for large corporations.

A multinational tech company facing a data breach could incur a maximum fine of Rs 250 crores under the DPDP Act, whereas under the GDPR, the fine could be significantly higher, depending on global revenue.

Consent Manager Model: Innovation: The DPDP Act introduces the role of Consent Managers, accountable to individuals (Data Principals) to manage their consent across various platforms.

Global Standout: This model fosters accountability and simplifies user consent management, distinguishing it from frameworks like the GDPR.

An individual can utilize a Consent Manager to oversee and modify their consent preferences across multiple online services, ensuring consistent application of their data privacy choices.

CONCERNS AND CRITIQUES

Broad Exemptions: Government processing under public interest or security clauses has raised fears of potential misuse and surveillance.

Operational Costs: Small and medium enterprises may struggle with the costs of compliance, including security measures and data audits.

Ambiguities in Enforcement: The discretion granted to the Data Protection Board in penalty determination may lead to inconsistent enforcement.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The DPDP Act, complemented by its 2025 Rules, is a significant step in regulating personal data processing in India. While it empowers individuals and strengthens governance, careful implementation is needed to address concerns and ensure equitable compliance across stakeholders.

Compiled by Rubira Talapatra

India's Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 for Businesses

Safeguard User Data Implement security measures to protect user data with third-party processors.	Data Protection Board Authority Summon, examine, recommend sanctions for data breaches.	Minor Consent Guardian approval for processing data of minors and physically disabled.	Appoint DPO Appoint Data Protection Officer (DPO) for enhanced transparency.
Controlled Transfers Central govt. will oversee data export beyond India.	Rapid Breach Alert Notify Data Protection Board & affected users on data breaches.	Hefty Penalties Up to Rs 250 crore penalties for breach severity.	Fair Appeals Telecom Disputes Settlement & Appellate Tribunal will resolve Data Protection Board (DPB) decision disputes.

SUPREME COURT TO HEAR PETITIONS CHALLENGING UPPER-AGE LIMIT IN SURROGACY LAWS ON FEBRUARY 11

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Arun Muthuvel Versus Union Of India And Ors and others is set to hear the petitions filed challenging the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021 and Surrogacy (Regulation) Rules, 2022 on the specific issue which relates to specific issue of upper-age limited and cases where the surrogacy process has already commenced for interim relief.

Under the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021, the age prescribed for the woman is 23 to 50 years and the age prescribed for the man is 26 to 55 years.

The Union of India has asked for filing the written submissions.

The bench comprising of Justice B.V. Nagarathna and Justice Satish Chandra Sharma was hearing the present matter.

The bench in the case passed the order after hearing the issues briefly.

The court was also informed that prior to the enforcement of the 2021 Act, there were cases where the intending couple had already initiated the surrogacy process. They will be at a loss if the matter is not heard soon.

It was also stated before the court that there are judgments



of the high courts which have interpreted the provisions of the 2021 Act as prospective and therefore, given the benefit to those couples that had initiated the process.

On the other hand, the other side opposed the petition filed stating that any benefits which being contrary to the provisions cannot be granted.

Two-year ago, the bench comprising of Justices Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan, Justice Nagarathna orally expressed reservations on the petition filed by petitioners wanting to have a child to surrogacy beyond the upper-age limited prescribed under the legislation.

The bench headed by Justice Nagarathna stated, 'There being cases where people in their 60s are saying they want children. It being so difficult to bring up a child at that age. Once a child starts walking, you know how difficult it is to monitor a child. Under Adoption Act, there is a cap on the combined age for adoption. In their 60s, having a child is very difficult. Thus, the child would not know whether to call them as a father or grandfather. We have to look at the child's point of view, whether they can take care of the child. It is very easy to bring a child into this world, but rear a child, educate a child

is not easy. What about the rights of the child? Even normal people will think 100 times before having in kid in their late 30s or 40s.'

The petitions have been filed before the Supreme Court wherein it challenged the the 2021 legislation and the 2022 Rules along with other issues.

The main petition is filed by an infertility specialist from Chennai, Dr. Arun Muthuvel, through Advocate Mohini Priya and Advocate Ameyavikrama Thanvi.

THE ISSUES HAVE BEEN RAISED:

1. Whether the prohibition of commercial surrogacy under

Section 4(ii)(b) and Section 4(ii)(c) of the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021 is constitutional?

2. Whether the right of a couple to avail surrogacy being restricted to married couples between the age of 23 to 50 years in case of female and between 26 to 55 years in case of male as provided in Section 4(iii)(c)(I) read with Section 2(1)(h) of the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, is constitutional?

3. Whether the right of a single woman to avail surrogacy is being restricted to only widows or divorcees between the ages of 35 to 45 years as provided under Section 2(1)(s) of the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act 2021, is constitutional?

4. Whether the right of an intending couple to avail surrogacy being restricted to only those couples who do not have a surviving child as provided under Section 4(iii)(c)(II) of the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act 2021, is constitutional?

5. Whether individuals who initiated the process of availing surrogacy which being prior to the enactment of the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021 have any right to avail surrogacy in a manner beyond the scope of the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021, save for cases falling within the ambit of Section 53 of the Act?

Supreme Court: Vehicle seized under NDPS Act not liable to be confiscated if accused used it without owner's knowledge or connivance

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Bishwajit Dey Versus The State Of Assam observed and has ruled that a vehicle seized under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, NDPS Act for the alleged transport of drugs cannot be confiscated if the owner of the vehicle can prove that it was used by the accused person without the owner's knowledge or connivance.

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

The bench in the case stated that the seized vehicle is not liable to confiscation if the owner of the seized vehicle can prove that the vehicle was used by the accused person without the owner's knowledge or connivance and that he had taken all reasonable precautions against such use of the seized vehicle by the accused person.

The court also clarified that the seized vehicles can be confiscated by the trial court only after the trial is completed i.e., when the

It also been stated by the court that even where the Court is of the view that the vehicle is liable for confiscation, it must give an opportunity of hearing to the person who may claim any right to the seized vehicle before passing an order of confiscation.

accused is convicted or acquitted or discharged, and an opportunity of hearing to the person who may claim any right to the seized vehicle before passing an order of confiscation.

The court stated that, 'The said court is of the view that the seized vehicles can be confiscated by the trial court only on conclusion of the trial when the accused is convicted or acquitted or discharged.'

It also been stated by the court that even where the Court is of the view that the vehicle is liable for confiscation, it must give an opportunity of hearing to the person who may claim any right to the seized vehicle before passing an order of confiscation.

BACKGROUND OF THE CASE:

The court in the case was hearing an appeal filed against the decision of Gauhati High Court upholding the decision of trial court, wherein the court refused to allow interim release of the Appellant's seized truck under Section 451 and Section 457 of Code of Criminal Procedure, CrPC.

The judgement authored by Justice Manmohan, while setting aside the decision of High Court held that the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, NDPS Act does not prohibit the interim release of vehicles that are seized for allegedly transporting contraband.

Adding to it, the court stated that the seized vehicle can be released under Section 451 and Section 457 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, CrPC.

Supreme Court: Until sale deed is registered, ownership of immovable property is not transferred

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Sanjay Sharma v. Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd. observed and has reiterated that the ownership of an immovable property does not get transferred until the sale deed is registered.

The court stated that the mere transfer of possession and payment of consideration will not transfer ownership, unless the sale deed is registered.

The bench comprising of Justice B.V. Nagarathna and Justice NK Singh was hearing the present matter.

The bench while referring to section 54 of Transfer of Property Act, 1882 observed that the provision stipulated that the transfer can be made only through a registered instrument and the use of term 'only' in the provision signified that, for tangible immovable property valued at one hundred

The bench rejected the said objection wherein noting that there was no registered sale deed in favour of the objector. He claimed right which being on the basis of an agreement to sell, which was unregistered and a General Power of Attorney.

rupees or more, a sale becomes lawful only when it is executed through a registered instrument.

The court in the case observed that, 'Where the sale deed requires registration, ownership does not pass until the deed is registered, even if possession is transferred, and consideration is paid without such registration. Thus, the registration of the sale deed for an immovable property is essential to complete and validate the transfer. Until registration is effected, ownership is not transferred.'

The court also referred to the judgement in the

case Babasheb Dhondiba Kute vs. Radhu Vithoba Barde, wherein the court held that, 'the conveyance by way of sale would take place only at the time of registration of a sale deed in accordance with Section 17 of the Registration Act'. Till the registration is made, there is no conveyance in the eye of law.

The bench made the said observations while approving the auction sale in terms of the SARFAESI Act.

Therefore, an objection is raised by a party, who claimed to be in possession of a portion of the secured

asset.

The bench rejected the said objection wherein noting that there was no registered sale deed in favour of the objector. He claimed right which being on the basis of an agreement to sell, which was unregistered and a General Power of Attorney.

The court observed that neither the bank nor the auction purchaser could have detected it despite exercising due diligence.

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case stated that all the documents relied upon by respondent No.2 to claim ownership of the basement of the secured asset are unregistered documents and fail to meet the requirements of a valid sale under Section 54 of the Transfer of Property Act. Thus, the Respondent No.2 did not have any title to claim the ownership of the basement of the secured asset.

Supreme Court: Borrower's right of redemption available only till notice for sale of mortgaged asset is published under SARFAESI Act

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Sanjay Sharma v. Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd observed and has stated that the right of a borrower to redeem the secured asset can be exercised only till a notice for the sale of the mortgaged property is published in terms of Rule 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

The court in the case observed that till the 2016 amendment to the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, SARFAESI Act, thus, the borrower had the right to redeem the mortgaged property till the sale or transfer of such secured asset. However, after the amendment to Section 13(8) of the SARFAESI Act, the right of redemption can be exercised only till the publication of sale



notice.

The bench comprising of Justice B.V. Nagarathna and Justice NK Singh was hearing the present matter.

The bench in the case observed and has set aside the judgement of Delhi High Court which cancelled the auction sale of a secured asset.

The bench noted that the bank had granted

ample opportunities to the borrower to redeem the mortgage by clearing the dues.

The court also reminded that the right of redemption is not unfettered.

The counsel appearing for the respondent No.2 vehemently argued before the court that respondent No.2 has to have the right of redemption of the property on payment

The bench noted that the bank had granted ample opportunities to the borrower to redeem the mortgage by clearing the dues.

of the dues. The said right is not unfettered and there is a statutory limitation prescribed to it. As per the unamended Section 13(8) of the SARFAESI Act, the right of the borrower to redeem the secured asset was available till the sale or transfer of such secured asset.

The bench observed that the right of redemption available to the borrower would be available only till the date of publication of the notice under Rule 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Supreme Court Collegium recommends elevation of Patna HC CJ Vinod Chandran as SC judge

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Collegium has recommended the elevation of Justice K Vinod Chandran, the Chief Justice of the Patna High Court, as the judge of the Supreme Court.

On November 08, 2011, Justice K. Vinod Chandran was appointed as a judge of the Kerala High Court. On March 29, 2023, Justice K. Vinod Chandran was elevated as the Chief Justice of the High Court of Judicature at Patna and he has been functioning as the Chief Justice of that High Court since then. The Supreme Court

Collegium while recommending the name of him considered the fact that there being no representation on the Bench of the Supreme Court from the Kerala High Court.

The Supreme Court Collegium noted that with the retirement of Justice CT Ravikumar last week, there is no judge from Kerala at the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court Collegium bench headed by Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna noted that during his long tenure as a judge, Justice Vinod Chandran 'has acquired significant experience in diverse fields of law.'

Supreme Court: Offence of grievous hurt by dangerous weapons under Section 326 of IPC can be compromised in exceptional circumstances

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case H.N. Pandakumar Versus The State Of Karnataka observed that while section 326 (punishment for grievous hurt by dangerous weapons) of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, IPC is non-compoundable, thus, the court can, in exceptional circumstances, invoke its inherent power to give effect to compromise.

The court stated that such kind of circumstances also include voluntary settlement between the parties.

The court in the case stated that, 'In light of the amicable settlement and the complainant's



unequivocal consent, as evidenced by the Interlocutory Application, the said court finds it appropriate to allow the present M.A. While the offense as stated under section 326 of Indian Penal Code, IPC is non-compoundable under the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code, CrPC 1973, thus, the exceptional circumstances of this case, including the voluntary

settlement between the parties, warrant the exercise of this Court's inherent powers in order to give effect to the compromise.'

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

The bench in the case was hearing an application filed in an appeal upholding the conviction of the present petitioner.

In the present matter, a complaint was filed wherein it alleged that the accused persons had formed an unlawful assembly and assaulted the complainant and his family members, causing grievous injuries.

The Trial Court convicted the accused persons for the

offence of grievous hurt. As the present matter reached the High Court, it reduced the sentence to one year and instead enhanced the compensation amount.

Aggrieved with the same, the accused person or petitioner filed a Special Leave Petition.

Last year, the court dismissed the same in his favour.

The petitioner filed an application seeking relief for compounding the said offence. It being the case of him that a compromise was reached between the parties and all the disputes have been amicably resolved.

The complainant had also supported the case of petitioner.

The court considered several factors which includes the close proximity within which both the parties reside and that any lingering hostility will affect the neighbourhood.

The court observed that, 'The complainant and the petitioner reside in close proximity, with only a road separating their houses, making it essential to maintain a peaceful relationship between the two families. Thus, the parties are also distantly related, and any lingering hostility is likely to disturb the social fabric of their neighbourhood. The compromise covers not only the criminal case but also related property disputes, including the right of way, which had

been a point of contention for years. The applicant or petitioner's commitment to paying the agreed compensation reflects a genuine effort to end the discord and uphold the terms of the settlement.'

Further, the court also highlighted that the support of the complainant in this regard reflects the voluntary nature of this dispute.

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case observed and has allowed the present application and the sentence was reduced to the period already undergone.

Accordingly, the court allowed the present application.

TOP OF THE DAY

CHINESE MONEY RUSHES OFFSHORE VIA HONG KONG MF

HONG KONG: Chinese investors are buying up large amounts of Hong Kong mutual fund products that invest overseas, particularly bonds, after authorities expanded a cross-border trading channel this month and opened for them an avenue to get better yields.

Several mutual funds that are registered in Hong Kong and allowed to market products to mainland investors were sold out with 24 hours of opening for subscription at the beginning of the year, fund statements show.

TAIWAN PROBES CHINESE SHIP OVER CABLE DAMAGE

Taipei: Taiwan is investigating whether a cargo vessel linked to China was responsible for damaging an undersea cable that serves as a critical internet link for the island, the New York Times reported. The Taiwanese Coast Guard revealed that seven Chinese nationals were aboard the ship, which is suspected of causing damage to the Trans-Pacific Express Cable. This incident underscores Taiwan's vulnerability to potential disruptions in its critical infrastructure, especially as tensions with China continue to rise.

The damaged cable, which also connects to South Korea, Japan, China, and the United States, is one of more than a dozen fibre-optic cables that help maintain Taiwan's connectivity. Chunghwa Telecom, Taipei.

INDIA HANDS OVER SCHOOL BUILT UNDER HICDP TO NEPAL

KATHMANDU: India has handed over to Nepal a school building built as a High Impact Community Development Project. The building of Shree Bhimgitthe Secondary School, Baglung, was formally handed over to the school management committee on Tuesday, the Embassy of India said in a statement here. The project was taken up as a High Impact Community Development Project (HICDP) and was implemented through the District Coordination Committee, Baglung. "The Government of India's grant under 'Nepal-India Development Cooperation' was utilized for the construction of school building and other allied facilities.

SRI LANKA TO FOCUS ON STRONGER CRISIS RECOVERY

Colombo: Sri Lanka will focus on stronger recovery this year after the island nation posted real GDP growth of 5% in 2024, the highest in seven years, its central bank chief said on Wednesday, hoping to accelerate a rebound from its worst financial crisis in decades. Sri Lanka's economy crumpled under a severe foreign exchange crisis in 2022, but has posted a faster than expected rally after it secured a \$2.9 billion International Monetary Fund (IMF) program in March 2023 and completed a \$25 billion debt restructuring in December.

ISRAELI STRIKES KILL DOZENS IN GAZA AMID STEPPED UP CEASEFIRE PUSH

An airstrike killed at least 10 people in a multi-storey house in the Sheikh Radwan neighborhood of Gaza City.

AGENCIES
CAIRO

Israeli military strikes across Gaza killed at least 22 people on Wednesday, Palestinian medics said, as international mediators pursued efforts to seal a ceasefire and hostage exchange deal between Israel and Hamas.

An airstrike killed at least 10 people in a multi-storey house in the Sheikh Radwan neighborhood of Gaza City, while another killed five in the nearby Zeitoun suburb, medics said.

In Deir Al-Balah city in central Gaza, where hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians are sheltering, and in Jabalia, the largest of Gaza's eight historic refugee camps, a total of seven people were killed, they said.

Israel's military said it struck Hamas militants operating in a school in Jabalia, and that it took steps to minimise risk to civilians.

Such mass casualties are a daily occurrence in Gaza, where more than 46,000 Palestinians have now been killed in Israel's 15-month-long assault against Hamas, according to health officials in the enclave.

As Israel continued its bombardments, the United States, Qatar and Egypt

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS



Smoke billows as buildings lie in ruin in Beit Hanoun, in the Gaza Strip, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, as seen from southern Israel, January 8, 2025. Source: Agency

- Strikes hit a multi-storey house in Gaza City (10 killed) and Zeitoun suburb (5 killed).
- Hospitals in Gaza face closure due to fuel shortages, Israel denies hindering aid.
- 7 more people killed in Deir Al-Balah and Jabalia refugee camp.
- Israeli campaign began after Hamas attacked southern Israel on October 7, 2023, killing 1,200 and capturing 250+ hostages.
- Over 46,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's 15-month assault on Hamas.
- Severe humanitarian crisis in Gaza, with displaced families facing flooding and shortages.
- International efforts, led by the U.S., Qatar, and Egypt, aim for a ceasefire and hostage exchange.
- Ceasefire negotiations stalled.

were making intensive efforts to reach a ceasefire deal, with one source close to the talks saying this was the most serious attempt to reach a deal so far.

The outgoing U.S. administration has called for a fi-

nal push for a deal before President Joe Biden leaves office, and many in the region view president-elect Donald Trump's inauguration on Jan. 20 as an unofficial deadline.

"Things are better than ever before, but there is no

deal yet," the source told media.

Trump's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff said overnight he hopes to have good things to report about Israeli hostages held by the time Trump is sworn in as president.

'Imran offered house arrest deal'

AGENCIES
ISLAMABAD

Talks between the Pakistani government and opposition parties, particularly PTI, have hit a roadblock, with allegations of government interference and restrictions on the party's access to its jailed leader, Imran Khan, Dawn reported.

Aleema Khan, the sister of the PTI founder, recently revealed that the former prime minister was offered a deal to move from Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail to house arrest at his Banigala residence.

In a statement on Tuesday, Aleema Khan claimed that several offers had been relayed to her brother via Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur. These offers, she said, came with the suggestion that Imran Khan remain silent, possibly in exchange for house arrest. However, she questioned how her brother could accept such a deal after spending so long in jail.

Last week, both the government and PTI denied any official offer of transferring Imran Khan to Banigala or any other location. Aleema's claims have added to the

Aleema Khan, the sister of the PTI founder, recently revealed that the former prime minister was offered a deal to move from Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail to house arrest at his Banigala residence.

already tense situation surrounding the negotiations.

Despite the high-stakes nature of these discussions, PTI negotiators have been pushing for "unmonitored access" to their leader, as talks continue with the government. After negotiations resumed in late December, PTI representatives met Imran Khan on Tuesday but were dissatisfied with the conditions, particularly the alleged surveillance of the meeting room.

PTI leader Omar Ayub made it clear that the team had specifically requested unmonitored access, but government representatives had denied the request. Ayub claimed that the presence of spy equipment hindered their discussions with the jailed leader, preventing open and candid dialogue.

Furthermore, Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, the PTI interim chairman, emphasised the need to resolve tensions,

urging the government not to make an issue out of the failure to provide written demands from the opposition.

PTI had already shared its two main demands -- the release of political prisoners and the formation of a judicial commission to investigate the violence on May 9 and November 26. Barrister Salman Akram Raja expressed concern over the government's refusal to allow unrestricted access to Imran Khan, citing it as an indication of questionable government intentions, reported Dawn.

Meanwhile, Imran Khan has turned to the legal system to address what he deems inhumane treatment in jail. The former prime minister filed a petition in Islamabad's Special Judge Central Court, accusing jail authorities of denying him basic rights under the jail manual and related laws.

Ailing former B'desh PM Khaleda Zia departs for London

AGENCIES
DHAKA

Khaleda Zia, the chairperson of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), departed for London on Tuesday evening for medical treatment. At 11:46 pm, she left Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on a special Royal Air Ambulance sent by the Emir of Qatar, Dhaka Tribune reported.

Khaleda Zia was accompanied by her doctors, family members, and work assistants, with a team of doctors from the Qatari government also aboard the flight.

The Emir of Qatar's Royal Air Ambulance had arrived in Dhaka on Monday evening at 7:40 pm to transport Khaleda



The special air ambulance transporting BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia to London included four Royal Qatari doctors and paramedics to ensure comprehensive medical care during the journey. Source: Agencies

Zia. Prior to her departure, a large number of BNP leaders and activists gathered near her residence, Firoza, in Gulshan to see her off.

The crowd had started to form as early as 7 pm on Tuesday, eagerly anticipating her departure for medical treatment. Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, BNP Secretary General, entered Firoza around 6:15 pm, where

Pakistan's trade route with China remains blocked for fifth day

AGENCIES
HUNZA

Pakistan's critical trade route with China remained blocked for the fifth consecutive day on Tuesday as thousands of people continue to hold protest against prolonged power outages in the mountainous region, VOA News reported.

The organizers of the sit-in in Hunza in Pakistan-occupied Gilgit Baltistan have vowed to continue their protest until their demands are met. Rally leaders spoke about the persistent inadequate power supply in the region, noting that people face up to 23-hour electricity outages amid the winter season.

Both men and women participated in the protest amid the average daytime temperatures of -4°C and nighttime temperatures of -10°C, VOA News reported citing rally participants.

Rahim Aman, a Hunza resident, said that there was a substantial increase in protesters. He further said that female activists were seen

Lebanon to hold presidential vote

AGENCIES
BEIRUT

Lebanon's parliament will try to elect a president on Thursday, with officials seeing better chances of success in a political landscape shaken by Israel's war with Hezbollah and the toppling of the group's ally Bashar al-Assad in neighbouring Syria.

The post, reserved for a Maronite Christian in the country's sectarian power-sharing system, has been vacant since Michel Aoun's term ended in October, 2022. None of the political groups in the 128-seat parliament have enough seats to impose their choice, and they have so far been unable to agree on a consensus candidate.

The vote marks the first test of Lebanon's power balance since the Iran-backed Shi'ite group Hezbollah - which propelled its then Christian ally Aoun to the presidency in 2016 - emerged badly pummeled from the war with Israel.

It takes place against a backdrop of historic change in the wider Middle East, where the Assad-led Syrian state exercised sway over Lebanon for decades, both directly and through allies such as Hezbollah.

Reflecting the shifts, Hezbollah and its ally the Shi'ite Amal Movement led by Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri have dropped their insistence on Suleiman Frangieh, their declared candidate for the last two years, and are ready to go with a less divisive figure,



Rice is thrown on newly-appointed General Joseph Aoun (C) as army commander, upon his arrival at his family's house in Sin El Fil, northeast of Beirut, Lebanon March 8, 2017. File Photo

HEZBOLLAH STILL SEEN WITH SWAY

Aoun, head of Lebanon's U.S.-backed army, would still need 86 votes because his election requires a constitutional amendment, as he is a still-serving state employee, Berri has said. A State Department spokesperson said it was "up to Lebanon to choose its next president, not the United States or any external actor."

"We have been consistent in our efforts to press Lebanon to elect a new president, which we see as important to strengthening Lebanon's political institutions," the spokesperson said. Hezbollah official Wafiq Safa said last week there was "no veto" on Aoun. But the sources said Hezbollah, designated a terrorist group by the United States, will not support Aoun.

three senior sources familiar with their thinking said.

Candidates in focus include army commander General Joseph Aoun - said by Lebanese politicians to enjoy U.S. approval - Jihad Azour, a senior International Monetary Fund official who formerly served as finance minister, and Major-General Elias al-Baysari - head of General Security, a state security agency.

Caretaker Prime Minis-

ter Najib Mikati said he felt happy because "God willing, tomorrow we will have a new president", according to a statement from his office. French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot also expressed hope in comments to France Inter radio, saying the election was "a prerequisite for the continuation of this dynamic of peace" and also for Lebanon's economic and social recovery.

Impeached Yoon's lawyers slam detention efforts

TDG NETWORK
SEOUL

Lawyers for impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol denounced efforts to detain him over his short-lived imposition of martial law, while the country's acting leader expressed concern Wednesday over a possible clash between law enforcement agents and presidential security personnel.

As anti-corruption officials and police prepared another attempt to detain Yoon following last week's failed effort, the presidential security service fortified Yoon's compound with barbed wire and rows of tightly placed vehicles blocking the path to his residence.

The Corruption Investigation Office for High-Ranking Officials and police say they will make a more forceful effort to detain Yoon, warning that they could arrest members of the presidential security staff if they obstruct efforts to seize the embattled president.



People in the Danyor area of Gilgit city protest at Main Danyor Chowk against prolonged power outages in the Gilgit-Baltistan region, Pakistan, on January 3, 2025. File Photo

Both men and women participated in the protest amid the average daytime temperatures of -4°C and nighttime temperatures of -10°C, VOA News reported citing rally participants.

making use of vehicles and loudspeakers to encourage people to participate in the rally. He said representatives of local political parties, traders and hotel associations were also present in the rally.

Local authorities tried to negotiate with the protesters. However, they were unable to convince them to disperse and restore traffic movement

along the Karakoram Highway connecting Pakistan to China. Hunza is situated on a roadway traversing the Pakistan-occupied Gilgit-Baltistan region which shares a border with Tibet.

According to traders, a number of containers carrying commercial goods were stuck on both sides of the highway due to the sit-in.

Rescuers battle cold, aftershocks to find survivors in Tibet

AGENCIES
BEIJING

Rescuers raced against time to search for survivors under the rubble of collapsed buildings in frigid weather amid hundreds of aftershocks, a day after a massive quake hit a Tibetan county while another county in the neighbouring Qinghai province was jolted by a 5.5 magnitude tremor on Wednesday.

Local officials said no casualties had been reported due to the Wednesday's quake that hit the Madoi County in Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture



People still trapped under rubble from Tuesday's earthquake in southern Tibet face a narrow window for survival, experts say. Photo: Xinhua News Agency

of Qinghai province of north-west China at 3:44 pm (Beijing time), tremors for which were also felt in north-eastern Nepal.

The epicentre was at a depth of 14 km, according to the China Earthquake Networks Centre (CENC).

THE KREWE PARADE



Members of the Funky Uptown Krewe parade as Twelfth Night kicks off carnival season in New Orleans, US. Source: Eduardo Muñoz

TRUMP MULLING ECONOMIC EMERGENCY TO IMPOSE TARIFFS

The move would allow President-elect to implement broad tariffs after threatening Panama, Greenland and Canada.

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

Donald Trump is mulling over the idea to declare a national economic emergency to impose widespread tariffs, CNN reports, as the president-elect escalates threats to seize the Panama Canal, acquire Greenland and force Canada into becoming a US state.

The emergency powers move would allow Trump to implement broad tariff measures against both allies and adversaries through the International Economic Emergency Powers Act, according to four sources familiar with the discussions.

The emergency powers would give Trump significant latitude in constructing a new tariff programme without having to demonstrate traditional national security justifications, the sources told CNN. "Nothing is off the table," one source familiar with the matter told the network, confirming that robust discussions about declaring a national emergency have taken place.

The exploratory consideration comes amid mounting international backlash after Trump refused to rule out using military or economic coercion regarding Panama and Greenland during a

TARIFF CONUNDRUM



Donald Trump

- Trump considering national economic emergency: To impose widespread tariffs using the International Economic Emergency Powers Act.
- Tariffs could target allies and adversaries: Giving Trump wide latitude without traditional national security justifications.
- Panama Canal issue: Trump demands U.S. control, claiming it's vital for national security and accusing China of operating it.
- Greenland and Denmark: Trump threatens tariffs on Denmark if it resists U.S. territorial ambitions over Greenland.
- Canada: Trump suggests using economic force to make Canada a U.S. state, which Trudeau rejects.
- Allied leaders reject Trump's claims: Panama and Denmark reaffirm sovereignty; Canada dismisses the idea of annexation.
- Advisers downplay rhetoric: Suggesting Trump's statements are more about negotiation than actual policy.

rambling press conference at Mar-a-Lago on Tuesday.

Trump claimed the Panama Canal was "being operated by China" and demanded its return to US control. "The Panama Canal was built for our military," Trump said. "Look, the Panama Canal is vital to our country."

The president-elect also threatened Denmark with punitive tariffs over Greenland, warning he "would tariff Denmark at a very high level" if the country resisted his territorial ambitions. His comments coincided with his son Donald Trump Jr's arrival in Nuuk, Greenland's capital, where he reportedly distributed "Make

Greenland Great Again" hats while claiming to be visiting as a tourist.

Allied leaders swiftly rejected Trump's positions. Panama's president, José Raúl Mulino, insisted "every square metre" of the canal would remain under Panamanian sovereignty. The Danish prime minister, Mette Frederiksen, reiterated that "Greenland is not for sale", emphasising the territory's future would be decided by its people.

Trump's aggressive stance extended to Canada, with suggestions of using "economic force" to make it a US state. The Canadian prime minister, Justin Trudeau, dismissed the idea, saying there "isn't a snowball's chance in hell that Cana-

da would become part of the United States".

Some Trump advisers attempted to downplay the rhetoric, telling the Wall Street Journal the comments were negotiating tactics rather than literal policy positions. Alexander Gray, a former Trump White House national security council chief of staff, characterised the approach as part of a broader strategy to "defend the western hemisphere against great power competitors".

US financial markets reacted negatively to the emergency powers news, with futures prices falling as investors processed the implications of potential widespread tariffs under the incoming administration.

Release Israeli hostages soon: Trump

AGENCIES
FLORIDA

US President-elect Donald Trump warned that "all hell will break out in the Middle East" if hostages held by Hamas in Gaza are not released before his inauguration on January 20, CNN reported.

While addressing a press conference at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida on Tuesday (local time), Trump said, "It will not be good for Hamas and it will not be good, frankly, for anyone. All hell will break out. I don't have to say anymore, but that's what it is," adding that "there should have never been" the October 7, 2023, attack by Hamas on Israel.



Sisters Dror and Naama Weinberg have been campaigning for the release of their cousin, Itai Svirsky, who was kidnapped from Kibbutz Be'eri on October 7. File Photo

Steve Witkoff, who has been chosen by Trump to serve as the special envoy to the Middle East, expressed an optimistic view about the state of negotiations to reach a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas that would secure the release of

the hostages, saying negotiators are "making a lot of progress," CNN reported.

He further said, "It's the president, his reputation, the things that he has said that are driving this negotiation, and so hopefully it'll all work out and we'll

save some lives." Earlier, it was reported that Biden administration officials were taking the lead in the talks, while their incoming Trump counterparts were being updated regarding the developments.

A senior Biden administration office offered a much more cautious tone after Trump and Witkoff's statement. Speaking to CNN, the official stated that the negotiations remain difficult. The official, who refused to speak about the status of the negotiations, insisted that despite Witkoff appearing to suggest that the deal was possible before January 20, the talks are challenging.

Hush money case: Court rejects Trump's plea

AGENCIES
NEW YORK

A New York appeals court judge has rejected US President-elect Donald Trump's request to postpone his Friday sentencing in the hush money case. Associate Justice Ellen Gesmer declined Trump's request after a brief hearing on the matter on Tuesday afternoon, CNN reported.

On Tuesday, Trump had requested to stay the proceedings in the hush money case - including his sentencing scheduled for Friday, while he appeals his conviction after Judge Juan Merchan rejected his demand to stop the sentencing.



Former U.S. President Donald Trump appears in court for his hush money trial at Manhattan Criminal Court in New York City on May 30, 2024. File Photo

Trump's attorney Todd Blanche, who has been selected as deputy attorney general in the US President-elect's new administration told the New York Appellate Division, First Department, on Tuesday, that it should stop Trump's sentencing,

acknowledging the situation was unprecedented, according to CNN report.

Blanche said the Supreme Court's decision on presidential immunity in July provides constitutional protection to Trump. Although Merchan denied two argu-

ments to vacate Trump's conviction, Blanche said that either of those arguments should grant them a stay of proceedings while the appeal is litigated.

Gesmer, who presided over the hearing, asked Trump's attorney whether there is any precedent for his request that presidential immunity could be extended to the US President-elect. In response, he said, "There has never been a case like this before, so no."

Manhattan District Attorney's Office Chief of Appeals Steven Wu said Trump's lawyers have not presented any argument that a sentencing hearing would disrupt the responsibilities

of Trump as US president-elect.

Wu said, "Now is the best time for this to happen here." He admitted the DA's office has agreed with legal team of Trump that it will be much more difficult to have a sitting president in for sentencing on a state matter.

Wu said, "The sentencing has to happen at some point, right?" Blanche called sentencing an "extraordinary" imposition on Trump and added that criminal sentencing is "a big deal" in someone's life even if it takes one hour. The judge interrupted him and said Merchan would have been happy to sentence Trump in July.

Thousands flee as US wildfires spread

AGENCIES
LOS ANGELES

California firefighters battled wind-whipped wildfires that tore across the Los Angeles area, destroying homes, clogging roadways as tens of thousands fled and straining resources as officials prepared for the situation to worsen early Wednesday.

The flames from a fire that broke out Tuesday evening near a nature preserve in the inland foothills north-east of LA spread so rapidly that staff at a senior living centre had to push dozens of residents in wheelchairs and hospital beds down the street to parking lot.

The residents waited there in their bedclothes as embers fell around them until ambulances, buses and even construction vans arrived to take them to safety.

UK universities join retreat from Elon Musk's X

AGENCIES
LONDON

Universities and other higher education establishments have joined a retreat among British institutions from Elon Musk's X social media platform, citing its role in spreading misinformation that fuelled race riots last year.

A media survey on Tuesday showed several universities have scaled back usage of X to the bare minimum

or quit completely, following scores of academics who have left the platform.

The role of X, formerly Twitter, came under the spotlight in Britain last year during violent racial disturbances.

Musk - a close aide to U.S. President-elect Donald Trump - has since called for Prime Minister Keir Starmer to be jailed and for anti-Muslim activist Stephen Yaxley-Lennon.



'X' logo is seen on the top of the headquarters of the messaging platform X, formerly known as Twitter, in downtown San Francisco, California, U.S., July 30, 2023. File Photo

Ukraine attacks oil depot serving air base for Russian nuke arms

AGENCIES
KYIV

Ukraine launched an overnight strike deep inside Russia that set fire to an oil depot that serves an air base for Russian nuclear bomber planes, the Ukrainian military said on Wednesday.

Russian regional governor Roman Busargin said the cities of Engels and Saratov, on opposite sides of the Volga river, had been subject to a "mass drone attack" and fire had broken out in Engels at an industrial site, which he did not name.

He later posted on Telegram that the blaze had spread and two firefighters had died trying to put it out. He declared a state of emergency in Engels, which has a population of some 200,000.

The Ukrainian military reported multiple explosions and a big fire at the Kristal oil



A huge fire rises from an oil depot in Engels, Russia, after a Ukrainian drone strike overnight into Wednesday. Source: X

depot, which it said provided fuel to the Engels-2 military airfield.

The strike "creates serious logistical problems for the strategic aviation of the Russian occupiers and significantly reduces their ability to strike at peaceful Ukrainian cities and civilian objects", it said in a statement on Telegram.

Ukraine deployed "long-range capabilities" in the attack, presidential adviser Oleksandr Kamyshin posted on X.

Anita Anand tops names of possible successors to Trudeau

AGENCIES
OTTAWA

As speculation grows about Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's future as leader of the Liberal Party, Anita Anand has emerged as a frontrunner to replace him. Indian-origin Anita Anand, who held the Transport portfolio in Justin Trudeau's government, is a prominent candidate among the names being put forward, along with important names like Dominic LeBlanc, Chrystia Freeland, Melanie Joly, François-Philippe Champagne, and Mark Carney. Here's all you need to know about her.

In 2021, Anita Anand, Canada's first woman Defence Minister. She has carved out a reputation for decisive leadership during turbulent times. She led the charge in overhauling the Canadian Armed Forces, tackling systemic issues such as sexual misconduct and lack of diversity. Her approach to reform has earned her respect across party lines and a strong following among Liberal Party loy-



Transport Minister Anita Anand speaks to reporters following a cabinet shuffle at Rideau Hall in Ottawa. File Photo

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF ANITA ANAND

A senior member of the Liberal Party, Ms. Anand has been a Member of Parliament since 2019 and has held several high-profile positions, including Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Minister of National Defence, and President of the Treasury Board. Serving as Canada's Minister of National Defence since 2021, she is credited with leading the country's efforts to modernise its military capabilities and ensuring robust support for Ukraine amid ongoing

geopolitical tensions. She assumed her current role as Minister of Transport in 2024. Since becoming Minister of Transport in 2024, Anand has focused on modernising Canada's infrastructure and improving roads, highways, and railways while prioritising the transportation sector's climate change and safety reforms. Addressing climate change has been central to her vision for Canada's clean and green transport sector.

alists. Born and raised in rural Nova Scotia, Anand moved to Ontario in 1985. According to the

Canadian government's website information, she and her husband, John, raised their four children in Oakville.

UK imposes asset freeze on 'extreme right wing group' Blood and Honour

AGENCIES
LONDON

Britain used counter-terrorism laws to freeze the assets of "Blood and Honour", an entity which it described as an "extreme right wing group" in what it said was a first use of its domes-

tic sanctions regime to target far-right terrorism.

The government said on Wednesday that all assets and economic resources in Britain belonging to, owned by or controlled by Blood and Honour must be frozen, adding that the sanctions designation extended

to the group's 28 Radio and Combat 18 aliases.

British police have warned for some time about the rise in far-right extremism and there have been substantial numbers of terrorism arrests linked to such ideologies in recent years.

MATT ON ROBERT'S 'BATMAN' MOVING IN JAMES GUNN'S DC UNIVERSE



AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

Director Matt Reeves believes Robert Pattinson starrer 'The Batman' can enter James Gunn's DC universe only if it 'makes sense.' The shooting of the sequel is expected to start this year, reported Variety.

As per Variety, recently James Gunn admitted contemplation to bringing 'The Batman' (2022) into his new DC Universe.

The Batman was directed by Matt Reeves. The actor recently addressed this matter at a podcast at the Golden Globes.

Director Matt Reeves believes Robert Pattinson starrer 'The Batman' can enter James Gunn's DC universe only if it 'makes sense.' The shooting of the sequel is expected to start this year, reported Variety.

Matt Reeves said, "It really comes down to whether it makes sense," Reeves said. "There was a story I wanted to tell. The epic crime saga. It's been important to me to play that out and James and Peter have been really great about that. They are letting us do that. What the future brings, I can't really tell you. I have no idea. My head is down right now on getting 'The Batman Part II' shooting, which is the most important thing."

On the topic of possible transfer of Robert in DC Universe, Reeves said, "I don't know, we will have to see where that goes."

Recently, Warner Bros. announced the new release date of 'Batman 2'. Marking a postponement of one year from its original release date, the film is now slated to release in theatres worldwide on October 1, 2027.

Netizens were disappointed with the delay. In response, James Gunn justified the delay and called it a common practice in the making of sequels. The director has defended the choice by recounting the

gap between the sequels of hit films like Alien, Incredibles, Terminator, Avatar, Top Gun and others.

"To be fair, a 5 year gap or more is fairly common in sequels," he wrote. "7 years between Alien and Aliens. 14 years between Incredibles. 7 years between the first two Terminators. 13 years between Avatars. 36 years between Top Guns. And, of course, 6 years between Guardians Vol 2 and Vol 3."

'WOLF MAN' AND 'UNSTOPPABLE' PREMIERES CANCELLED IN LA



AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

The makers of 'Wolf Man' and 'Unstoppable' have cancelled their premieres in Los Angeles due to a wildfire at Pacific Palisades, reported Deadline.

As per the report of Deadline, Universal has decided to cancel the 'Wolf Man' premiere at the TCL Chinese Theatre on Tuesday.

"Tonight's premiere of Wolf Man is cancelled due to sensitivities around the worsening weather situation in LA and related evacuations," read an email from a Universal PR rep as quoted by Deadline. The

The Pacific Palisades wildfire has expanded to beyond 1,200 acres forcing evacuations and posing a threat to several buildings in LA.

Wolf Man is slated to release in the theatres on January 17. Leigh Whannell directed and co-wrote the movie that stars three-time Emmy winner, Julia Garner, Sam Jaeger and Christopher Abbott.

The film follows the story of a family who lives at a remote farmhouse and is attacked by an unseen animal. As the night stretches on, the father begins to

transform into something unrecognizable.

Earlier in the day, the premiere of Jennifer Lopez was also cancelled in LA due to the Pacific Palisades fire.

Unstoppable is the feature directorial debut of 'Argo' editor William Goldenberg and tells the story of wrestler Anthony Robles, played by Jerome. Lopez stars as his mother.

The premiere was set to take place at the DGA Theater in West Hollywood, with arrivals scheduled for 5:30 p.m. for a 7 p.m. screening. Cast Lopez, Jerome, Don Cheadle, Michael Pena, Mykelti Williamson, Robles and his mother Judy Robles had been scheduled to attend, Deadline reported.

As per a CBS News Report news report, the Los Angeles Fire Department said the Palisades Fire started at 10:30 a.m. near 1190 North Piedra Morada Dr. on Tuesday.

With winds reaching at least 40 mph, the flames had quickly spread to about 200 acres and grew exponentially. The fire had burned over 2,921 acres. Authorities have evacuated about 30,000 people as flames threatened more than 10,000 homes.

PICTURE PERFECT

Revealing her plans for the next five years, Ananya Pandey in a conversation with Forbes India said, "Hopefully married. And have a happy, settled home, planning babies and lots of dogs." (Instagram)



JACKIE SHROFF-STARRER 'CHIDIYA UDD' TRAILER OUT

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Makers of the much-awaited crime drama series 'Chidiya Udd', starring actor Jackie Shroff, unveiled the official trailer on Wednesday, offering fans a glimpse into its gripping narrative.

The series, based on Aabid Surti's critically acclaimed novel 'Cages', revolves around the harsh realities of Mumbai's underworld.

Directed by Ravi Jadhav and produced by Harman Baweja and Vicky Bahri, the series features a cast that includes Bhoomika Meena, Sikandar Kher, Madhur Mittal, Mayur More, and Mita Vashisht.

'Chidiya Udd' follows the story of Seher (played by Bhoomika), a young woman from Rajasthan, who struggles to break free from the clutches of crime and power in Mumbai.



In a press note shared by Amazon MX Player, Jackie, who plays Qadir Khan in the series, said, "The world of Chidiya Udd is full of twists and turns. It's a place where survival is the ultimate game, and every character is fighting their own battle. Portraying Qadir has been a challenging yet rewarding

experience, and the audience will love it."

Bhoomika Meena, who portrays Seher, added, "Portraying Seher has been an incredible journey. She is a fighter, someone who refuses to succumb to the harshness around her. The challenges she faces in this unforgiving world are

daunting, but her strength and determination shine through. Chidiya Udd is a powerful story of survival, and I hope the audience finds themselves drawn to Seher's spirit and the choices she makes along the way."

Fans can watch 'Chidiya Udd' for free on Amazon MX Player starting January 15.

Armaan, Aashna make first public appearance post-wedding

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Popular singer Armaan Malik and his wife, influencer Aashna Shroff, were spotted at the airport for the first time after their wedding in December last year.

The couple, now Mr and Mrs Malik, were all smiles as they interacted warmly with photographers stationed at the airport.

In a video shared by paps, the newlyweds appeared excited about starting their new journey together. They took a moment to pose and smile at shutterbugs. Armaan also wished the paps a "Happy New Year" and also asked about their well-being, saying, "Aap log sab thik ho?" (Are you all doing well?).

For their first post-wedding appearance, Aashna wore a cream-colored coordinated outfit paired with white sneakers, a matching cap, and open hair. Armaan looked dapper in a blue



hoodie, denim jeans, and black sunglasses.

Earlier this month, the couple shared the happy news of their wedding on Instagram by posting stunning photos from their intimate ceremony. "Tu hi mera ghar" (You are my home), read the caption of his post.

Armaan and Aashna tied

the knot in a traditional ceremony on December 28, at an event that was attended by close friends and family. The couple had been dating for a few months before solemnizing their relationship.

For their special day, Aashna opted for a radiant orange-coloured lehenga

designed by Manish Malhotra. She complemented her bridal look with exquisite jewellery from the same designer. Armaan, equally stylish, was dressed in a bespoke Manish Malhotra outfit that perfectly complemented Aashna's, creating a harmonious and elegant look.

Yash shares glimpse of 'Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups'

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Actor Yash who gained fame with 'KGF' turns 39 today. On this occasion, the actor treated his fans with a 'Birthday Peek' video from his highly anticipated upcoming film 'Toxic - A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups.'

Yash's upcoming film is directed by Geetu Mohandas and is currently under production.

In the video, Yash, impeccably dressed in a crisp white suit while holding a cigar makes a commanding entrance in a club which is filled with partygoers. As



the actor walks to the centre of the club, every gaze in the room is drawn to him.

The teaser, brimming with bold and provocative moments, invites viewers

into an intoxicating and captivating world, a cinematic experience which is awaited by many.

Taking to his Instagram handle, KGF actor Yash

released a glimpse of Toxic and wrote 'Unleashed.'

Speaking on Yash and creating the world of Toxic, Director Geetu Mohandas said in a press note,

BRAIN PICKING



There are a lot of singers who cannot sing to save their lives. We have to accept it, but thank God there is such a thing as live shows.



- SONU NIGAM
(Indian Singer)

JOHN ABRAHAM ADVISES STUDENTS AT ANTI-DRUG AWARENESS EVENT



TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Bollywood actor John Abraham attended the anti-drug awareness campaign event in Navi Mumbai on Wednesday. The actor called himself an example of a disciplined life and encouraged students to stay away from drugs.

As part of a zero-tolerance policy towards drugs, Navi Mumbai has started a big campaign called 'Drug-Free Forever Navi Mumbai'.

John advised the students to lead a disciplined life and become a role model for their friends and colleagues.

During his speech at the anti-drug awareness campaign event, the 'Vedaa' actor said, "I personally am talking about myself and you should follow the ex-

ample. I have not touched drugs in my life. No smoking, no drinking and no drugs. Being very disciplined in life is very important. Become a role model for your colleagues and your friends. I don't have time to give a long speech but I will tell you just be very disciplined. Be a good citizen of this country and a good citizen of India. Maharashtra, Navi Mumbai wish you all the best. Train hard so you can get some biceps."

Following the conclusion of the anti-drug awareness campaign event in Navi Mumbai, actor John expressed his gratitude to Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis for gracing the occasion and congratulated Navi Mumbai Police Commissioner Milind Bharambe.

AKSHAY, VEER PAHARIYA-STARRER TRACK PAYS TRIBUTE TO BRAVE INDIAN SOLDIERS



TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

The much-awaited song 'Maaye' from Akshay Kumar's upcoming historical action thriller 'Sky Force' has been released.

The song shows the heart of the movie-balancing the passion of risking lives for the country with the strong emotional ties of family. It features intense war scenes, including wounded officers and emotional moments from the battlefield. The song also shows Sara Ali Khan as a pregnant woman and Nimrat Kaur in a moving role.

'Maaye' is sung by B Praak, with music given by Tanishk Bag-

chi and lyrics by Manoj Muntashir.

'Sky Force', set for release on January 24, 2025, just before Republic Day, stars Akshay Kumar as an Air Force officer, who is on a revenge mission following the death of fellow soldiers.

At the trailer launch earlier this month, Akshay shared his connection with the uniform, saying, "My father was in the army, so this feeling is inbuilt in me," Akshay explained, adding "When I wear a uniform, it automatically imbues me with strength. I've worn different uniforms before, but this is the first time I am donning the Indian Air Force uniform."

SUZUKI V-STROM 800 DE REVIEW | THE ABSOLUTE BEST BUY IN THE SEGMENT

SYED SHIRAZ SHAH

I generally publish reviews on a “first come first serve” basis, which means that the vehicle I have tested first will have its review published on priority, and the vehicle I reviewed subsequently will see its review getting published the following week. Unless, of course, there are restrictions due to an embargo placed by the manufacturer until a certain date. This time, however, there is no such embargo on any of the vehicles I have tested in the last 30 days, and this Suzuki V-Strom 800 DE review has jumped the queue primarily because of two reasons: 1) I have just returned the bike in the morning today, so my test observations are absolutely fresh in my mind, and 2) the Suzuki India Comms. & PR team is a gem. Allow me to elaborate.

See, with a few others, while trying to get a press unit from them, you have to wait for the planets to align perfectly; consult an astrologer, etc., but getting a press vehicle from Suzuki is a hassle-free affair. Not just that, most of the times I don't even have to ask—they proactively reach out to me. In fact, this particular unit was assigned to me within

review, shall we?
DESIGN & ERGONOMICS

The Suzuki V-Strom 800 DE is a bonafide adventure motorcycle in both form and function. While you'll read about the latter in a minute, I'll just devote a few lines to its design and ergonomics here.

It's a BIG motorcycle, ladies and gentlemen, but, somehow, it doesn't come across as intimidating. On the contrary, it has a friendly demeanour, which is something you can't say about most adventure motorcycles nowadays.

The proportions are just right—the beak doesn't resemble Pinocchio's nose; the tail isn't in a different continent either, and everything in between has been tightly, and neatly, packed together.

Ergonomics are also spot on for an ADV (adventure motorcycle). Even if you have the arms of a T-Rex, you will still sit fairly upright on this motorcycle. However, the tall 855 mm seat would require you to have a minimum inseam of 32 inches to be able to manage this motorcycle comfortably. The seat itself is immensely comfortable though, and I reckon derrieres of all shapes and sizes will have a good time on it.



Photos: Syed Shiraz Shah.

It's a BIG motorcycle, ladies and gentlemen, but, somehow, it doesn't come across as intimidating. On the contrary, it has a friendly demeanour, which is something you can't say about most adventure motorcycles nowadays.



former is more intrusive than the latter. If you want to know what my preferred overall setting for the road was on the V-Strom 800 DE, well here it is: TC off, Ride Mode A, and ABS 1. Yes, the V-Strom 800 DE also gets Suzuki's usual A, B, and C ride modes, and, if you claim to be an avid motorcyclist, and still don't know what those modes are, you, dear sir, don't be-

However, if I were in the market for an ADV today, I would still buy the DE in a jiffy because of its supreme highway manners. At triple digit speeds, it's more stable than your last relationship, and way calmer than your current partner. In 6th gear, there are absolutely ZERO VIBRATIONS at all speeds, except for some in the footpegs that you can feel at around 130 km/h onwards. However, they are neither bothersome, nor do they increase exponentially when you twist your right wrist a lot more...

1st, for the uninitiated) and add about 200 rpm to the figures mentioned for the 8R in that article.

FUEL EFFICIENCY / TOURING RANGE

The V-Strom 800 DE carries a 20-liter fuel tank, and “responsible” riding can even get you a touring range of over 400 km on a full tank, with the first reserve (approx. 5 L on this one) coming in on between 300-350 km.

VERDICT

If you're in the market for an adventure bike in this segment, chances are that you might not even test ride any other ADV after riding the Suzuki V-Strom 800 DE. Yes, it's that good.



a millisecond. Yes, I am not exaggerating. I asked if it's available, and the immediate answer I got was, “yes, it is; you may pick it up right away.” THAT'S how it should be. I so wish to name a few people who can learn from the Suzuki team...

Of course, that doesn't mean I will be writing a love story about the motorcycle in the name of a review. No, sir, the review as always will be unbiased and Suzuki India knows that. In fact, that is why it needed to be said. The unsung heroes deserve credit for the Jason-Bourne-like precision they work with. Now let's begin the

PERFORMANCE, RIDE QUALITY, AND HANDLING

I was picking up the V-Strom immediately after returning the GSX-8R, and, honestly, I was expecting the ADV to be a bit staid because it's heavier. However, I am happy to report that it's not even an ounce less entertaining than its sportbike sibling. It carries a bigger rear sprocket, which helps it to be almost as quick in the 0-100 km/h sprint, despite the extra weight, and the top speed is respectable as well.

It even handles beautiful-

ly for such a tall and heavy motorcycle. You won't buy an ADV for corner-carving shenanigans, but you must still please note that if your friend or partner is on the 8R and you're riding the V-Strom, on the road, they won't be able to get out of your sight...

But you'd not only overtake them, and every other sportbike, but also leave them in the dust the moment you encounter a bad patch of road or no road. See, I am not an ADV guy, but even I love flying over bad roads on an ADV when the rest of the traffic comes to a crawling pace. That's

actually the primary reason you buy such a motorcycle, especially in India. The V-Strom 800 DE's suspension simply decimates even the most nightmarish surfaces you can find in our country. In fact, not bumping into the traffic ahead would be your only reason to slow down for a speedbreaker or a crater.

Also, the suspension is fully adjustable. Yes, both the fork and monoshock can be adjusted for preload, rebound, and compression. Plus, the “range” of adjustment is so extensive that it would even allow professional rallyists to set it up

for competition use as well. Of course, you can switch the ABS off at the rear wheel, and even the Traction Control has one more additional mode to help you play in the dirt. It's called the G (for Gravel) mode, and you'll find it above the OFF setting (3-2-1-OFF-G). It's a shade more lenient than TC 1, but the few who will really go bonkers off the road on this bike will be switching the traction control off completely along with the rear ABS too.

For most users, there are two more (in addition to OFF) ABS modes: 2 and 1, where it's obvious that the

long on or even near a motorcycle...

There is something else that doesn't belong on a motorcycle nowadays: tube-tyres. Come on, Suzuki, these are totally unacceptable, especially from a manufacturer like you that introduced tubeless tyres on spoke wheels on a sub-ten-lakh-rupee ADV (V-Strom 650) in India in 2018. Back then, if I remember correctly, the next ADV to offer the tubeless-tyre-wired-wheel combo was almost twice as expensive. This is the only chink in the V-Strom 800 DE's otherwise impenetrable armour.



A big thanks to Prakbar Bansal & Shubham Sharma for assisting in this shoot!

GOING GREEN IN 2025: MAKING YOUR BUSINESS SUSTAINABLE WITH DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION



THE NEXT
ABHISHEKANAND

Sustainability isn't just a buzzword—it's a business necessity in 2025. With climate-conscious customers, eco-friendly regulations, and the global push for a greener future, the question isn't *if* your business should go green—it's *how*. Enter **digital transformation**, your ultimate toolkit for creating a sustainable and eco-smart business.

In my today's article, check how to merge sustainability with digital innovation to thrive in 2025.

1. GO PAPERLESS: DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION FTW

Still printing memos, contracts, or invoices? It's time to break up with paper. **Adopt Cloud Storage:** Use platforms like Google Drive, Dropbox, or OneDrive to store, share, and access files securely. **E-Signatures:** Tools like DocuSign or Adobe Sign eliminate the need for physical documents while speeding up workflows.

Digital Invoicing: Implement accounting tools like QuickBooks or Zoho Invoice for eco-friendly billing. *Fun fact:* Going paperless saves trees and cuts down on operational costs—a double win!

2. SMART ENERGY MANAGEMENT WITH IOT

Leverage **Internet of Things (IoT)** devices to optimize energy consumption at your workplace. **Install smart thermostats** to regulate office temperatures efficiently. **Use smart lighting systems** that adjust based on occupancy and daylight. **Monitor energy usage** with IoT sensors and software to identify inefficiencies. These innovations don't just save the planet—they save money, too.

3. SUSTAINABLE E-COMMERCE

For e-commerce businesses, digital tools can significantly reduce environmental impact.

AI-Optimized Logistics: Use AI-powered platforms like Route4Me to streamline delivery routes and minimize fuel consumption.

Eco-Friendly Packaging Tools: Offer customers options to choose recyclable or reusable packaging during checkout.

Carbon Offsetting: Integrate tools like Cloverly into your platform to allow customers to offset the carbon footprint of their purchases.

4. EMBRACE GREEN CLOUD COMPUTING

Traditional data centers consume immense amounts of energy. Transitioning to **green cloud services** is a sustainable alternative.

Choose providers like **Google Cloud, Microsoft Azure, or AWS**, which have renewable energy commitments. **Optimize server usage** to reduce unnecessary energy consumption. **Use edge computing** to cut down on bandwidth and improve energy efficiency.

5. OPTIMIZE SUPPLY CHAIN DIGITALLY

A sustainable supply chain is the backbone of a green business.

Blockchain Technology: Track and verify sustainable



sourcing with blockchain-based tools like IBM Food Trust.

AI for Demand Forecasting: Use AI-powered tools to reduce overproduction and minimize waste.

Inventory Management Software: Platforms like NetSuite or TradeGecko ensure smarter inventory practices.

6. PROMOTE VIRTUAL EXPERIENCES

Reduce the need for physical travel or products by embracing digital alternatives.

Host **virtual events** instead of in-person conferences using tools like Hopin

or Gather. **Offer AR/VR shopping experiences** that allow customers to try products virtually before buying.

Create **digital products**, such as e-books or online courses, to minimize physical resource use.

7. LEVERAGE AI FOR SUSTAINABILITY INSIGHTS

AI isn't just for automation—it's a powerful tool for driving sustainability.

Use AI for **carbon footprint tracking** and sustainability reporting.

Implement **predictive maintenance** to ensure

equipment runs efficiently, reducing energy waste.

Analyze customer data to create targeted campaigns that encourage eco-friendly choices.

8. SUSTAINABLE MARKETING WITH DIGITAL TOOLS

Traditional advertising often comes with a hefty environmental price tag. Go digital instead:

Social Media Campaigns: Platforms like Instagram or LinkedIn help you promote your green initiatives cost-effectively.

Programmatic Advertising: Use AI to target the

right audience, reducing wasteful spending.

Email Marketing: Tools like Mailchimp or ActiveCampaign ensure low-impact, high-ROI campaigns.

Pro tip: Use your marketing to tell the story of your green transformation—it builds trust and inspires your audience.

9. MEASURE, MONITOR, IMPROVE

You can't manage what you don't measure. Use digital tools to track and improve your sustainability efforts.

Sustainability Dashboards: Tools like Salesforce Sustainability Cloud provide real-time insights into your environmental impact.

Energy Tracking Apps: Monitor usage with tools like Energy Star Portfolio Manager. **Lifecycle Assessment Software:** Evaluate the full environmental impact of your products using platforms like SimaPro.

BONUS: ALIGN WITH ECO-CONSCIOUS CUSTOMERS

Your digital transformation doesn't end with internal processes. Engage with your customers and encourage green practices:

Offer **eco-loyalty re-**

wards for sustainable choices.

Educate them with **interactive content** about your green journey.

Foster a community around sustainability through social media and forums.

FINAL THOUGHT: A GREEN BUSINESS IS A SMART BUSINESS

In 2025, sustainability and technology go hand in hand. Digital transformation doesn't just make your business greener—it makes it more efficient, innovative, and customer-friendly. So, harness the power of digital tools, embrace eco-friendly practices, and lead the charge toward a sustainable future.

Because the planet doesn't just need heroes—it needs tech-savvy innovators like you.

This article is authored by Abhishek Anand, Founder of Skill Bud Technologies Pvt. Ltd., a company specializing in CGI Ads, Social Media and other related services including Website Development, AR, Web 3.0, Metaverse, and Digital Marketing. Abhishek is also an Author, Speaker, and Mentor, helping businesses grow through technology

Navigating Authenticity Concerns Amidst Exponential Growth in Q-Commerce



S SWAMINATHAN

Quick commerce, or Q-commerce, has gained immense popularity in the last four years, thanks to its convenience. The convenience of delivering groceries, personal care items, electronics, and other essentials within 10-30 minutes has helped Q-commerce become indispensable to urban consumers. An NIQ Shopper Trends 2024 report found that 31% of consumers in urban India use Q-commerce for groceries, while

39% rely on it for top-ups. In this business arrangement, strategically located dark stores across neighbourhoods have become essential to meet hyperlocal demand for fast deliveries. This speed and convenience have transformed the retail business model and paved the way for Q-commerce players like BlinkIt, Zepto, and Swiggy Instamart. While their entry into the industry has increased options for consumers, the intense competition is setting new standards for fast delivery. However, with speed taking precedence in the Q-commerce business model, concerns about product quality, authenticity, and shelf life have increased. These issues make it vital to maintain authenticity across platforms to build consumer trust and ensure long-term sustainability in the evolving industry.

WHY IS THERE A NEED TO BOOST AUTHENTICITY IN Q-COMMERCE?

Today's consumers demand speed and convenience from online retailers. This need for speed puts pressure on delivery fleets and management, who already deal with issues such as operational inefficiencies, optimization challenges, and delivery deviations.

As a result, cases of consumers receiving mislabeled and substandard products in categories such as beauty products, electronics, and health supplements are rising. These problems worsen due to the fragmented nature of the Q-commerce supply chain.

Typically, Q-commerce vendors work within shorter timelines, which makes it tough to ensure thorough quality checks



and supplier verification. These gaps could hamper consumer trust and impact their buying behavior. Hence, it is important to address these issues to retain customer trust in Q-commerce platforms.

Key Initiatives to Boost Authenticity in E-commerce Space

To address the growing consumer concerns, the government has implemented some measures

to ensure transparency and accountability in the Q-commerce supply chain. For instance, the Consumer Protection (E-commerce) Rules, 2020, require e-commerce platforms, including Q-commerce players, to offer information and address consumer grievances to promote fair trade practices.

Establishing trust in the Q-commerce space re-

quires a delicate balance between speed, agility, and transparency. While rapid delivery is essential, maintaining accuracy and reliability in order fulfillment is equally crucial. Businesses must ensure real-time visibility of inventory across dark stores to prevent stock-outs and enhance operational efficiency. Incorporating robust quality checks and leveraging digital tools like barcodes/QR codes can reassure consumers about product authenticity and safety.

MEASURES TO TACKLE COMMON AUTHENTICITY ISSUES

To address authenticity concerns, Q-commerce platforms must embrace a comprehensive approach that prioritizes traceability, transparency, and operational efficiency.

Transparency throughout the supply chain ensures seamless coordination and builds consumer confidence.

E-commerce players need to be proactive and encourage manufacturers to adopt globally recognized barcode standards which offer a reliable and scalable solution. Barcodes/QR codes governed by GSI standards enable each product to carry a unique identity, linked to vital details like the manufacturer, batch number, and expiry date. This ensures end-to-end visibility across the supply chain, helping platforms prevent counterfeit goods and empowering consumers to verify product authenticity instantly through simple scans.

Q-commerce players could promote consumer education on their platform by helping custom-

ers identify and report suspicious products. This insight could allow buyers to make an informed choice and help platforms enhance their reputation. By facilitating transparency, enabling standards-based master data, leveraging standardized product listing systems, Q-commerce players can not only streamline inventory management and improve order fulfillment accuracy but also meet regulatory requirements and ensure compliance. Transparency throughout the supply chain, from sourcing to delivery, coupled with seamless coordination, strengthens consumer confidence. By prioritizing these elements, Q-commerce platforms can build lasting trust while meeting the demand for speed and convenience.

The author is the CEO of GSI India.

Top 5 AI tools to look for in 2025

ANANDA TIRTHA DASA

As the world dives deeper into the digital age, artificial intelligence (AI) continues to emerge as a transformative force across industries. From securing identities to creating personalised marketing campaigns, AI tools developed are at the forefront of solving global challenges. These tools are not only addressing critical issues but also paving the way for new possibilities in healthcare, law enforcement, finance, and entertainment.

RISE OF AI TOOLS

The last decade has seen exponential growth in AI adoption. From powering customer service chatbots to predicting market trends, the use cases for AI are virtually limitless. Innovators are pushing boundaries, creating AI tools tailored to solve complex problems with precision and efficiency. In 2025, the spotlight is on solutions

that merge technology with real-world applications.

IMPACT ON VARIOUS INDUSTRIES

AI's influence spans across multiple sectors:

Law Enforcement: Enables smarter policing through deepfake detection, predictive analytics and real-time data intelligence.

Healthcare: Facilitates early disease detection and enhances patient care with personalised insights.

BFSI (Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance): Secures identities, combats fraud, and optimises operations.

Entertainment: Creates personalised content, enhancing audience engagement.

Telecommunications: Improves network reliability through predictive maintenance.

1. AUTHENTIFY

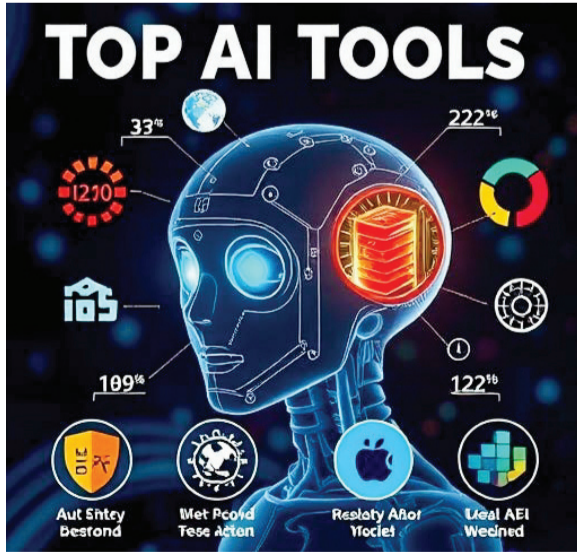
Company: pi-labs.ai

Product Introduction: Authenticate, the deepfake detection engine, leverages AI++ techniques to combat the growing threat of synthetically generated content created using AI, safeguarding content authenticity and public trust.

Category: Deepfake Detection and Identity Verification **Why it Stands Out:** It offers deepfake detection and secure biometric verification, ensuring seamless and trustworthy identity management.

Key Features:

- Real-time deepfake detection.
- Protects Video KYC from being spoofed
- Robust analytics for identity fraud prevention.
- Excellent support for Indian languages and demography
- USP: Industry-first solution addressing the critical need for proactive fraud prevention for enterprises and streamlined investigative support for law enforcement.



Website: www.pi-labs.ai

2. WYSA

Company: Wysa

Product Introduction: Wysa is a conversational AI chatbot providing mental health support and therapy, democratising access to emotional care.

Category: Mental Health and Well-Being

Why it Stands Out: Combines AI with cognitive be-

havioural therapy (CBT) to provide 24x7 mental health assistance.

Key Features:

- Empathetic chatbot for mental health support.
- Integrated CBT exercises and tools.
- Therapist handoff for advanced care.
- USP: Simplifies access to mental health care with AI-driven empathy.

Website: www.wysa.io

3. NIRAMAI

Company: Niramai Health Analytix

Product Introduction: Niramai's AI-powered thermal imaging tool revolutionises early breast cancer detection with non-invasive methods.

Category: Healthcare AI for Early Cancer Detection

Why it Stands Out: Provides a safe, affordable, and portable solution for early cancer screening.

Key Features:

- Radiation-free thermal imaging technology.
- AI-driven insights for accurate detection.
- Mobile screening for rural areas.
- USP: Makes early cancer detection accessible and non-invasive.
- Website:** www.niramai.com

4. STAQU'S JARVIS

Company: Staqu Technologies

Product Introduction: Jar-

vis is an AI-powered video analytics tool that enhances surveillance systems for real-time threat detection and investigation.

Category: Law Enforcement and Security

Why it Stands Out: It offers seamless integration with existing CCTV systems and delivers actionable insights for public safety.

Key Features:

- Facial recognition and object identification.
- Real-time anomaly detection.
- Predictive analytics for threat prevention.
- USP: Enhances law enforcement with advanced surveillance capabilities.
- Website:** www.staqui.com

5. REPHRASE.AI

Company: Rephrase.ai

Product Introduction: Rephrase.ai leverages generative AI to create hyperpersonalized video content for marketing and customer engagement.

Category: Generative AI for Video Personalization

Why it Stands Out: Creates realistic, AI-generated videos featuring human avatars, streamlining video production.

Key Features:

- Customisable and scalable video content.
- Realistic human avatars for personal touch.
- Multilingual support.
- USP: Revolutionizes marketing strategies with AI-driven personalised videos.
- Website:** www.rephrase.ai

CONCLUSION

AI landscape is poised for unprecedented growth in 2025, with innovations addressing critical challenges across industries. Tools like Authentify, Wysa, and Niramai exemplify how AI can enhance security, health, and engagement. As AI continues to evolve, these tools will play a pivotal role in shaping a smarter, more efficient future.

LAKSHYA SEN CRASHES OUT OF MALAYSIA OPEN 2025

AGENCIES
KUALA LUMPUR

Ac Indian shuttler and Paris Olympics 2024 semi-finalist Lakshya Sen lost his Malaysia Open 2025 badminton tournament clash against Chinese Taipei's Chi Yu-Jen in straight games at the Stadium Axiata Arena in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Tuesday.

The Indian badminton player, 12th in the BWF rankings, failed to put up a fight against the world No. 32 shuttler, going down 14-21, 7-21 in his men's singles round of 32 contest. This was the first meeting between the two badminton players.

Meanwhile, Indian shuttler HS Prannoy marked his return to court for the first time since the Paris 2024 Olympics in a start-stop match against Canada's Brian Yang.

Ranked 26th, HS Prannoy won the first game 21-12 before play was halted due to a leaky roof in the stadium in the second with the score reading 6-3 in the Indian's favour at the time.

The match resumed briefly after a 25-minute disruption and Brian Yang fought back to take an 11-9 lead in the second game before the encounter was halted once again due to persistent leakage through the roof.

HS Prannoy and Brian Yang will resume their match on Wednesday with scores of 21-12, 9-11. Women's singles player Malvika Bansod and men's shuttler Priyanshu Rajawat will also play their first round on Wednesday.



Prannoy makes triumphant return

TDG NETWORK
KUALA LUMPUR

Indian tennis star HS Prannoy made a triumphant return to the badminton court as he kicked-started the year with a win in his opening match at the Malaysian Open 2025 being held in Kuala Lumpur on Wednesday.

On Wednesday, Prannoy defeated Brian Yang of Canada by 21-12, 17-21, 21-15. His comeback effort lasted one hour and 29 minutes.

Commonwealth Games bronze medallists Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand won their women's doubles round of 32 match at the BWF Super 1000 tournament after beating Thailand's Ornnicha Jong-sathapornpan and Sukittita Suwachai.

Also, the mixed doubles pair of Tanisha Crasto and Dhruv Kapila kickstarted their campaign with a win over South Korea's Ko Sung-hyun and Eom Hye-won by 21-13, 21-14 in two successive games. The match lasted 30 minutes.

Also, coming to the women's singles competition, Malvika Bansod started her tournament with a bang, securing a win over Goh Jin Wei of Malaysia by 2-15, 21-16.

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finalist Lakshya Sen lost his Malaysia Open 2025 badminton tournament clash against Chinese Taipei's Chi Yu-Jen in straight games at the Stadium Axiata Arena in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Tuesday.

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WFI questions Khel Ratna 'selection process'

TDG NETWORK
GONDA (UTTAR PRADESH)

As Olympic double medalist shooter Manu Bhaker is set to be conferred with the prestigious Khel Ratna Award, the highest sporting honour in India, the announcement has sparked a debate on the transparency of the selection process, with Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) President Sanjay Singh raising concerns about 'favouritism' in the award nominations.

Speaking on the matter, Sanjay Singh said that Bhaker's name was included only after the outrage that erupted when her name was not included initially. He claimed that deserving athletes are sometimes overlooked in favour of candidates with influential backing.

"The officials discuss who to award Bharat Ratna or Khel Ratna... You must have seen Manu Bhaker's name was not there even after winning two medals and after the movement was started she did get included... Officials sit and try to include their favourite people in the list of Khel Ratna," Singh said.

He also addressed the current state of wrestling in India, which has faced challenges recently but remains hopeful for its future.

ICC releases pitch ratings for Border-Gavaskar series

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Wednesday released the pitch ratings for each Test match of the recently-concluded Border-Gavaskar Trophy between India and Australia, with four of five pitches earning the top rating of "very good", reported ICC Cricket.

Four of the five matches in the thrilling Test series between Australia and India have earned a 'very good' rating. It is the highest on the ICC's pitch ranking scale.

The pitches at Perth Stadium, Adelaide Oval, Gabba and Melbourne Cricket Ground - the venues for the

first four Tests - were rated as 'very good'. Meanwhile, the surface for the final Test in Sydney received a 'satisfactory', the second-highest rating on ICC's scale.

In 2023, the ICC revamped its pitch rating system, reducing it from six categories to four - very good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory and unfit.

Peter Roach, Cricket Australia (CA) Head of Cricket Operations and Scheduling said as quoted by ICC: "We are delighted by the quality of pitches produced for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy series and grateful for all the hard work of the curators and venues across the country."

"We encourage pitches that bring out the unique

characteristics of that venue and this has long been a feature of Australian cricket. We strongly believe that this is one of the reasons that Test cricket is so popular in Australia."

"We do not look to prepare wickets that favour the home side or suit our situation in a series. What we seek is a good contest between bat and ball and pitches that are likely to produce a result."

The Border-Gavaskar series lived up to its billing as a fiercely contested battle between two cricketing powerhouses. India opened the series with a commanding 295-run victory in Perth, but Australia roared back with wins in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney.

Scott Boland joins ICC Men's Test Bowling Top 10

TDG NETWORK
DUBAI

Australia pacer Scott Boland, who played three games in the recently concluded Border Gavaskar Trophy against India that too being the fourth pacer who played only in Hazlewood's absence, on Wednesday, broke into the top 10 of the International Cricket Council's (ICC) latest Men's Test Bowling Rankings.

The past week was brimming with Test cricket action, with three series reaching their conclusion: the Border-Gavaskar Trophy between India and Australia, South Africa's



clash against Pakistan and Zimbabwe's tussle with Afghanistan.

One of the standout performers in the latest ICC Men's Rankings is Scott Boland, the Player of the Match in the Sydney Test. Boland made a remarkable leap of 29 places to break into the top 10, sharing the ninth spot with India's

spinner Ravindra Jadeja.

Boland's stellar performance in the Sydney Test, where he claimed a 10-wicket haul (4/31 and 6/45), proved too much for the Indian batters on a lively Sydney pitch. His efforts were instrumental in Australia's triumph, ending a decade-long wait to reclaim the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

Australia's skipper, Pat Cummins, also made gains in the rankings, climbing to No.2 after picking up five wickets in the final match. He is now closing in on Jasprit Bumrah, who remains at the top with a career-best rating of 908.

Deschamps to quit as France manager post-2026 WC

TDG NETWORK
PARIS

Didier Deschamps has decided to step down as the manager of the French national football team after the 2026 World Cup, ending a historic 14-year tenure.

The official X handle of France's national football team has announced on Wednesday,

"Aux commandes des Bleus depuis 2012, le plus grand sélectionneur de l'histoire de l'Equipe de France tirera sa révérence apres la Coupe du Monde 2026"

[At the helm of Les Bleus since 2012, the greatest coach in the history of the French team will bow out after the 2026 World Cup.]

Deschamps has been in charge of France since 2012, leading the team to remarkable successes, including winning the 2018 FIFA World Cup and the 2021 UEFA Nations League. Under his leadership, France



also reached the finals of the UEFA Euro 2016 and the 2022 FIFA World Cup, though they narrowly missed out on victory in both tournaments.

Reports suggest that Deschamps had been planning his departure for several months, wanting to give the team clarity about the future of the managerial role. With his contract set to end after the 2026 World Cup in North America, the focus has already shifted toward finding his successor.

One name stands out as the likely candidate--Zinedine Zidane.

Namhail records fastest goal in Ice Hockey League

TDG NETWORK
LEH

Namhail Nangmo created history today by scoring the fastest goal ever recorded in the Ice Hockey League, setting a new benchmark in the sport. On Day 3 of Ice Hockey League Season 2, Maryul Spamo began their campaign with a dominant 4-0 victory over Shakar Chiktan Queens.

In the Men's category, Humas Warriors set the tone earlier in the day with a commanding 6-1 win in the opening match. Defending champions Kang Sings and Changthang Shans continued their strong performances, triumphing 4-1 and 6-2, respectively.

The third day of the league delivered intense action and high-energy performances, with goals flowing throughout the matches, leaving fans exhilarated.

Selective norms undermine sports governance: PT Usha

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

In a strongly-worded letter, Indian Olympic Association (IOA) president PT Usha has accused the sports ministry of interfering in the affairs of national federations and thus "undermining the credibility of sports governance", citing multiple examples, including the contentious Indian Golf Union elections, to support her claims.

Close on heels of the ministry pulling up the IOA for recognising the Indian Golf Union (IGU) elections won by the Harish Kumar Shetty-led faction, Usha said sports minister Mansukh Mandaviya is not being "properly apprised" of various important issues concerning national federations, including the contentious IGU polls.

In a letter dated January 2 and signed by the under secretary, the ministry said the IOA's act of according recognition to Shetty' faction can



"create avoidable duplication and confusion" which may not withstand legal scrutiny.

In her reply addressed to Mandaviya, Usha said, "The manner in which this letter has been issued appears procedurally incorrect and reflects a lack of verification of the facts on record and a complete non application of mind by the Under Secretary. "Sir, since I have assumed office in the IOA, it has become more and more apparent that the staff of the Ministry deliberately never appraises the true and correct facts to the Hon'ble Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports."

SA's 7 straight wins key to WTC final qualification: Smith

TDG NETWORK
CAPE TOWN

Former South African captain Graeme Smith expressed happiness about the Proteas reaching the ICC World Test Championship final for the first time ever, noting that the team deserves it after winning seven Tests in a row under tough conditions.

Smith was speaking to ANI ahead of the third season of SA20. Smith is the commissioner of the league. The competition is starting from Thursday and going on till February 9. The defending champions, Sunrisers Eastern Cape, take on MI Cape Town at St George's Park in Gqeberha in the opening clash.



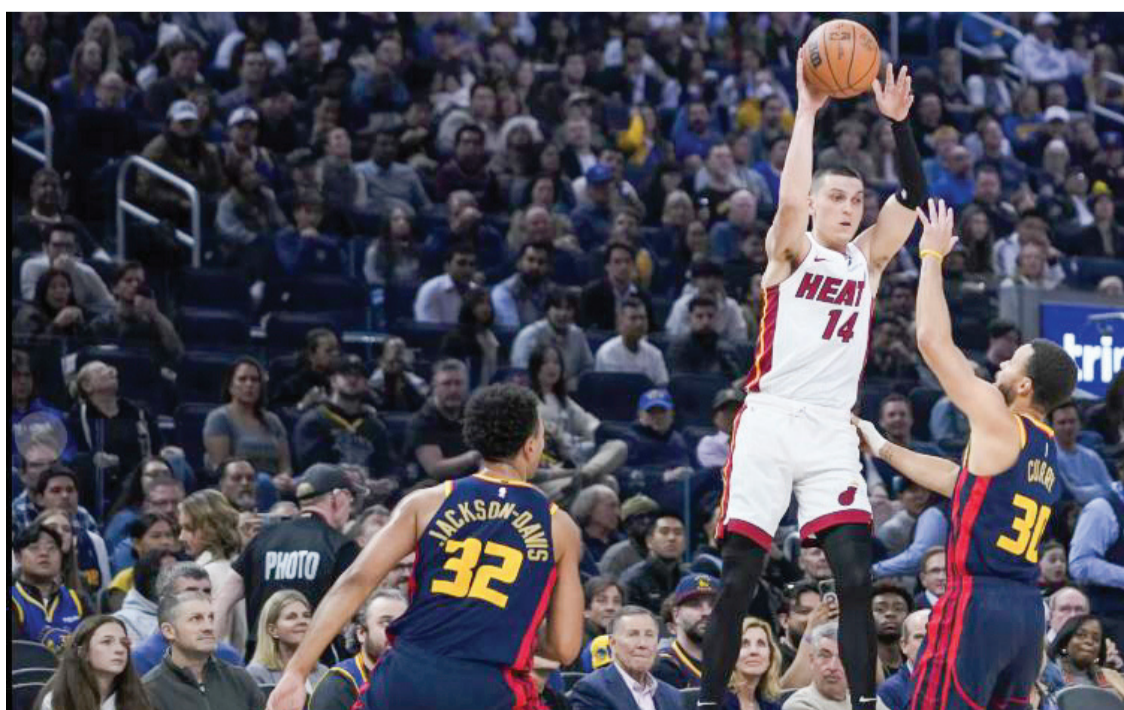
Speaking to ANI, Smith said, "It is fantastic. During the last one and the half years, it has been a great period for South African cricket. We have reached the finals of the women's T20 World Cup, the men's T20 World Cup, the semifinals of the men's 50-over World Cup and now the ICC World Test Championship final. It is good to see that we have got some really strong talent

coming through, becoming more consistent and we have got a chance to put our hands in the trophy. So I think the next 6 months, starting with SA20, then Champions trophy, then WTC is a big opportunity for South African cricket."

Smith also put aside and brushed all the talks of Proteas making it to the finals by beating much lower-ranked teams like Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan on their way to the title clash, saying that all matches have been played under tough conditions and Proteas truly deserves to be in the finals.

"South Africa has won 7 tests in a row in very tough conditions, they deserve to be there.

CLASH PLAY



Miami Heat Guard Tyler Herro (14) passes while defended by Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry, right during the first half of an Nba basketball game, in San Francisco. AP

38th National Games to kick off on January 28

RUPINDER SINGH
DEHRADUN

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama has confirmed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the 38th edition of the National Games, scheduled to take place from January 28 to February 14.

"I would like to thank PM Modi. We had urged him to inaugurate the National Games. PM has agreed to inaugurate the National Games. We also informed him about the winter yatra and urged him to stay here for a day during this yatra," said CM Dhama.

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) announced Uttarakhand as the host for the 2025 edition in December, last year. The event will feature over 10,000 ath-



letes, officials, and coaches competing in 38 sports across multiple cities in the state.

"The 38th National Games in Uttarakhand promise to be a landmark event in promoting both traditional and modern sports in India," IOA President PT Usha said, as quoted by Olympics.com.

"The inclusion of demonstration sports like kalariyayattu, yogasana,

mallakhambh, and rafting reflects our commitment to honouring India's rich heritage while encouraging new opportunities for athletes," she added.

The National Games of India is an Olympic-style multi-sport event that brings together athletes from states and Union Territories to compete for medals. The upcoming edition will feature 32 sporting disciplines and four dem-

onstration events. The last edition of the National Games took place in Goa in 2023, spanning five cities--Mapusa, Margao, Panjim, Ponda, and Vasco. Maharashtra topped the medal tally with 228 medals, including 80 gold.

The 2022 edition, hosted by Gujarat, marked the revival of the National Games after a seven-year hiatus since the 2015 event. During that edition, Services emerged as the top team, winning 128 medals, including 61 gold.

Hosting the National Games is expected to boost Uttarakhand's reputation as a hub for sports and tourism. The inclusion of traditional sports alongside Olympic disciplines highlights the diversity and cultural richness of the event.