



**2**  
**MAHA KUMBH: OVER 8 MILLION TAKE HOLY DIP IN SANGAM**



**11**  
**ISRAELI FORCE WITHDRAWS FROM GAZA'S NETZARIM CORRIDOR: HAMAS**



**16**  
**2ND ODI: ROHIT'S TON POWERS INDIA TO 4-WICKET WIN**

## Atishi resigns as Delhi CM; LG dissolves Assembly

NEW DELHI: Atishi tendered her resignation as Delhi Chief Minister on Sunday, following her party's loss in the assembly elections.

The AAP leader submitted her resignation to Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena at the Raj Niwas on Sunday.

Saxena dissolved the Seventh Legislative Assembly of the National Capital Territory of Delhi with effect from Sunday. This came after Atishi tendered her resignation as Chief Minister on Sunday.

TDG NETWORK

## BJP top leadership goes into a huddle to choose Delhi CM

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

After registering an emphatic victory in Delhi assembly polls a day before on Saturday, the BJP's exercise to pick the Delhi chief minister gained momentum on Sunday, with party president JP Nadda meeting Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Senior leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, had held consultations at the BJP headquarters on Saturday as well after Modi delivered a



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP President JP Nadda during the celebrations of the party's win in the Delhi Assembly Election, at BJP HQ in New Delhi on Saturday. Home Minister Amit Shah was also present. (ANI Photo/Shrikant Singh)

victory speech to jubilant party workers.

While visible faces such as Parvesh Verma, a leader from the Jat community who defeated AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal, and seasoned organisational leaders like Satish Upadhyay, Vijender Gupta, Ashish Sood and Pawan Sharma are being talked about, the BJP has a history of elevating leaders with a relatively low public profile.

With larger political messaging often guiding the

P3

## Security forces eliminate 31 Naxals in C'garh encounter

Two jawans also killed; 81 Naxalites gunned down in separate encounters in state so far this year

AGENCIES  
BASTAR (CHHATTISGARH)

Thirty one Naxalites were killed in an encounter with security forces in the forests of the National Park area in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, officials said on Sunday. Police during the operation recovered weapons and explosives from the area.

According to Bastar police officials, the encounter broke out in the forests on Sunday morning. "31 Naxalites were killed in the encounter in the National Park area of Bijapur district," Bastar IG P Sundarraj said.

"Two jawans, including one from the District Reserve Guard (DRG) and the other from Special Task Force (STF), lost their lives, while two others were injured in the gunfight," he said.

The condition of both injured jawans was said to be stable.

The latest gunbattle took place on a forested hill along the border of Madded and Parsegarh police station

P3



Bodies of Naxals and recovered Arms and Ammunition during an encounter brought to District Headquarters by security forces, in Bijapur on Sunday. ANI

## Shah says 'big success in making India Naxal-free'

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah lauded security forces for neutralising 31 Naxalites in the forests under the National Park area of Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district on Sunday morning.

Home Minister Shah described the operations against the Naxals as a "big success" in the direction of making India Naxal-free.

"In the direction of making India Naxal-free, the security forces have achieved a big success in Bijapur, Chhattisgarh. In this operation, 31 Naxalites were killed and a huge amount of arms and explosives were also recovered," Shah wrote on X.

Two security personnel also lost their lives while two others were injured during the gunfight, officials informed.

Shah expressed "heartfelt" condolences to the families of soldiers who lost their lives.

"Today we have lost two of our brave soldiers in the effort to end anti-human Naxalism. This country will always be indebted to these heroes. I express my heartfelt condolences to the families of the martyred soldiers." Shah said.

P3

## MANIPUR CM BIREN SINGH QUILTS

State Assembly session is scheduled to begin today

Congress says most urgent priority is to restore peace in the state

AGENCIES  
IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister Biren Singh tendered his resignation to Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla at Raj Bhawan here on Sunday nearly two years after the violence marred the state.

Singh was accompanied by BJP president A Sharda, BJP's North East Manipur in-charge Sambit Patra, along with at least 19 MLAs.

The governor accepted the resignation, along with that of his council of ministers, and requested that he continue in office until alternative arrangements are made.

"It has been an honour to serve the people of Manipur so far," Singh said in his resignation letter.

The violence between the Meitei and the Kuki communities in Manipur erupted after a rally by the All Tribal Students Union of Manipur (ATSUM) on May 3, 2023, following the Manipur High Court order directing the state to consider the inclusion of the Meitei community in the Scheduled Tribes list.

"I am extremely grateful to the Central government for timely actions, interventions, developmental work and implementation of various projects for safeguarding the interest of every single Manipuri," he further said in the letter.

He urged the Central government to continue with the same.

"I take the opportunity to



Biren singh

enumerate the most important ones of them: To maintain the territorial integrity of Manipur which has a rich and diverse civilizational history over thousands of years. To crack down on border infiltration and to formulate policy for the deportation of the illegal immigrants. To continue the fight against drugs and narco terrorism. To continue the stringent and fool-proof revised mechanism of FMR with the biometric being stringently applied. Time bound and faster border which is underway," Singh's letter read.

In 2022, Biren Singh took the oath as the CM of Manipur following NDA alliance comfortable victory with 32 seats in the 60-member House in the Assembly polls.

The Congress had bagged

five seats and the NPP won seven seats. Naga People's Front bagged five and the Kuki People's Alliance got two seats. Independents bagged three seats in that elections.

The NDA ally JD(U) had won six seats. However, five of its MLAs later switched to the BJP.

Last week, a new controversy erupted after the Supreme Court sought a sealed-cover forensic report on the authenticity of leaked audio clips alleging the role of Singh in the ethnic violence.

The tapes reportedly included conversations where Singh allegedly suggested that Meitei groups were allowed to loot arms and ammunition from the state government during the unrest, which has so far claimed 250

lives.

It was not immediately clear whether the BJP will appoint a new CM.

BJP sources on the other side expressed hope that his resignation will help boost the efforts being helmed by the Centre to broker peace between the two main ethnic communities in the state.

Noting that former home secretary Ajay Bhalla was appointed the state's governor in December last with an apparent aim to accelerate peace and security measures, they said Singh's resignation will help the process and convey the Centre's sincerity in bridging the ethnic divide.

A source said that Singh was also losing support among BJP MLAs, many of whom have met party leaders in Delhi to convey their unhappiness with his continuation. The state assembly session is scheduled to begin on February 10, and there was concern that some party MLAs might embarrass the government by targeting their own leadership.

Meanwhile, state BJP president A Sharda said: "We are yet to receive further instructions from the party." She asserted that Singh worked tirelessly for the development and integrity of the state.

"He has been trying to bring peace in the state since the ethnic violence broke out on May 3, 2023. The BJP will continue to work hard for the integrity of the state," Sharda added.

## Rahul targets PM Modi

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi on Sunday said that Manipur Chief Minister Biren Singh resigned amid mounting pressure from public, Supreme Court and Congress.

Gandhi also accused Biren Singh of "instigating" division in Manipur and blamed PM Narendra Modi for "allowing him to continue." "For nearly two years, BJP's CM Biren Singh instigated division in Manipur. PM Modi allowed him to continue despite the violence, loss of life, and the destruction of the idea of India in Manipur," Rahul Gandhi wrote on X.

"The resignation of CM Biren Singh shows that mounting public pressure, the SC investigation and the no-confidence motion by the Congress have forced a reckoning," Gandhi added. Gandhi further targeted PM Modi and asked him to visit Manipur.

"But the most urgent priority is to restore peace in the state, and work to heal the wounds of the people of Manipur. PM Modi must visit Manipur at once, listen to the people and finally explain his plan to bring back normalcy," Gandhi said.

## Prez Murmu to visit Maha Kumbh today

NEW DELHI: President Droupadi Murmu will



visit the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj on Monday and take a holy dip at the Sangam, her office said.

Maha Kumbh, which began on Paus Purnima (January 13), is the world's largest spiritual and cultural gathering, attracting devotees from across the globe. It will continue until Mahashivratri on February 26.

## Octogenarian businessman killed by grandson over property dispute

AGENCIES  
HYDERABAD

In a shocking incident, an 86-year-old businessman was stabbed to death by his grandson in Hyderabad's Panjagutta area, said the police.

The police said that Keerthi Teja, 28, stabbed VC Janardhan Rao on Thursday midnight, following a heated argument over property. The accused also stabbed his mother when she intervened, re-

sulting in her sustaining injuries.

"This incident occurred on Thursday midnight. The deceased, 86-year-old businessman VC Janardhan Rao, was stabbed multiple times with a knife by his grandson, Keerthi Teja, aged 28, following an argument over property," said the police.

The police added, "The accused also stabbed his mother when she tried to intervene and stop him, resulting in her sustaining

injuries; she is currently undergoing treatment in a hospital. We have arrested the accused, Keerthi Teja, and he has been remanded."

Teja and his mother, who live in another part of the city, visited Rao's house in Somajiguda on Thursday. While she went to get coffee, an argument broke out between Teja and Rao over the distribution of his property, police said.

Teja took out a knife and 'attacked' his grandfather,

accusing him of being indifferent toward him since childhood and "refusing" to distribute the property to him, police said, citing preliminary investigations.

When asked about reports that the victim was allegedly stabbed more than 70 times, police stated that there were multiple stab wounds and that the exact number would be confirmed based on the post-mortem examination

P3

## Aero India kickstarts today, to showcase India's aerial prowess

State-of-the-art products of global aerospace companies will be on display

TDG NETWORK  
BENGALURU

The Yelahanka Air Force Station here is decked up for the biennial Aero India show which will be inaugurated by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday.

Themed as 'The Runway to a Billion Opportunities',



Air Force's Surya Kiran Aerobatic team performs during the final rehearsal ahead of 'Aero India 2025', at Air Force station in Bengaluru on Thursday.

FILE PHOTO

the five-day extravaganza will showcase India's aerial prowess and indigenous cutting-edge innovations alongside state-of-the-art products of global aro-

space companies.

Aero India is a crucial platform that drives forward the government's vision of a "strong, capable,

P3



# PUNJAB TO FOLLOW DELHI, TO REJECT ‘AAP-DA’: SAINI

Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini attacks Kejriwal for false promises made to people of Delhi

NEERAJ MOHAN  
CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Sunday said that just like voters in Delhi, the people of Punjab will soon reject the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). Addressing a press conference at Haryana Bhavan in Delhi, Saini slammed AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal for making false promises and misleading the public.

“Delhi voters have given a strong reply to AAP. Similarly, the people of Punjab will soon show AAP-da (disaster) party the door,” Saini said, expressing confidence that the BJP would

win the upcoming local body elections in Haryana as well.

Talking about the cleaning and beautification of the Yamuna River, Saini attacked Kejriwal for blaming BJP-ruled Haryana for Yamuna pollution. He announced that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s leadership, the Yamuna Riverfront would be transformed into a major tourist destination, surpassing even Kartavya Path and India Gate.

“PM Modi is committed to cleaning the Yamuna. Soon, it will be one of Delhi’s most beautiful spots. With welfare schemes like Ayushman Yojana and



clean drinking water, Delhi will now move forward with a Viksit Bharat (developed India),” Saini said. Celebrating the BJP’s

## YAMUNA TO BECOME TOP TOURIST SPOT

- “Delhi voters have given a strong reply to AAP. Similarly, the people of Punjab will soon show AAP-da (disaster) party the door,” Saini said
- He announced that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s leadership, the Yamuna Riverfront would be transformed into a major tourist destination, surpassing even Kartavya Path and India Gate.
- Saini, who had been at the center of BJP and AAP’s clash during the election campaign, called AAP’s defeat a fitting answer to Kejriwal’s “politics of accusations.”

center of BJP and AAP’s clash during the election campaign, called AAP’s defeat a fitting answer to Kejriwal’s “politics of accusations.”

“This victory is a result of PM Modi’s leadership and the people’s trust. For the last ten years, Delhi had a government that only made false promises. Now, real development will begin,” said Saini.

Haryana BJP president Mohan Lal Badoli, Madhya Pradesh minister Kailash Vijayvargiya, Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Krishan Bedi, and Rajya Sabha MP Subhash Barala were also present at the event.

# Defeat teaches a lot: Akhilesh after AAP loss in Delhi polls



Akhilesh Yadav

TDG NETWORK  
AGRA

After BJP’s win in the Delhi assembly polls, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday stated that defeats are lessons, asserting that the INDIA bloc will gain more strength in the future. Akhilesh Yadav has campaigned for Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) candidates in the Delhi assembly polls, but AAP suffered a massive setback, securing only 22 seats—a huge drop from its previous tally of 62 in 2020 polls, while the BJP won a historic mandate on Saturday, returning to power in the national capital after 27 years by winning 48 seats in the 70-member Delhi assembly. “We wanted AAP to win the Delhi elections, but BJP won. In a democracy, we have to accept the people’s mandate.

Defeat teaches a lot, and in the days to come, the INDIA alliance will gain more strength,” the SP chief said. He also alleged that the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) indulged in large-scale rigging in the Milkipur bypolls. “But in the Milkipur by-elections, it wasn’t an election but a loot. The people have seen it. PDA is seeing that. Those who are saying that they have taken revenge for losing the Ayodhya seat (in Lok Sabha), I want to tell them—you cannot take revenge from Ayodhya,” he stated. Notably, BJP also secured a resounding victory in the Milkipur Assembly bypolls, where its candidate Chandrabhanu Paswan won by a thumping margin of 61,710 votes against SP’s Ajit Prasad.

# Doctors take out silent rally on RG Kar incident victim’s birthday

TDG NETWORK  
KOLKATA

Doctors along with Citizen Forum took out a silent rally from College Square to Shyambazar in Kolkata against RG Kar Medical College and Hospital rape and murder case, on the victim’s birthday. Junior and senior doctors took part in the silent rally.

Earlier the Sealdah Civil and Criminal Court announced life imprisonment for the accused Sanjay Roy in the RG Kar rape and murder case on January 20. Along with this, the court has also fined Rs 50,000 to the accused. During the hearing of the case, the Central Bureau of Investigation sought “capital punishment” for the accused Sanjay Roy.

Explaining the penalties of the section, the court said to the accused Sanjay Roy, “I told you the previous day the charges you were convicted against and the charges that have been proven against you.” When asked about his charges, accused Sanjay Roy claimed that he has not done anything and is being “falsely implicated.” “I have not done anything, neither rape nor murder. I am being falsely implicated. You have seen everything. I am innocent. I already told you that I was tortured. They made me sign whatever they wanted,” ac-



Junior and Senior Doctors along with Citizen Forum take out silent rally from College Square to Shyambazar against RG Kar rape-murder case on the victim’s birthday, in Kolkata on Sunday. ANI

cused Sanjay Roy said. The lawyer of the accused argued that even if the case is “rarest of rare,” there should be scope for reformation. He said, “Even if it is a rarest of rare cases, there should be scope for reformation. The court has to show why the convict is not worth reformation or rehabilitation... The public prosecutor has to present evidence and give reasons why the person is not worth reformation and should be completely eliminated from society...”

However, the victim’s family lawyer said, “I want the death sentence as maximum punishment...” The father of the victim had demanded the harshest punishment to the accused. He said their fight will continue on the streets and in the courts. “On Saturday, the judge said that the harshest punishment would be given (to the accused). We have full faith in the judge. Our

fight will continue in the courts and streets,” the father of the deceased doctor said.

Meanwhile, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee expressed dissatisfaction over the court giving life imprisonment to the convict in the RG Kar hospital rape-murder case and said if the case had been with Kolkata Police, they would have ensured a death penalty.

“I learned about the sentencing from the media. We have always demanded capital punishment and we continue to stand by it. However, this is the court’s decision and I can’t say much about this. For three other cases, Kolkata police ensured capital punishment through thorough investigations concluded within 54-60 days. This was a serious case. Had it been under our purview, we would have ensured the death penalty long back,” CM Mamata said while addressing the media at Malda.

# Navy Chiefs’ Conclave deliberates over warfare, maritime strategy

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Indian Navy’s Chiefs’ Conclave 2025 took place at Naval Headquarters in New Delhi on February 8. The event brought together eight former Naval Chiefs to share their collective experience and knowledge, said the Navy. “The Chiefs’ Conclave 2025 aims to gain from the collective experience and knowledge of the eight former Naval Chiefs who are attending the #Conclave. They were presented with an operational update, including policy initiatives, technological, materiel, and operational logistics advancements, and perspective plans at the new #NausenaBhawan,” the Indian Navy said in a post on X. The conclave featured operational updates, policy initiatives, and discussions on the future of warfare and maritime strategy.

“An exclusive session was also conducted to deliberate #Manthan on key issues of interest, fostering an open exchange of ideas on the future of warfare and #maritimestrategy in an evolving geo-political landscape and HR paradigms,” the Navy said. A book titled “Legacy of Leadership: Naval Chiefs through Time” was also released, chronicling the inspiring journeys of former Chiefs of Naval Staff. “With personal stories, rare photographs & first-hand accounts, this “Collector’s Edition” offers a unique glimpse into the leadership of the former CNSs.” Chief of Naval Staff reaffirmed the Navy’s commitment to safeguarding India’s national maritime interests, saying, “We are committed to carrying forward your illustrious legacy.” The conclave highlighted the Navy’s dedication to institutional conti-

nuity and leveraging wisdom from past leadership to shape the future of India’s maritime power. The conclave takes place as the Navy is making strides toward achieving full self-reliance by 2047, with a focus on enhancing its capabilities in the vast Indian Ocean region (IOR) and nearing critical acquisitions, such as fighter jets and submarines. This follows Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s recent dedication of three indigenously built combat platforms—two warships and a submarine—to the nation, marking a significant step in empowering the 21st-century Indian Navy. The event highlighted the Navy’s rapid indigenisation efforts, with 60 warships currently under construction at various Indian shipyards, as it works toward complete self-reliance by 2047, coinciding with India’s 100th year of Independence.



Former Naval Chiefs pose for a picture during Chiefs’ Conclave 2025, at Naval Headquarters in New Delhi on Saturday. ANI

# Maha Kumbh: Over 8 million take holy dip in Sangam

TDG NETWORK  
PRAYAGRAJ

The ongoing Mahakumbh here continues to draw devotees from across the globe to witness and participate in one of the largest religious gatherings in the world.

Devotees are flocking to the Mahakumbh Mela Kshetra to take a sacred dip in the Triveni Sangam, experiencing the spiritual significance of this ancient and grand event.

Around 8.429 million devotees took holy dip at Mahakumbh 2025 on Sunday, the Uttar Pradesh government said.

More than 420 million devotees have taken a holy dip at Mahakumbh 2025 till now.

Mahakumbh 2025, which commenced on Paus Purnima (January 13, 2025), is the world’s largest spiritual and cultural gathering, attracting devotees from across the globe.

The grand event will continue till Mahashivratri on February 26. The event has already attracted millions of devotees from across the country and around the world and is expected to set new records for attendance and participation.

A day earlier, Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajanlal

Sharma, after taking a holy bath at Triveni Sangam, served prasad to devotees at Rajasthan Mandap here.

“On the auspicious occasion of Maha Kumbh-2025, the world’s largest spiritual and cultural event, distributed food prasad to the devotees at Rajasthan Mandapam in Prayagraj and received their blessings,” the Rajasthan CM said in a post on X.

“The divine stream of Triveni Sangam—may the infinite blessings of Maa Ganga, Maa Yamuna and Maa Saraswati always remain upon all of us; may everyone’s life be filled with happiness, prosperity



Devotees gather to take a dip at Triveni Sangam during the ongoing ‘MahaKumbh’, in Prayagraj on Saturday. ANI

and well-being; this is my wish,” CM Sharma added.

CM Bhajanlal Sharma, during the holy bath at

Sangam, was accompanied by his Madhya Pradesh

counterpart, CM Mohan Yadav.

The two Chief Ministers greeted each other at Triveni Sangam after taking the holy dip together. Triveni Sangam is the confluence of the Ganges, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati rivers in Prayagraj.

After the holy dip, CM Yadav said, “Sangam has the blessings of Maa Ganga and Maa Yamuna and Prayagraj is the supreme place of all pilgrimages. So the pleasure of having a holy dip here is achieved after the virtues of many births. I prayed here for the wellness of Madhya Pradesh’s people, especially youth and fortune for every section of the society.”



# 'INDIA TO BRING CONCERNS FROM GLOBAL SOUTH IN AI ACTION SUMMIT'

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

Indian Ambassador to France Sanjeev Singla stated on Sunday that India will bring forward the concerns of the Global South during the event.

While talking to ANI, Singla said that India would bring the issues of the Global South like the AI tools to be safe, to be trustworthy.

"The significance of this visit is that India would be bringing to the table the concerns from the global south that we would like the AI tools to be safe, to be trustworthy, to be secure, that there should not be any concentration of these tools in a particular geography or in

a particular set of corporate sector, and that there should be an equitable access when it comes to AI technology being developed, capability building, and how should the governors be looking forward," Singla told ANI.

Discussing India's role in AI, the Indian envoy highlighted the country's expertise in developing digital public infrastructure as a public good.

"One of the two things which India brings when it comes to AI is its expertise in developing the digital public infrastructure as a public good. And that's India's strength, we have several examples of developing that and using that, and that's something we can of

*PM Modi will travel to Marseille on the evening of February 11. President Emmanuel Macron will also host a dinner in honour of PM Modi.*

fer to the rest of the world," Singla stated.

On Indo-French relations, Singla emphasized the depth of the strategic partnership between the two nations.

"India and France have a deep strategic partnership. It's been there for more than 25 years. We had Prime Minister Modi as a chief guest at Bastille Day Two years ago, and then President Macron was the chief guest at our Republic Day last year.

Next year, we're celebrating the year of innovation, and it's expected that President Macron would be there. So it's a deep strategic partnership we have, and as part of that partnership, we have built roadmap for the next 25 years. And as part of that roadmap we have very intense, intensive dialogs on the sweeping geopolitical changes which are happening around us, and AI, as one of those major developments,

is a subject of discussion," Singla explained.

After the AI summit, there will be a bilateral component to the visit and PM Modi and President Macron will address the India-France CEOs forum. PM Modi will travel to Marseille on the evening of February 11. President Emmanuel Macron will also host a dinner in honour of PM Modi.

During his visit to France, PM Modi will also honour the sacrifices of Indian soldiers in World War I by visiting a military cemetery on February 12.

PM Modi will visit Cadarshe, the location of the international thermal nuclear experimental reactor on February 12.



A view of the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) fighter aircraft designed by the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA), on Sunday. ANI

## Vertical lift Pamban Railway Bridge set to open soon

AGENCIES  
RAMANATHAPURAM

India's first vertical lift railway sea bridge is set to be inaugurated in Pamban, Rameswaram, a significant milestone in the country's railway infrastructure.

The new bridge replaces the British-era Pamban Railway Bridge, which was commissioned in 1914 and featured a manually operated horizontal opening mechanism to allow ships to pass.

Located in Tamil Nadu's Ramanathapuram district, the bridge connects the

Indian mainland with Rameswaram Island, one of the Char Dham pilgrimage sites.

The old bridge, originally built for Metre Gauge trains, was strengthened for Broad Gauge traffic and reopened in 2007. In February 2019, the Ministry of Railways sanctioned the construction of a new bridge to replace the ageing structure.

Built at Rs 531 crore by Southern Railway in collaboration with Rail Vikas Nigam, the new 2.1 km-long bridge features a 72.5-meter-long central section that will be lifted to a height of 17 meters to facilitate mari-

time traffic. The electro-mechanical lift mechanism is integrated with train control systems, ensuring efficient and automated operations.

The bridge is currently equipped with a single electrified railway track, with provisions for an additional line in the future to support increased rail traffic. Presently, 10 regular and 10 weekly special trains operate up to Mandapam station.

Following the inauguration, these services will be extended to Rameswaram, enhancing connectivity with other parts of the country.

## Rs 95,566 cr for railways in Bihar: Vaishnaw

AGENCIES  
PATNA

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Sunday announced that the government was making an investment worth Rs 95,566 crore for the development of railways in Bihar.

Highlighting the efforts made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi electrification in Bihar, Vaishnaw said that reconstruction work for 98 stations was ongoing. "An investment of Rs 95,566 crores is being made for the development of railways in Bihar and the people will get its benefits... Today PM Modi has done



hundred percent electrification in Bihar. Today, the work of total reconstruction of ninety-eight stations is going on in Bihar," Vaish-

naw told reporters. The Railway Minister said that reconstruction works for stations at three places was being carried out today

and works for doubling of railway lines was also being undertaken.

"Prime Minister has great respect for Bihar. The Prime Minister always pays attention to the development of Bihar. Today, at three places, stations are being reconstructed and doubling of railway lines is being done. New rake points are being built at many places," Vaishnaw said. As many as 136 Vande Bharat train services having chair cars are operational on the Indian Railways network as of January 2025, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw informed Rajya Sabha in a written reply. The Minister

also said that overall occupancy in these trains is almost 100 per cent.

In the written reply dated February 7, the Union Minister said passenger-carrying train services, including Vande Bharat services, are operated as per the charted timetable and General Order of Precedence of Trains, without infringing other services.

During the financial year 2024-25 (upto December 2024) approximately 2.14 crore passengers availed of Vande Bharat trains and the overall occupancy of Vande Bharat trains during the said period is approximately 100 per cent.

## BJP brass goes into a huddle

CONTINUED FROM P1

India's choices in choosing its chief ministers in different states, political watchers believe that Delhi would be no exception.

A BJP leader said the party could also consider an MLA with 'Purvanchal' background, a Sikh, or a

woman, depending on the political calculations guiding its top brass.

"You never know... The national leadership can come up with an altogether fresh face who fits the bill and is capable of discharging the duties as Delhi chief minister amid high expectations of the

people," the BJP leader said.

The BJP's Delhi unit president Virendra Sachdeva said the decision on the chief minister would be taken by the party's central leadership, adding that all newly-elected MLAs were capable of discharging the duties assigned to them

## Octogenarian businessman killed by grandson

CONTINUED FROM P1

(PME) report.

The accused had recently returned to Hyderabad from the US after completing his master's de-

gree, police said.

Based on a complaint, a case of murder was registered against the accused, and he was arrested, police added. Further investigation is

ongoing.

Rao was the chairman & managing director of the Veljan Group. Established in 1965, Veljan has expertise in providing complete

solutions for various applications, including shipbuilding, energy, mobile, and industrial segments, according to the company's website.

## Security forces eliminate 31 Naxals

CONTINUED FROM P1

areas, Inspector General of Police, Bastar Range, Sundarraj P said.

Acting on inputs about the presence of Maoists belonging to their national park area committee, personnel from state police units District Reserve Guard (DRG), Special Task Force (STF) and Bastar Fighters had launched the operation on February 7, he said.

At around 8 am on Sunday, an intense exchange of fire broke out on the hill, a part of the Indravati National Park. The intermittent gunfight lasted till around 4 pm, he said.

"So far, bodies of 31 Naxalites, including 11 women, clad in 'uniform' have been recovered from the encounter site. Besides, a huge cache of weapons, including AK-

47, INSAS, SLR and .303 rifles and Barrel Grenade Launchers (BGL), and explosives have also been seized from the scene," the official said.

DRG Head Constable Nareish Dhruv and Constable Vasit Ravte from the STF were killed in the gunfight and their mortal remains have been brought to Bijapur district headquarters, he said.

While Dhruv was a resident of Balodabazar-Bhatapara district, Ravte hailed from the Baldo district in the state. Chhattisgarh chief minister Vishnu Deo Sai said the end of Naxalism in the country and the state is certain. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the state will get rid of Naxalism by March 2026, he added.

With this incident, 81 Naxalites have been gunned down by security forces in separate encounters in Chhattisgarh so far this year.

Security forces have been continuously getting success in this direction and moving rapidly towards achieving the goal. The end of Naxalism, which is like "cancer", from the country and the state is certain, he said in a statement.

"The sacrifice of our soldiers will not go in vain. I pray to God for the departed souls to rest in peace and provide strength to the bereaved families, and for the speedy recovery of the injured jawans," Sai said.

All the deceased Naxalites were clad in uniform and automated weapons were recovered from them, he told reporters, according to Deputy CM Vijay Sharma.

secure and self-reliant India," said Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in Bangalore on Sunday.

Addressing a curtain raiser event for Aero India 2025 at Hotel Taj West End Court here, Singh said through Aero India, "We are not just showcasing defence capabilities, but also strengthening partnerships and collaborations."

"Under the visionary leadership of PM Modi, we have galvanised the entire defence sector, especially the aerospace sector like never before. Today we are not only capable of designing and developing major platforms and equipment within India, but we have also successfully established a vast supply chain within the country. LCA Tejas and LCA Prachand are being produced in India," the Defence Minister said.

The technologies developed for defence applications often go beyond just military use. They frequently lead to innovations in the civilian area as well. These advancements contribute to employment generation and accelerate economic development, making the defence sector a key driver of India's economic growth, he said. "I believe that the role of Aero India is not limited to just enhancing our aerospace capabilities. It is also a significant driver of economic strength, contributing to the overall growth and development of our



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh addresses the inauguration of Aero India 2025 at Yelahanka Air Force Station, in Bengaluru on Sunday. (ANI Photo)

economy," said Singh.

The five-day conclave will provide a unique and unparalleled opportunity for both global and Indian CEOs to drive business expansion and innovation in the defence and aerospace industries, he said.

There will be a CEO's Roundtable as well, with the theme of 'EDGE' (Enabling Development through Global Engagement). And more than 100 industry leaders will

be participating in this Roundtable, he added.

Another significant event, the Defence Ministers' Conclave, will also be organized. The theme of this conclave is 'BRIDGE' - Building Resilience through International Defence and Global Engagement. In this conclave defence leaders from around the world discuss the future of the aerospace and defence sectors, fostering global collaboration and

strategic partnerships, he said.

Speaking on defence manufacturing Singh said, "I am delighted to share that our domestic defence production has surpassed a record Rs 1.27 lakh crore. By the end of 2025-26, we expect this figure to exceed Rs 1.60 lakh crore. Additionally, our defence exports have also crossed a record Rs 21,000 crore, and by the end of 2025-26, we anticipate this figure to surpass Rs 30,000 crore. I am confident that this event will further accelerate our journey toward self-reliance in defence production."

As India moves towards becoming an economic superpower, the role of the defence industrial sector is becoming even more crucial. Every achievement in the defence sector not only strengthens national security but also has a large-scale impact on the economy, he said. "I am delighted to share that this edition has exceeded all our expectations. This event features participation from over 900 exhibitors, including around 150 foreign exhibitors. With representatives from more than 80 countries, this grand gathering stands as a testament to the growing global confidence in India's aerospace and defence capabilities," the Defence Minister said.

Additionally, defence ministers or representatives from about 30 countries have come to participate in this event. The presence of

air chiefs and secretaries from 43 countries further highlights the significance of this event - not just for India, but for the entire international defence community.

Earlier in the day, Singh visited the production facility of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) in Bengaluru.

After arriving at HAL Airport, Singh visited the state-of-the-art Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) MK1A production facility of HAL. The Tejas Mk1A is an advanced version of the LCA Mk1, enhanced to improve combat efficiency.

Meanwhile, the preparations are in full swing for the 15th edition of the biennial event promises to be a spectacular showcase of the latest advancements in aerospace technology.

One of the highlights of the show is the Combat Air Teaming System (CATS) Warrior, a full-scale engineering demonstrator that is on display at the India Pavilion. The CATS Warrior is a cutting-edge system that is designed to enhance the combat capabilities of the Indian Air Force.

The Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is set to take centre stage at Aero India 2025, showcasing its indigenous products and technologies at the India Pavilion, said the state-owned aerospace and defence company. The five-day event will feature HAL's Light Utility Helicopter (LUH) and the CATS Warrior as the main attractions.



# OUR FIGHT IS TO SAVE ESSENCE OF INDIA: CONG MP PRIYANKA

The Congress Wayanad MP slams the BJP-led government at the Centre

TDG NETWORK  
MALAPPURAM

Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Sunday slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government at the Centre, accusing it of "weakening" the Constitution and democracy.

The Wayanad MP was speaking at the United Democratic Front booth-level leadership meeting at Sullamussalam Science College here.

Priyanka Gandhi won the by-polls from Wayanad held in November, after Congress leader and her brother, Rahul Gandhi vacated the seat as he had also won from Rae Bareli in the Lok Sabha elections.

"It is probably the first time in the history of our nation that we have a government which is working to weaken the Constitution and democracy," Priyanka Gandhi said. She told UDF workers that they are fighting to save Constitution and the "very essence of India."

"The fight that we are fighting. The fight that all of you are fighting is not just a fight for our own politics or our own ideas. It is a fight for the Constitution of India, for the essence of India, for everything that makes our nation what it

## 'BJP WEAKENING CONSTITUTION'

■ "It is probably the first time in the history of our nation that we have a government which is working to weaken the Constitution and democracy," Priyanka Gandhi said.

■ "The fight that we are fighting. The fight that all of you are fighting is not just a fight for our own politics or our own ideas. It is a fight for the Constitution of India, for the essence of India, for everything that makes our nation what it is to do," she said.

■ Priyanka Gandhi also told reporters that she will continue to raise the man-animal conflict in her constituency Wayanad.



is to do," she said.

"So you're not just soldiers and warriors for the UDF. You are soldiers and warriors for the soul of India. It is through you that the people will understand the truth about what is going on in our country. Through you the people will understand we are fighting for their rights for them to be stronger and for our Constitution "she added.

Meanwhile, Priyanka Gandhi told reporters that she will continue to raise

the man-animal conflict in her constituency Wayanad.

"I have already raised it once, I will continue to raise it and I think it's something that we need to look into and it's a complex issue. It doesn't have easy solutions, but I will definitely put as much pressure and raise it as much as I can," she said.

She highlighted that more funding is needed to resolve the man-animal conflict.

"We also need more

funding here. During my last trip here I had a meeting with the District Magistrate and all the forest officials and essentially there is difficulty with the funding both from the centre and state," she said.

"So I will go and request that these issues be resolved because, with more funding, there's better monitoring, better safety measures, and better protection even for forest guards, watchmen and everything. So we will work on it," she added.

## Singhvi's lunch sparks conversation around Cong-AAP ties last year

AJIT MAINDOLA  
NEW DELHI

On Sunday, Senior Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi hosted the annual lunch, which sparked discussions about last year's event. Last year, Congress had teamed up with AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal, hoping the alliance would weaken the BJP, especially in Delhi. However, the partnership ended after the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, and Kejriwal became a strong opponent of Congress ahead of the Delhi elections. This year, instead of focusing on their own defeat, Congress leaders appeared happy about AAP's loss in the Delhi elections. The mood at the lunch was more positive, with Congress celebrating AAP's defeat rather than reflecting on their own challenges. In the lunch hosted by Singhvi in the second week of February last year, Congress national president Mallikarjun Kharge and

Aam Aadmi Party chief Arvind Kejriwal enjoyed lunch at the same table. But this time both the leaders were away from the lunch.

In the past, Congress and AAP seemed to share a moment of unity. During the last annual lunch, both Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge and AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal were surrounded by party leaders, chatting joyfully. Congress leaders felt hopeful that the India Alliance, led by Rahul Gandhi, could prevent Prime Minister Narendra Modi from securing a third term in the upcoming 2024 general elections. On the other hand, AAP leaders believed that with Kejriwal in the lead, the country's political landscape would revolve around him. At that time, both Kharge and Kejriwal enjoyed each other's company, putting aside their past differences, including insults exchanged in 2013.

Congress believed history

would repeat itself like in 2004, and started discussing potential leaders for the post of PM and ministers. In their pursuit to win the upcoming elections, Congress put aside past grievances with Kejriwal, including accusations he made in 2012 and 2013. The entire Gandhi family — Sonia, Rahul, Priyanka — even protested at Ramliia Maidan demanding Kejriwal's release from jail, attacking Modi's government.

However, after Congress' defeat in the Lok Sabha elections, this brief alliance collapsed. As Delhi Assembly elections neared, Congress and AAP turned into rivals once again. Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi, and Congress leaders quickly forgot the support they had shown Kejriwal just months earlier. In the Delhi elections, Congress aggressively attacked Kejriwal, calling him corrupt, and contested all 70 seats, including against Kejriwal's AAP and the BJP.

## Results mark exit for Kejriwal: BJP's Tamilisai

TDG NETWORK  
CHENNAI

BJP leader Tamilisai Soundarajan hailed the party's historic victory in the Delhi Assembly elections, stating that the results marked the "exit" of AAP's Arvind Kejriwal and highlighted the INDI alliance's inability to "contest unitedly", following the BJP's decisive return to power after 27 years.

"After a quarter century, we are able to win Delhi elections. I thank our Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) for his good governance and for giving the people hope that the same good governance would be delivered to Delhi also," said Soundarajan.

The BJP leader said that the Delhi election results signify an "exit" for Kejriwal, who also lost the Delhi assembly seat to BJP's Parvesh Verma. "As exit polls predicted, it is an exit for Kejriwal, and this will lead to a split in the INDI alliance. Even DMK should be worried because they are un-

## Lack of AAP-Congress ties led to loss in Delhi polls, says Sanjay Raut

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

Following the Delhi Assembly election results, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut asserted that lack of talks on seat sharing between the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Congress contributed to their losses.

While speaking with the reporters, Raut said, "INDI Alliance is there and will remain in the future too. It was the responsibility of both, the Aam Aadmi Party and Congress, they should have sat down and discussed seat sharing but both fought elections separately and lost the elections."

He added, "BJP wants us to fight among ourselves. If we are happy that AAP and Congress lost, then it is not a good thing for democracy. Till the time we fight among ourselves, we cannot defeat dictatorship."

Earlier on Sunday, Atishi tendered her resignation as the Delhi Chief Minister, following her party's loss in the Assembly elections.

The Aam Aadmi Party leader submitted her resignation to Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena at the Raj Niwas.

Atishi, 43, was serving as the Chief Minister of Delhi since September last year. Her elevation to the top post came after Kejriwal announced resignation from his post as Chief Minister.

She became the third woman Chief Minister of Delhi after Sushma Swaraj and Sheila Dikshit.

AAP suffered a massive setback in the Delhi assembly elections, as it could secure only 22 seats, a huge drop from its previous tally of 62.

The BJP won a historic mandate in Delhi polls on Saturday, returning to power in the national capital after 27 years by ousting AAP.

Atishi, however, retained the Kalkaji seat after a hard-fought contest and defeated BJP's Ramesh Bidhuri by a margin of 3,521 votes.

Acknowledging her individual victory, Atishi conceded AAP's defeat in the Delhi Assembly elections and vowed to continue fighting against BJP.

Atishi's win in Kalkaji constituency stands out for AAP, especially as several of its top leaders, including former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and ex-Deputy CM Manish Sisodia, lost their constituencies.

The Congress, which was hoping for its revival in the national capital, again failed to win any seat.



## CT Ravi hails BJP's clean sweep in Delhi polls, calls AAP 'corrupt'

TDG NETWORK  
BENGALURU

BJP leader CT Ravi hailed the party's "historic" victory in the Delhi elections, accusing the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) of being "corrupt" and asserting that the people of Delhi have shown their trust in BJP leadership by decisively voting them into power after more than two decades.

The BJP made a clean sweep in the national capital after more than two decades and is set to form the government, having won 48 seats, more than the majority mark needed to form the government in the 70-member legislative assembly.

"The people of Delhi have blessed BJP. I want to congratulate and thank the people of Delhi for throwing out the corrupt AAP and showing faith in the BJP," said Ravi.

Responding to the consistently poor performance of the Congress, he said, "Congress neither has 'neeti, neeyat nor neta'...If they do not have the trust of the people, they will lose in the elections as well..."

"Who will vote for such people? They are anti-poor, and anti-constitution. Can they hide the truth by carrying a copy of the Constitution," he said, referring to Rahul Gandhi.

BJP stormed to power in Delhi polls on Saturday winning a two-thirds majority with vthe rul-



ing AAP suffering major blows and a drastic reduction in its numbers in the 70-member assembly. The Congress continued its dismal run.

Bharatiya Janata Party won 48 seats in a historic mandate for the party as it returned to power in the national capital after 27 years. Several AAP leaders including former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal lost in their strongholds with Chief Minister Atishi managing to retain her seat.

The verdict came months after the BJP-led coalition swept Maharashtra polls and the party won Haryana, consolidating its domination of national politics.

The Congress, which was hoping for its revival in the national capital, again failed to win any seat. The party, which ruled Delhi for 15 years from 1998, registered a hat-trick zero tally in assembly polls.

AAP swept the polls in the last two assembly polls. It won 62 out of the 70 seats in 2020 and got 67 seats in 2015. The counting of votes was taken up on Saturday morning. Votes were polled on February 5.

## In a first, Army, Air Force chiefs take flight in desi LCA jet Tejas



In a first, Army chief General Upendra Dwivedi and Air Force chief Air Chief Marshal AP Singh on Sunday took to the skies together in the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas.

This first ever flight with two chiefs in the cockpit not only marks a personal milestone for the two Chiefs, who are course mates, but also underscores the growing synergy and integration between the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force (IAF).

"It was the best moment of my life. As you are aware Air Chief Marshal AP Singh is my course mate and we have been together since our NDA days. I wish he had met me earlier; I would have changed my option to the Air Force. I have told earlier also if I had gone to the Air Force, I would have been a fighter pilot. From today AP Singh is also my guru. I relished. I must admire the kind of challenge Air Force pilots take. It's a good start for Aero India 2025," Dwivedi told reporters.

The flight is a powerful demonstration of India's advancing defence capabilities, particularly in the realm of self-reliance. The Tejas, developed entirely within India, is a shining example of the nation's commitment to 'Aatmanirbharta' (self-reliance) in defence. The successful operation of this homegrown aircraft signifies the significant strides India has made in the field of indigenous defence aviation.

Today's flight also highlights the enhanced cooperation between the services, an essential pillar for modern warfare. As both Chiefs soared together in the skies, they exemplified the deepening bond and collaboration between the Army and the

Air Force, vital to achieving operational excellence. The Indian Army's role in the air domain is becoming increasingly pivotal, especially in tactical battle areas where advanced technologies such as helicopters, unmanned aerial systems, and air defence systems play a crucial role.

This historic moment serves as a clear indicator of the evolving landscape of warfare, where jointness and seamless integration between the Army and the Air Force will define success in the future. The ongoing decade of transformation (2023-2032) is reshaping the future of defence operations, and the period of 2024-2025 will be crucial for integrating cutting-edge technologies across all domains.

Aero India 2025, the premier aerospace exhibition, provides an exceptional platform for defence industry leaders to engage, collaborate, and explore emerging technologies. It serves as an ideal venue for the Indian Armed Forces to forge strong ties with the industry and

acquire the best solutions to modernize and enhance their operational capabilities.

Today's flight by General Dwivedi and Air Marshal Singh is not only a remarkable event but a reflection of India's unwavering commitment to nation-building through indigenous defence production. As the country continues its journey towards self-sufficiency, the collaboration between the Army and the Air Force, backed by innovations like the Tejas, reinforces India's standing as a rising global defence power.

Earlier in the day, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the government has galvanised the entire defence sector, especially the aerospace sector, where it has been made possible to produce fighter jets like LCA Tejas and Prachand in India.

Speaking at the Curtain Raiser event for Aero India 2025, he said that India was not merely designing or developing major equipment in the country, but has also been able to develop a supply chain for the same.

# Two centres of development to be established in Nagpur, Amravati: Maha CM

TDG NETWORK  
NAGPUR

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Union Minister Piyush Goyal on Sunday attended the closing ceremony of the Advantage Vidarbha 2025.

Speaking at the closing ceremony, Fadnavis said that two centres of development would be established in Vidarbha, one in Nagpur and the other in Amravati.

Further, he stated that these development centers would have a positive impact in the nearby districts. "We want to ensure development in every area... We will establish two



centres of development in Vidarbha- one will be in Nagpur and the other in Amravati...This will have a very positive impact on the nearby districts..." Fadnavis said at the closing ceremony.

He also requested Union Minister Nitin Gadkari for

"We want to ensure development in every area... We will establish two centres of development in Vidarbha- one will be in Nagpur and the other in Amravati... This will have a very positive impact on the nearby districts..." Fadnavis said at the closing ceremony.

organizing a business conclave in Vidarbha dedicated to tourism to showcase the opportunities and possibilities in the field.

"There are huge possibilities in the field of tourism and I would like to request Nitin ji that in the coming days, we want to orga-

nize a business conclave dedicated to tourism in Vidarbha through which we will be able to showcase the tourism opportunities and possibilities in the field of tourism here..."

Advantage Vidarbha in its second edition is a premier platform for fostering



# KEJRIWAL MEETS NEW AAP MLAs, URGES THEM TO CONTINUE SERVING DELHI

AAP will nominate its Leader of Opposition in the coming days.

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday met the 22 newly elected MLAs from his party.

A day after the AAP was ousted from power in Delhi, party supremo Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday met its 22 newly elected MLAs at his Ferozshah Road residence here and asked them to work for the people.

Addressing reporters after the meeting, outgoing chief minister Atishi, who is among the 22 AAP leaders who weathered the BJP storm, said the party will play the role of a constructive opposition and ensure that the saffron party delivers on its promises.

Arvind Kejriwal directed the newly elected MLAs to serve the people and solve their problems, she said.

“The AAP will play the role of a constructive opposition and ensure that the BJP pays Rs 2,500 per month to women by March

## AAP’S OPPOSITION ROLE

- AAP will act as a constructive opposition, holding BJP accountable for promises like Rs 2,500 for women and continued free services.
- AAP leaders committed to ensuring BJP keeps its promises on electricity, healthcare, and education.
- BJP’s Rekha Gupta called AAP’s rule a “disaster” and backed PM Modi for future development.



Former Delhi chief minister Atishi with AAP winning candidates addresses the media after a meeting with party convener Arvind Kejriwal, outside his residence in New Delhi.

8 as was promised by it, provides 300 units of free electricity and continues other facilities for the people,” she said.

The MLAs will ensure that the BJP does not discontinue the free services and facilities that the AAP government provided in the last 10 years, she added.

Atishi said the leader of opposition will be nominated during the legislative party meeting of the AAP in the coming days.

“We will also ensure that the work that AAP has

done in the last 10 years is not stopped by the BJP. We would like to tell BJP that as they had promised not only will all Delhiites get free electricity, they will get 300 units of free electricity, all facilities will continue, government schools will remain good, free treatment will continue in Mohalla clinics, all treatment will continue in government hospitals, so we will ensure accountability of BJP whether it is to give Rs. 2500 to women of Delhi or continue the work done by

Aam Aadmi Party,” Atishi told reporters after the meeting.

Speaking about their meeting with Kejriwal, AAP leader Mukesh Ahlawat said that the national convener had asked the elected leaders to play the role of the Opposition strongly.

“We met Arvind Kejriwal. All the MLAs were present at the meeting...it is our duty that whatever work was going on in Delhi should not stop...” Ahlawat said.

Party leader Sahiram Pa-

halwan said that the convener had directed to get all promises made by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) fulfilled. “We met with Arvind Kejriwal...he has directed us to get all the promises fulfilled which BJP has made to the people just like he fulfilled in the past 10 years...” Pahalwan said speaking to ANI.

Party leader Sanjeev Jha who also present at the meeting said that it was their duty to make sure that the ongoing work in the national capital did not come to a halt. ““We met Arvind Kejriwal. All the MLAs were present at the meeting...it is our duty that whatever work was going on in Delhi should not stop...” Jha said.

Meanwhile, Rekha Guota, BJP candidate from Shalimar Bagh called the near-decade rule of Aam Aadmi Party in the national capital as a “AAPda” for Delhi.

She also slammed AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal and former Deputy CM Manish Sisodia, calling them “self-centered”

# BJP’s Delhi victory: Who will be the next CM?



TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) marked a historic return to power in Delhi after a 27-year gap, as the party reached the majority threshold in the recently concluded assembly elections.

The BJP, which secured 39 seats, is expected to increase its tally to 48 as vote counting progresses. Meanwhile, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which had dominated the city’s politics with 67 seats in 2015 and 62 in 2020, saw a dramatic fall to just 22 seats. The Congress once again failed to win any seats.

Several factors have been attributed to BJP’s resurgence, including anti-indebtedness sentiments, corruption charges against top AAP leaders, and the Congress’ improved vote share, which appears to have split AAP’s support base. As BJP looks to form the next



government, several names have emerged as contenders for the Chief Minister (CM) position.

Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma is one of the leading candidates for CM. A former Member of Parliament (MP), Verma made waves by defeating AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal in the New Delhi constituency during the assembly elections. The son of former Delhi CM Sahib Singh Verma, he first entered politics in 2013 by winning the Mehrauli seat and later clinched the West Delhi Lok Sabha seat in both the 2014 and 2019 elections.

Bansuri Swaraj, the daughter of veteran BJP leader Sushma Swaraj, is also being considered for the CM role. Although she is a first-time MP, she made a significant impact by winning the New Delhi Lok Sabha seat, which was previously held by political giants like Atal Bihari Va-



jpayee and LK Advani.

Another potential contender is Smriti Irani, the Union Minister who became a national figure after defeating Rahul Gandhi in Amethi during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Though she did not contest the Delhi assembly elections, her active involvement in the BJP’s campaign makes her a significant figure in the party’s future leadership considerations.

Dushyant Gautam, BJP’s national general secretary and a Dalit leader, is seen as a possible CM candidate, though he lost the Karol Bagh seat to AAP’s Vishesh Ravi. Despite this, Gautam’s prominence within the party makes him a strong contender.

Virendra Sachdeva, the current Delhi BJP President, did not contest the Assembly elections but remains a prominent figure within the party and a potential contender for the CM role.

## Atishi slams BJP for ‘hooliganism’ after meeting Kejriwal

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Atishi also alleged that the saffron party indulged in malpractices with the help of Delhi Police, which is under the control of the Union home ministry.

Outgoing Delhi chief minister Atishi accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of indulging in “hooliganism” to secure victory in the recently concluded assembly election.

The Kalkaji constituency winner said the ruling party is analysing its defeat in the election and added that it will respect the people’s mandate.

Atishi also alleged that the saffron party indulged in malpractices with the help of Delhi Police, which is under the control of the Union home ministry.

“This election was conducted with so much hooliganism, such an election would have never happened in the history of Delhi. Where money is being distributed openly, liquor is being distributed openly, police are getting it distributed, and whoever is complaining about this is being put in jail,” Atishi said, offering to play the role of a



Delhi Chief Minister Atishi tendering her resignation as CM to Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena, at Raj Niwas in New Delhi. ANI

constructive opposition.

Allegations and counter-allegations between the AAP and the BJP have dominated the election campaign discourse in Delhi. Kejriwal even accused the BJP of distributing gold chains to voters in colonies and urged people not to “sell” their votes. Both parties have denied any wrongdoing.

Atishi won the Kalkaji assembly seat for the second time, defeating BJP’s Ramesh Bidhuri by over 3,500 votes. The chief minister managed to surpass Bidhuri’s initial leads during the later stages of counting on Saturday.

On Sunday, the outgoing chief minister was accompanied by party MLAs during her meeting with Kejriwal.

## LG dissolves 7th assembly, clears path for new govt

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena has dissolved the Seventh Legislative Assembly of the National Capital Territory of Delhi with effect from today.

This came after Atishi tendered her resignation as Delhi Chief Minister on Sunday, following her party’s loss in the Delhi assembly elections. She submitted her resignation to Lieuten-

ant Governor VK Saxena at the Raj Niwas.

The dissolution of the assembly paves the way for the formation of a new government in the national capital under the BJP’s leadership.

“In exercise of the power conferred upon me by subsection (2)(b) of section 6 of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991, I, Vinai Kumar Saxena, Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, hereby dissolve the Seventh Legislative As-

sembly of the National Capital Territory of Delhi with effect from February 8, 2025,” the LG order said.

Atishi, 43, had been serving as the Chief Minister of Delhi since September last year. Her elevation to the top post came after Kejriwal announced resignation from his post, days after resigning from the post.

Atishi became the third woman chief minister of Delhi after Sushma Swaraj and Sheila Dikshit.

## Revamping Yamuna riverfront top priority: Parvesh Verma

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

BJP leader Parvesh Verma, who is one of the key contenders for the Delhi chief minister’s post, on Sunday said that developing the Yamuna riverfront will be a key priority for his party. Talking to reporters after paying homage to his father and former chief minister Sahib Singh Verma in his native village in Mundka, he said the previous government had neglected rural areas of Delhi and the roads are in a bad condition. “Revamping the Yamuna riverfront will be one of our main



priorities,” Verma said. He also said that he is committed to completing the unfinished works of his father. Expressing gratitude for the support received by the BJP in Delhi, he said, “With the blessings of the people of Delhi and the efforts of

## Anna Hazare takes a jab at Arvind Kejriwal: ‘He didn’t understand true happiness from serving society’

TDG NETWORK  
AHMEDNAGAR (MAHARASHTRA)

Social activist Anna Hazare, whose anti-corruption movement of 2011 became a catapult for the political career of Arvind Kejriwal, on Sunday criticized the former Delhi chief minister and AAP national convener for his lack of understanding about serving society.

Hazare further stated that if Kejriwal understood the concept, he would not have thought of constructing a ‘Sheesh Mahal’.

“Doing good work for society makes one happy from within... he did not understand this. Otherwise, he



would have never thought of making the ‘Sheesh Mahal...” Hazare said speaking to ANI. Further, he stated that Kejriwal had given liquor licenses after coming to power. “He gave liquor licenses after coming to power. When he was with us, he did not like liquor. Liquor is just a way to destroy everything...” Hazare said.

The social activist further said that his belief was that not all politics were bad but those who entered politics for money were wrong. “Not all politics are bad. But those who enter politics for money, they are wrong. Many people in politics are good and think of the society

and the country...” Hazare said.

Meanwhile, Rekha Gupta, BJP party’s winning candidate from Shalimar Bagh called the near-decade rule of the Aam Aadmi Party in the national capital an ‘AAPda’.

She also slammed AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal and former Deputy CM Manish Sisodia, calling them “self-centered”.

The BJP leader further affirmed that huge development will be carried out in the national capital under Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s leadership.

Modi. This victory goes to the leadership of PM Modi. People of Delhi are hopeful that PM Modi will do development here.”

“The truth was revealed to the public that they (Arvind Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia) are self-centered.

Nothing was done by them in the interest of the public. They were really an AAPda (disaster) for Delhi and people understood this,” she added.

BJP won 48 seats in a historic mandate, returning to power in the national capital after 27 years. AAP won 22 seats while the Congress failed to win a single seat for the third time in a row.

## ‘We will make Delhi healthy, safe, and clean’: Kiran Bedi on BJP’s

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Former Puducherry Lieutenant Governor Kiran Bedi reacting to BJP’s win in Delhi Assembly elections, said that the time for accusations and counter-accusations has ended and that the focus should now be on governance and development.

Bedi highlighted the importance of addressing key issues such as public health, safety, and cleanliness in the city. “Now we will make Delhi healthy, safe, and clean,” she added. “...Now the era of allegations and counter-allegations is over. People want to move forward now, want improvement, cleanliness, civic amenities and a trustworthy government. The public says no more downfall and make Delhi the capital so that it can become an example for the world. “I am a resident of old Delhi. I felt like we have to leave Delhi. Now we will make Delhi healthy, safe and clean and it will happen as

there is double engine government.”

The former IPS officer who was the BJP’s chief ministerial candidate in 2015 said that it was vote for change, a vote for overhauling, all of Delhi was seeking an overhaul. “Delhi was in a state of decay and decline and they checked this... schemes like swachh abhiyaan and other central schemes there were put in place in other places why were they stopped in Delhi? I believe this vote was one for an overhaul and it puts a big responsibility on the incoming government,” she said. Meanwhile, BJPM P Anurag Thakur lauded his party’s thumping win in the Delhi Assembly elections and expressed his gratitude to the people. Thakur also assured that the party would work towards fulfilling all promises made to the people of Delhi, and said that “BJP will make Delhi a developed Delhi.” Speaking to ANI, Thakur said, “I express my gratitude to the people of Delhi that they have made BJP win with 2/3 majority.



# DELHI POLLS 2025: FEWER CRIMINAL CASES, MORE GRADUATES, SOARING ASSETS

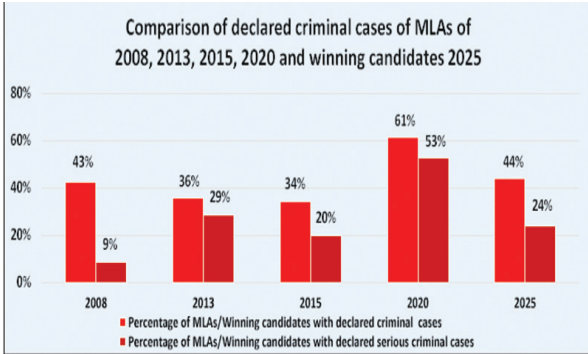
TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The eighth Delhi Assembly will have fewer women members but a higher number of lawmakers with graduate degrees, according to a report. The report by PRS Legislative Research found that five women had been elected to the assembly, the results of which were announced on Saturday, representing 7 per cent of the House. Four women MLAs are from the BJP while Atishi is AAP's only woman member in the House.

In 2020, eight women were elected.

The BJP swept to power in Delhi after more than 26 years, winning 48 of the 70 assembly seats. AAP won 22 seats while the Congress drew a blank in the polls held on February 5.

The percentage of MLAs with graduate degrees has risen to 38 per cent in the eighth assembly from 34



per cent in the seventh. MLAs with postgraduate degrees and above remain unchanged at 26 per cent.

About 61 per cent of the newly-elected MLAs listed politics or social work as their profession, compared to 67 per cent in the previous assembly.

The number of MLAs who listed their profession as business also registered an increase from 29 per cent in the seventh assembly to 49 per cent in the eighth.

The average age of the members is 52, the report found.

According to the report, 13

per cent of the new MLAs are aged between 25 and 40, down from 23 per cent in the previous assembly.

The number of MLAs aged between 41 and 55 is unchanged at 49 per cent while 34 per cent are aged between 56 and 70, and 4 per cent above 70 years old.

In the previous assembly, 28 per cent of members were aged 56 and above.

Meanwhile, thirty-one of the 70 candidates elected to the eighth Delhi Assembly have declared criminal cases against their names, according to poll rights body ADR. The figure is lower than the



43 MLAs in the seventh assembly who had declared criminal cases.

The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and Delhi Election Watch, which analysed the affidavits submitted by all 699 candidates who contested the assembly elections, said the number of winning candidates with serious criminal cases remained a concern.

The analysis found that 17 newly-elected candidates were facing serious criminal cases, including those related to attempted murder and crimes against women.

In the 2020 election,

37 candidates who had emerged victorious declared serious criminal cases.

One newly-elected MLA in 2025 has declared cases related to attempted murder while two others are facing charges of crimes against women.

A party-wise breakdown shows that 16 of the BJP's 48 MLAs and 15 of AAP's 22 lawmakers have criminal cases against their names.

Seven MLAs from the BJP and 10 from AAP are facing serious criminal charges.

The assembly election results were announced on Saturday.

According to the analysis, the 70 newly-elected lawmakers have total assets of Rs 1,542 crore. The average asset per candidate has risen to Rs 22.04 crore from Rs 14.29 crore in 2020.

BJP lawmakers dominate the wealth chart, with an average asset value of Rs 28.59 crore, compared to AAP's Rs 7.74 crore.

Three BJP candidates with assets ranging from Rs 115 crore to Rs 259 crore emerged victorious. In contrast, three victors from AAP declared assets below Rs 20 lakh.

According to the analysis,

44 per cent of the winning candidates have assets of Rs 10 crore or more while only 3 per cent have a net worth below Rs 20 lakh. Twenty-three winning candidates declared liabilities of Rs 1 crore or more, with the BJP's Parvesh Verma topping the chart with Rs 74 crore in liabilities. The three wealthiest lawmakers are also from the BJP -- Karnail Singh with assets of Rs 259.67 crore, Manjinder Singh Sirsa with Rs 248.85 crore, and Verma with Rs 115.63 crore.

According to the analysis, 64 per cent of the new lawmakers hold graduate de-

grees or above while 33 per cent declared their academic qualifications to be between Class 5 and Class 12.

In terms of age, 67 per cent of the winning candidates are between 41 and 60, while 20 per cent are above 60 years old. Gender representation remains low, however, with only five women elected, down from eight in 2020. The analysis also highlighted the growth in assets of re-elected MLAs.

The 22 candidates re-elected to the House saw their average assets rise 25 per cent from Rs 7.04 crore in 2020 to Rs 8.83 crore in 2025.

## Tabling CAG reports in assembly will expose AAP govt's graft: Gupta

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The AAP government's corruption will be exposed once the 14 CAG reports on city administration are tabled in the Delhi Assembly, the BJP's Rohini MLA Vijender Gupta said on Sunday. The Delhi government did not present a single Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report in the assembly during the past five years, he said in a statement.

Once these reports are finally disclosed, the AAP government's wrongdoings will come to light, he asserted.

Gupta -- the opposition leader in the outgoing assembly -- slammed the AAP government for withholding the reports and said, "Opposition MLAs had to struggle to have those tabled in the



assembly."

Despite raising the issue during multiple sessions, "we were met with hostility from previous ruling party MLAs instead of receiving a proper response", he alleged.

Gupta and six BJP MLAs filed a petition in Delhi High Court last year, seeking its direction to the speaker to call a session of the assembly for tabling the CAG reports.

Gupta also accused the AAP government of deliberately withholding the reports out of fear that those

would expose the corruption within the administration.

In an appeal to the public, Gupta said, "I request the people of Delhi to carefully read, listen to, and watch the reports when those are made public."

"See for yourself how AAP misgoverned for 10 years. Do not let it get away -- those responsible will soon be held accountable," he added.

Reaffirming his commitment to the people of Delhi, he said, "Better days for the city have begun and the BJP government will soon fulfil every promise made in its election manifesto."

The BJP swept to power in Delhi after more than 26 years, winning 48 of the 70 assembly seats. AAP won 22 seats while the Congress drew a blank in the polls held on February 5.

## ECI completes Delhi polls, submits results to LG

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission submitted the Due Constitution Notification for the Delhi Assembly polls to Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena, marking the conclusion of what it termed a "free, fair, and transparent democratic exercise".

The BJP registered a landslide victory with 48 seats in the 70-member Delhi Assembly while AAP -- which had won 62 assembly constituencies in 2020 and 67 in 2015 -- saw its tally plunge to 22.

The Congress drew a blank for the third consecutive time.

In a statement on Sunday, the ECI said the notification containing the list of newly elected candidates was handed over to the LG by Principal Secretary Ajay Kumar and Delhi Chief Elec-



*Voting for the 70-member Delhi Assembly took place on February 5, with counting held on February 8.*

toral Officer Alice Vaz.

"With this, the electoral process for the Delhi Legislative Assembly Election-2025 has been successfully completed," the poll panel said.

Voting for the 70-member Delhi Assembly took place on February 5, with counting held on February 8.

## Atishi danced as Kejriwal's plot to defeat her failed: Anurag

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

BJP leader Anurag Thakur on Sunday alleged that outgoing Delhi Chief Minister Atishi danced after coming to know that AAP convenor Arvind Kejriwal's "ploy to engineer her defeat had failed".

Thakur was commenting on a leaked video clip purportedly showing Atishi dancing after her victory from Kalkaji.

The defeat had revealed the fissures in top AAP leadership, Thakur said.

Atishi was among the select AAP leaders who won the polls as others, including Kejriwal and Manish Sidodia, lost the polls.

"Look at the politics of Arvind Kejriwal, (he) came into politics by climbing on



the shoulders of Anna Hazare, finished him off, then formed his own party. He then finished off the founding members of his party," Thakur alleged.

Kejriwal's team worked against senior AAP leaders and ministers, but ultimately Kejriwal got the taste of his own medicine, he said.

"Atishi ji's name was missing from the election banner, posters and the entire (poll) campaign. Attempts

*Thakur claimed that Atishi, like other Delhiites, was expressing her "happiness" over the defeat of the former chief minister and former deputy chief minister.*

were made to defeat her in her assembly constituency and that is why you saw her dance in the leaked video," Thakur said.

Thakur claimed that Atishi, like other Delhiites, was expressing her "happiness" over the defeat of the former chief minister and former deputy chief minister.

## Cook beaten to death over spilled food

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

A cook was beaten to death inside a bus in the northwest Delhi's Bawana area for allegedly spilling food on a seat, police said on Sunday. The man, Manoj alias Babu, was beaten by three people, the driver of the RTV bus and his two helpers, one of whom shoved an iron rod in his private part, they said.

When Manoj became unconscious, the three dumped him near Bawana flyover and fled.

Police said they have arrested one of the assailants, while two others remain at large.

Manoj, a native of Narela, worked as a wedding cook.

On the night of February 1, he and a colleague of his, Dinesh, attended a wedding in Sultanpur Dabas.

"After wrapping up work, they packed some leftover food and boarded a bus.



During the journey, some food accidentally spilled onto a seat, enraging the driver and his associates," a police officer said.

While Dinesh was allowed to get off at Bawana Chowk, the three held Manoj hostage and forced him to clean the seat with his shirt, the officer said.

The driver, Ashish alias Ashu, and his friends hurled abuses at him and beat him. As he cleaned the seat, Ashish rammed a rod in his private parts, the officer said.

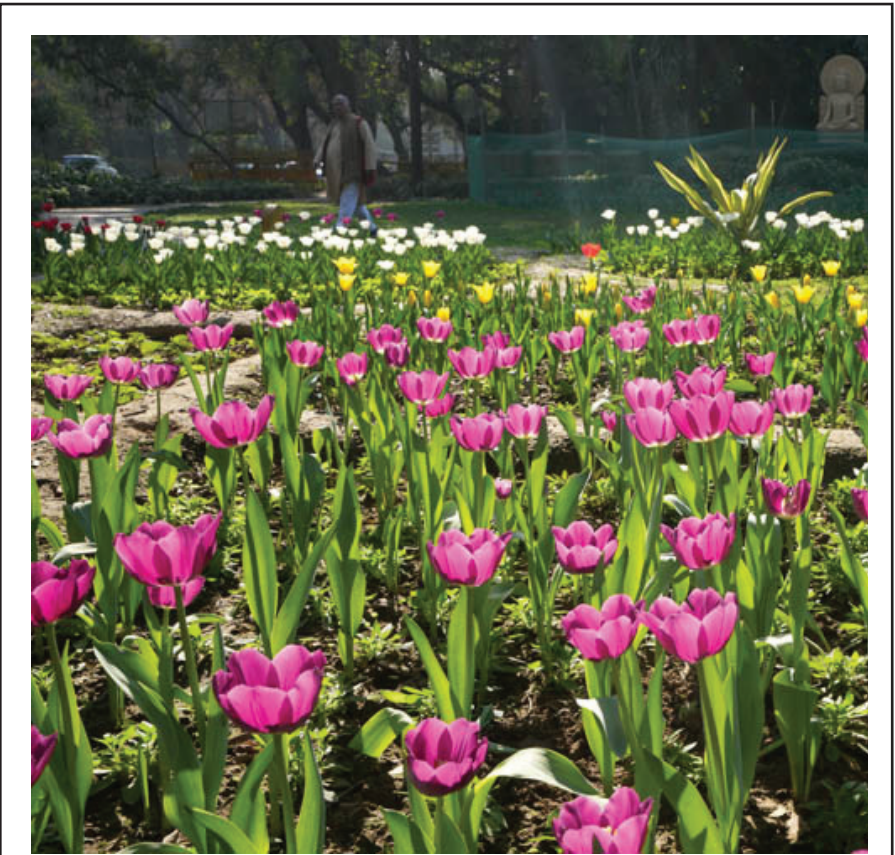
"On February 2, police received a PCR call about a man found lying unconscious. Initially, teams believed the deceased was a

*While Dinesh was allowed to get off at Bawana Chowk, the three held Manoj hostage and forced him to clean the seat with his shirt, the officer said.*

vagabond, as there were no visible injuries. However, after a day of effort, his identity was confirmed through his brother, Jitendra, who had reported him missing," he said.

A postmortem on February 5 revealed severe internal injuries, confirming the nature of the attack.

During a raid, police arrested Sushant Sharma alias Chutkuli, 24, a native of Karala village. A hunt is on to nab Ahish and the third person.



Tulips bloom during the 'Delhi Tulip Festival' organised by the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), in New Delhi. ANI

## 62-year-old man arrested for rape of minor in Sarojini Nagar

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

A 62-year-old man was arrested for allegedly raping a minor girl in Pillanji village of southwest Delhi, an official said on Sunday. The official said that police received information from the Safdarjung Hospital on February 6 about a pregnant minor undergoing medical examination, adding that a police team reached the hospital and collected medical documents.

"Initially, the girl claimed that she was in a consensual relationship with a boy for a year. However, upon further questioning, she revealed that her neighbour had sexually assaulted her four months ago. She stated that he took her to his room and raped her," said the po-



*"Initially, the girl claimed that she was in a consensual relationship with a boy for a year.*

lice officer.

The man allegedly threatened her for the dire consequences, leading her to initially provide false information to doctors out of fear.

A case was registered based on her statement and the accused was arrested by the Sarojini Nagar Police.

## Compressed biogas offers a sustainable solution to Delhi's pollution: Report

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The pollution crisis in Delhi calls for a large-scale shift in agricultural waste management and compressed biogas (CBG) offers a sustainable solution by tackling both stubble burning and vehicular emission, according to a report.

While vehicles contribute 20 per cent to Delhi's pollution in summers and stubble burning 16 per cent, these numbers rise to

30 per cent and 23 per cent in winters respectively, as per the report by Nomura Research Institute Consulting & Solutions India.

"Worse, during peak stubble-burning season, biomass-burning emissions frequently exceed 30 per cent," it said, adding that although the city's toxic air comes from multiple sources' -- vehicle emissions, construction dust, biomass burning, including paddy straw stubble burning, and industrial emissions.



Stressing that CBG can play a key role in tackling Delhi's air pollution, the report said, "A CBG plant producing 10 tons of CBG per day requires about 90

tons of paddy straw. By repurposing this biomass instead of burning it, we can prevent about 270 kilograms of PM (particulate matter) emissions every

*The report, however, said a coordinated effort among the government, private sector, and farmers is essential for the widespread adoption and long-term viability of CBG as a pollution control measure.*

single day."

Citing several sources, the report said, "A staggering 67 per cent of the PM from stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana drifts into Delhi NCR, turning the

region into a gas chamber each winter."

By preventing the burning of paddy straw, a single 10 tons per day CBG plant can eliminate 11,000 to 12,000 kilograms of PM

emissions annually, which is equivalent to replacing 1.5-1.75 lakh petrol cars with electric vehicles, thus keeping Delhi's air cleaner and healthier, it noted.

"It is also equivalent to removing about 25,000 high-polluting pre-BS-VI, older vehicles from the roads," the report added.

The benefits of CBG extend well beyond just pollution reduction as it is a renewable fuel and can be used as a direct substitute for fossil-based CNG and

PNG in transportation, industrial, and household applications.

The report, however, said a coordinated effort among the government, private sector, and farmers is essential for the widespread adoption and long-term viability of CBG as a pollution control measure.

A combination of demand-side and supply-side measures is needed to effectively tackle pollution in Delhi-NCR using CBG, it added.



# PLI SCHEME DRIVES RS 10K CR INVESTMENT IN INDIA'S ELECTRONICS MANUFACTURING

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Production Linked Scheme (PLI) for electronics manufacturing is performing well and it has attracted a cumulative investment of Rs 10,213 crore till December 2024, Union Minister of State for electronics and information technology Jitin Prasada informed Rajya Sabha this week.

Under the special incentive scheme, cumulative production of Rs 662,247 crore and additional employment of 137,189 (direct jobs) has been achieved, the minister said in his written reply.

Driven by the special incentive scheme, the production of mobile phones has increased from about 60 million mobile phones in 2014-15 to about 330 million mobile phones in 2023-24. This is more than 5 times increase in number of mobile phones manufactured over the last 10 years.

In value terms, the production of mobile phones



has increased from a meagre Rs 19,000 crore in 2014-15 to Rs 422,000 crore in 2023-24 growing at a CAGR of 41 per cent.

“Due to policies of the government for promotion of electronics manufacturing, India has become a mobile phone exporter now from a mobile importing country in 2014-15,” the minister said in the written reply.

Further, since the inception of the PLI Scheme for Large Scale Electronics Manufacturing, mobile phone exports have in-

creased from Rs 22,868 crore in 2020-21 to Rs 129,074 crore in 2023-24 growing at a CAGR of 78 per cent.

Further, whereas in 2015, 74 per cent of all mobile phones sold in India were imported, India has now reached a point where 99.2 per cent of the mobile handsets being used in India are made in India.

Apart from manufacturing mobile phones, manufacturing of various electronic components/sub-assemblies for mobile

phones such as batteries, chargers, PCBA, camera modules, display module, enclosures, USB Cable, Ferrite, and Glass covers has also started in India, the minister apprised the upper house through his reply.

“This clearly indicates that the complete ecosystem for mobile phone manufacturing is developing in the country. The existing component manufacturers are expanding their existing capacity and new players are also exploring India as a potential

market,” said the minister.

The government also recognises the contribution of small players producing mainly for domestic markets.

The domestic mobile phone manufacturers under the PLI Scheme have made a cumulative investment of Rs 787 crore, leading to cumulative production of Rs 34,111 crore and generating additional employment of 25,288 (direct jobs) till December 2024.

“As the scheme is performing well, no changes in this scheme are anticipated at present,” the minister's reply concluded.

As part of its ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat’ and ‘Make in India’ plan, the government launched production incentive (PLI) schemes in over a dozen sectors in 2020, to make Indian manufacturers globally competitive, attract investments, enhance exports, integrate India into the global supply chain and reduce dependency on imports.

## India to have own GPU in 3-5 years, 18K AI servers soon: Vaishnaw

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

India is gearing up to make a significant breakthrough in high-end computing by developing its own Graphics Processing Unit (GPU) within the next three to five years, while also working on an indigenous foundational Artificial Intelligence (AI) platform expected to be ready in just 10 months. Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw made these announcements during the Budget Roundtable 2025, organized by India Today and Business Today.

In a major step towards AI development, the government will roll out 18,000 high-end GPU-based computing facilities in the coming days, making advanced computing power accessible to researchers, startups, and academic institutions. This move is crucial for reducing India's reliance on foreign chip manufacturers, particularly Nvidia, which currently dominates over 80%



of the global GPU market.

With AI becoming a critical driver of global innovation, India's efforts to develop self-sufficient semiconductor and AI ecosystems mark a pivotal shift. This article explores India's GPU development strategy, AI advancements, computing infrastructure expansion, and the broader impact of these initiatives on the country's technological future.

Developing an advanced, high-performance GPU requires cutting-edge research, skilled engineering, and robust semiconductor

manufacturing capabilities. According to Vaishnaw, India is considering multiple approaches to achieve this goal, including leveraging open-source GPU architectures, acquiring licensed chip designs, and innovating its own GPU technology from the ground up.

Instead of designing a GPU entirely from scratch, India plans to build upon existing architectures—an approach widely followed worldwide. This strategic pathway enables faster development while reducing the technical and financial barriers that come with semiconductor manufacturing. If executed successfully, India could significantly reduce its dependency on foreign semiconductor companies, strengthening its position in the global high-performance computing industry.

GPUs were initially designed for graphics rendering and multimedia processing but have now become indispensable for AI and machine learning applications.

## ‘India’s trade to hit \$1.8 trillion by 2033, growing at 6.4% CAGR’

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

India's total trade is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6.4 per cent through 2033, reaching USD 1.8 trillion annually, according to a BCG report.

A major factor fueling this surge is India's growing appeal as a production hub for companies looking to diversify supply chains beyond China.

The government's substantial incentives for manufacturing, a vast low-cost workforce, and rapidly improving infrastructure are further strengthening India's position. As a result, the country is becoming a preferred destination for foreign investment and trade collaborations.

India's trade growth will be geographically diverse. Trade with the United States is projected to more than double over the next decade, reaching USD 116 billion by 2033.

This increase reflects deepening political and economic ties between the two largest democracies, particularly in defence and technology sectors.

Additionally, trade with



the European Union, ASEAN, and Africa is expected to expand by approximately 80 per cent. Notably, India's trade with Japan and Mercosur nations is projected to nearly double, while its trade with Australia and South Korea is set to more than triple.

A significant surge is also expected in trade with Russia, driven by increased imports of discounted Russian hydrocarbons.

Europe's trade with India, Turkey, and Africa is expected to accelerate, reinforcing India's role in the global supply chain. The information technology, pharmaceutical, and manufacturing sectors will be key contributors to India's trade expansion with the EU.

India is also becoming in-

creasingly cautious of Chinese investments in sensitive sectors. These economic tensions are further intensified by the ongoing border disputes between the two nations, leading India to seek greater trade partnerships elsewhere.

While India's trade growth with the West remains strong, China's trade with Western economies is expected to slow down. In response, China is strengthening its economic ties with India, Russia, ASEAN, Africa, and Mercosur nations.

However, China's massive trade surpluses, driven by excess capacity in various industries, could face pushback not only from the US and EU but also from India and other trade partners.

## ‘India to focus on energy infrastructure in FY25-30 capex shift’

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

India's capital expenditure from FY25-30 is expected to pivot from public-led transport infrastructure to a more balanced investment in energy infrastructure, which includes electricity generation and the integration of power grids for efficient transmission and distribution, according to BNP Paribas report.

India's economy is expected to remain resilient despite global trade uncertainties and shifting monetary policies. Larger economies like China, India, and the US tend to be less reliant on external trade, making them relatively insulated from the economic risks associated with tariff wars.

India's inward-focused economy is likely to experience less volatility in trade compared to smaller, trade-dependent nations.

The US 10-year bond yield



has increased from 3.7 per cent in September 2024 to 4.5 per cent currently, while India's 10-year yield has remained relatively stable, fluctuating between 6.7 per cent and 6.9 per cent. This has significantly narrowed the yield gap, contributing to a 3 per cent depreciation of the Indian Rupee (INR) since September 2024.

BNP Paribas economists anticipate that US inflation will continue to face upward pressures, preventing any rate cuts in 2025.

Meanwhile, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) may lean towards rate cuts to support economic growth, further compressing the yield gap and exerting downward pressure on the

INR.

Both consumer staples and industrials in India are trading at a premium compared to their historical valuation averages and against other emerging markets. While industrials have gained from India's strong manufacturing momentum, consumer staples are expected to undergo a

## India targets \$10 billion in technical textile exports by 2025-26

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The central government aims to target the export of USD 10 billion worth of technical textiles under its National Technical Textiles Mission. MoS textiles Pabitra Margherita informed Rajya Sabha this week.

To position India as a global leader in technical textiles, the Mission was launched in 2020-21 and has been extended till 2025-26, with a financial outlay of Rs 1,480 crore.

At present, India's technical textile exports are reportedly between USD 2 billion to USD 3 billion.

Technical textiles are defined as textile materials and products used primarily for their technical performance in various high-end



industries.

There are four broad components under the Mission: The first among those is research, innovation and development with an allocation of Rs 1,000 crore.

The next components are promotion and market development with a Rs 50 crore allocation; export promotion with Rs 10 crore;

and education, training, and skill development with a Rs 400 crore outlay.

The mission focuses on research and innovation and indigenous development of machinery and speciality fibres; promoting awareness amongst users; enhancing India's exports of technical textiles; and creating human resources with requisite skills.

## India’s tourism growth boosts investor confidence: Report

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

India's tourism sector, which shattered records in 2023-24, is demonstrating further growth in the current financial year, the hospitality consulting firm Hotelivate said in a report.

In 2023-24, India's hotel inventory grew significantly to 180,403 rooms, marking a 9.2 per cent year-on-year increase.

This expansion was notable not only in major cities such as Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Delhi, but also in growing markets like Dehradun, Jaipur, and Navi Mumbai.

The strong hotel network in other regions suggests a dynamic shift, driven by increased business travel, leisure tourism, and marquee events - cricket, and international conferences, the consulting Hotelivate said.

Demand from Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) is also supporting the tourism industry.

Mumbai, New Delhi, and Bengaluru dominate the landscape, benefiting from a strong mix of MICE and



corporate travel. These cities show high room revenue per key, indicative of premium pricing and strong occupancy rates. Mumbai saw a substantial increase in room revenue, growing by over 61 per cent year-on-year, solidifying its lead as the top city for room revenue.

“This widespread expansion indicates strong investor confidence and rising demand across multiple segments of India's hotel industry,” the report read.

The surge in domestic tourism post-COVID has encouraged travellers to explore Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities, attracting heightened interest from investors eager to develop these areas.

As a result, emerging destinations are gaining visibility, becoming attractive not only for leisure and busi-

ness travel but also for investment and development opportunities.

Hotelivate's ‘Trends and Opportunities’ report primarily focuses on the top 20 hotel markets in India.

However, it is important to highlight several additional towns and cities that have captured the attention of hotel developers and operators over the past year. Hotelivate has conducted various studies in the Northeastern states, including key destinations such as Guwahati, Shillong, Gangtok, Siliguri, and Makaibari, along with several pristine tea estates and scenic trails. Among smaller towns attracting developer interest, Indore, Bhopal, Nagpur, Jodhpur, Chikmagalur, and Thiruvananthapuram emerged as notable contenders.

## PM Ujjwala Yojana reaches 10.33 cr connections: Hardeep Puri

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

About 10.33 crore Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) free gas connections have been provided across the country since its launch in May 2016, petroleum and natural gas minister Hardeep Puri informed Lok Sabha this week.

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) was launched to provide deposit-free LPG connections to adult women from poor households.

India has taken a huge stride in making cooking fuel clean and sustainable through its PM Ujjwala Yojana. Usage of traditional cooking fuels had detrimental impacts on the health of rural women as well as on the environment.

The target to release 8 crore connections under PMUY was achieved in September 2019.

To cover the remaining poor households, Ujjwala 2.0 was launched in August 2021 with a target to release 1 crore additional PMUY connections, which was achieved in January 2022.



Subsequently, the government decided to release 60 lakh more LPG connections under Ujjwala 2.0 and the target of 1.60 crore Ujjwala 2.0 connections has been achieved during December 2022.

Further, the government approved the release of an additional 75 lakh connections under the free gas scheme for the period 2023-24 to 2025-26 which has already been achieved in July 2024.

“As a result of these efforts, LPG coverage in the country has improved from 62 per cent in April 2016 to near saturation now. No targets for new connections under PMUY have been set,” the minister said in his written reply.



# DEPORTATION OF ILLEGAL MIGRANTS: A STEP TOWARDS FAIR IMMIGRATION

## OPINION

PROF. (DR.) DEEVANSHU SHRIVASTAVA



The issue of illegal migration has been a pressing concern for countries worldwide, including the United States. Over the years, the U.S. has grappled with the challenge of undocumented migrants who enter the country through various means, often overstaying their visas or crossing borders unlawfully. In recent developments, the deportation of illegal Indian migrants from the U.S. has gained momentum, leading to widespread debate. While some view this measure as harsh, it is a necessary step in ensuring legal order, safeguarding national interests, and maintaining the integrity of immigration policies. Illegal migration poses significant socio-economic and security challenges for host countries. The United States, with its robust economy and high standard of living, has always been an attractive destination for individuals seeking better opportunities. However, unlawful entry into the country undermines the legal immigration

system, places additional burdens on public services, and creates security vulnerabilities. The deportation of illegal migrants, including those from India, is not an act of discrimination but a justified measure to uphold the rule of law. Every sovereign nation has the right to regulate its borders and enforce immigration laws, ensuring that individuals enter and reside within the country through legal means. The deportation of illegal migrants from the USA to India is governed by various legal frameworks and agreements between the two nations. In the United States, immigration laws such as the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), also known as the McCarran-Walter Act, provide the legal basis for the removal of individuals who violate visa terms, enter unlawfully, or engage in criminal activities.

One of the primary reasons behind the deportation of illegal migrants is the strain they place on public resources. The U.S. government allocates substantial funds to provide healthcare, education, and welfare services. When undocumented individuals access these services without contributing through legal employment and taxation, it places an undue burden on taxpayers. Additionally, illegal employment deprives American workers and lawful immigrants of job opportunities, leading to wage suppression



in certain sectors. By deporting those who are in violation of immigration laws, the government ensures that its resources are directed towards those who enter the country legally and contribute to its development. Security concerns also play a crucial role in the decision to deport illegal migrants. Unregulated migration can be exploited by criminal networks involved in human trafficking, drug smuggling, and other illicit activities. Without proper documentation and background checks, it becomes challenging for authorities to monitor individuals who might pose a risk to national security. By enforcing deportation policies, the U.S. strengthens its internal security measures, ensuring that only individuals who have undergone the necessary legal scrutiny are allowed to reside within its borders.

From an ethical and legal standpoint, deportation is a fair approach to handling illegal migration. Countries like the U.S. have well-

*In the United States, immigration laws such as the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), also known as the McCarran-Walter Act, provide the legal basis for the removal of individuals who violate visa terms, enter unlawfully, or engage in criminal activities.*

defined immigration procedures that allow foreign nationals to apply for visas, work permits, and permanent residency. When individuals circumvent these processes and enter unlawfully, they undermine the principles of fairness and justice. Many prospective migrants follow the legal route, patiently waiting for approvals while ensuring compliance with the law. Granting leniency to illegal entrants would be unfair to those who abide by regulations, creating an imbalance in the immigration system. Deportation serves as a deterrent, reinforcing the importance of lawful entry and residence. The impact of deportation extends beyond the borders

of the United States. For India, the return of illegal migrants presents challenges and opportunities. Many of those deported have spent significant time abroad and may find it difficult to reintegrate into Indian society. However, their return also brings potential benefits. With experience gained from their time in the U.S., these individuals can contribute to India's workforce and economy. The Indian government must take proactive measures to facilitate their reintegration, providing them with employment opportunities, skill development programs, and support to rebuild their lives. Furthermore, deportation highlights the need for better awareness and regula-

tion of migration channels in India. Many illegal migrants fall prey to fraudulent agents who promise them a prosperous life in the U.S., only to leave them in precarious situations upon arrival. Stricter regulations, public awareness campaigns, and cooperation between Indian and U.S. authorities can help curb illegal migration at its root, ensuring that individuals seeking to move abroad do so through legitimate channels. While the deportation of illegal migrants may seem harsh, it is a necessary step for upholding the integrity of immigration laws. It is essential to distinguish between humanitarian concerns and legal obligations.

In conclusion, the deportation of illegal Indian migrants from the U.S. is a justified and necessary step towards ensuring legal order, protecting national resources, and maintaining security. It underscores the importance of adhering to immigration laws and seeking legal pathways for migration. While the deportees may face challenges upon their return, it also presents an opportunity for India to strengthen its workforce and regulate migration processes more effectively. Countries must continue to collaborate to address the root causes of illegal migration, ensuring that individuals seeking better opportunities do so through lawful means. Ultimately, a well-regulated immigration system benefits both the host and home countries, fostering stability, economic growth, and global cooperation.

*Prof. (Dr.) Deevanshu Shrivastava, Founding Dean and Professor, GL Bajaj Institute of Law, Greater Noida.*

# Is hard work enough? Can it alone guarantee success?

## OPINION

DR BENAZIR PATIL



For generations, Indian parents have drilled into their children's heads the golden mantra: "Work hard, and success will follow!" It's an uplifting thought, often packaged with bedtime stories of ants carrying food grains, labourers sweating under the sun, and that one distant uncle who studied under a streetlight and became an IAS officer. Hard work, indeed, remains a crucial foundation for success, shaping discipline, resilience, and perseverance. However, in today's India, while effort is indispensable, success also depends on networking, access to resources, and adaptability. And of course, the occasional stroke of luck!

Hard work has always been a powerful tool for success. Our grandparents take pride in how they overcame adversity, earned their degrees, secured stable jobs, and built homes through sheer dedication. While these values remain relevant, modern India presents a more dynamic landscape where additional factors like strategy, adaptability, and access to opportunities play a critical role in determining success.



A farmer's dedication to his land remains unwavering, yet his income may fluctuate based on market prices, government policies, and unpredictable monsoons. Meanwhile, digital entrepreneurs and influencers have leveraged new-age platforms to create opportunities that were unimaginable a decade ago. This is not to say that hard work has lost its value—rather, its application has evolved in a world driven by technology, networking, and innovation.

Gone are the days when academic toppers alone automatically secured the best jobs. Today, building meaningful relationships and expanding one's network can open doors that talent and effort alone might struggle to unlock. For instance, access to resources, is definitely the multiplier of hard work. Consider two students preparing for IIT-JEE. One has access to premier coaching institutes, extensive online resources, and mentorship, while the other relies on self-study with borrowed books and patchy internet. Both put in immense effort, but the former has a clear advantage due to superior resources and guidance.

In today's India, adaptability is just as critical as effort. Auto-rickshaw drivers who embraced ride-hailing apps like Ola and Uber saw increased earnings, while street vendors who adopted online delivery models during the pandemic managed to sustain their livelihoods. Those who upskilled in emerging fields like AI, digital marketing, and data science found new career paths, proving that evolving with the times is key to long-term success.

Does hard work still matter? Absolutely—it remains the bedrock of any meaningful achievement. But in today's fast-changing world, success is shaped by a blend of effort, strategic thinking, social capital, and resourcefulness. While challenges like unequal access to opportunities persist, inspiring stories of self-made achievers continue to emerge, proving that perseverance, adaptability, and smart decision-making can bridge many gaps.

So, should we work hard? Without a doubt. But let's also work smart—seizing opportunities, building meaningful connections, and staying open to change. After all, success today is not just about the hours we put in, but how effectively we channel our efforts.

And who knows—maybe that perfect mix of dedication and strategy could even turn someone into India's next top influencer.

*Dr Benazir Patil is the Chief Executive Officer of a non-profit organization called SCHOOL that works for ensuring good health & well-being.*

# Government approves data protection rules, paving the way for implementation

## OPINION

PARTH GAUTAM & PRAGATI SOLANKI



The long-anticipated Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act 2023 has moved closer to enforcement following the Home Ministry's clearance of draft rules. This approval marks a crucial step in India's evolving data protection framework, aiming to safeguard user data and impose stringent accountability on data handlers.

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) is pre-

paring to unveil the draft regulations for public consultation, a necessary step before they are formally enacted and phased in. This progress is significant, as the DPDP Act, which was enacted over 16 months ago, has been inoperative due to pending rule finalization. The Act seeks to establish a comprehensive legal framework for handling personal data, ensuring transparency, and empowering users with greater control over

their information.

Key Provisions and Regulatory Delays

The delay in implementation has hindered essential aspects such as data privacy safeguards, minimization principles, purpose-specific data use, and enforcement penalties. The finalized rules aim to address these concerns by detailing user consent mechanisms, data handling protocols, and compliance schedules. The Act also lays down strict guidelines on the lawful processing of data and mandates that organizations disclose data collection and usage purposes clearly to users.

A key feature of the DPDP Act is its focus on consumer rights. Organizations found responsible for data breaches could face penalties reaching Rs 250 crore per incident, reinforcing corporate accountability and encouraging robust data protection measures. Additionally, specific guidelines for managing consent for minors will bolster child data protection, ensuring that their personal information is handled with extra caution. Compliance Timeline and

Industry Transition

Authorities have indicated a transition period of 18 to 24 months for companies to adjust, aligning with international best practices, which typically allow 12 to 30 months for similar adaptations. This timeline provides organizations ample opportunity to revamp their data protection policies and adopt stringent security measures.

Ensuring that government departments, private stakeholders, and regulatory bodies are aligned on implementation has been a priority. Some ministries previously expressed concerns regarding user consent frameworks, prompting additional time for compliance adjustments. Meanwhile, private enterprises, particularly in sectors dealing with large-scale personal data, have sought an extended compliance window to incorporate the necessary technical and policy changes.

Impact on Digital Learning and EdTech Industry

India's growing dependence on online education and EdTech platforms has underscored the necessity for stringent data protec-

tion laws. As educational institutions amass increasing amounts of personal and academic information, ensuring its security has become imperative. The proliferation of online learning tools and remote education has heightened concerns regarding the ethical handling of student data.

The DPDP Act mandates explicit consent, data minimization, and the appointment of Data Protection Officers (DPOs) to align India's regulations with global norms. However, rural and under-resourced educational institutions may face challenges in adopting these measures due to technological limitations and lack of expertise. Many smaller institutions may struggle with compliance due to limited digital infrastructure and awareness of data security protocols.

To facilitate compliance, efforts should be made to educate educators and administrators on data privacy laws. The government could introduce training initiatives and compliance support mechanisms to ensure smooth adaptation. Furthermore, EdTech companies

operating internationally must navigate cross-border data transfer regulations, a challenge that requires ongoing oversight and regulatory cooperation between nations.

Looking Ahead

With public consultations on the draft rules set to begin soon, the DPDP Act is progressing toward full execution. While the law is a significant milestone in India's digital policy, its efficacy will depend on how well public and private entities adapt to and enforce its provisions.

As India strengthens its cybersecurity and data protection laws, the implementation of the DPDP Act will be instrumental in shaping the future of digital privacy, education technology, and consumer data rights. The successful rollout of these regulations will be a defining moment in India's digital evolution, establishing a robust framework for responsible data governance and ensuring that personal information remains protected in an increasingly data-driven world.

*Parth Gautam (Advocate, New Delhi & Pragati Solanki (Assistant professor, HLM Group of Institutions)*



# THE EVOLVING LEADERSHIP OF DELHI

*Delhi's leadership evolved from Brahm Prakash in 1952 to Atishi Marlena in 2025, with significant shifts in political dynamics, governance, and urban development throughout the years.*

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Delhi, the National Capital Territory of India, has seen a significant evolution in its leadership. Brahm Prakash of the Indian National Congress (INC) was the first Chief Minister in 1952. However, the States Reorganisation Act of 1956 abolished the position for 37 years, with Delhi governed directly by the central government.

In 1991, the 69th Amendment granted Delhi the status of a National Capital Territory (NCT), with an elected legislature. The first election after this change in 1993 saw Madan Lal Khurana of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) take office, signaling a new political era.

The longest-serving Chief



Delhi Secretariat

mentors. Upon returning to India, he joined the Atomic Energy programme, working in Bombay from 1948 to 1950.

In 1951, Prakash became



Atishi Marlena in the Chief Minister's Office

Minister, Sheila Dikshit of INC, transformed Delhi over 15 years (1998-2013) through urban development and reforms. In 2013, Arvind Kejriwal of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) made history as the first state party CM, marking a shift in Delhi's political landscape. His leadership continues to shape the capital's future.

**Brahm Prakash:** He was a renowned metallurgist recognized for his contributions to nuclear materials in India. Born in Lahore, he earned his doctorate in physical metallurgy from Punjab University in 1942. Prakash furthered his studies in the United States at MIT, where he earned a Sc.D. in Mineral Engineering and Metallurgical Thermodynamics under notable

the Head of the Department of Metallurgy at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), where he played a crucial role in establishing and expanding the department. Under his leadership, the department grew both in research output and academic development. Prakash's work contributed significantly to India's atomic energy initiatives and the advancement of metallurgical research, leaving a lasting impact on the field of nuclear materials in India.

**Gurmukh Nihal Singh:** He was the first Governor of Rajasthan[3] and second Chief Minister of Delhi from 1955 to 1956 and was a Congress leader.[4] He was the successor of Brahm Prakash and assumed office in 1955 just for one year. The noted

LIST OF CHIEF MINISTERS OF DELHI			
S.No.	Chief Minister	In Office	Political Party
1.	Brahm Prakash	1952-55	Indian National Congress
2.	Gurmukh Nihal Singh	1955-56	Indian National Congress
3.	Madan Lal Khurana	1993-96	Bharatiya Janata Party
4.	Sahib Singh Verma	1996-98	Bharatiya Janata Party
5.	Sushma Swaraj	1998-98	Bharatiya Janata Party
6.	Sheila Dikshit	1998-2003	Indian National Congress
		2003-2008	Indian National Congress
		2008-2013	Indian National Congress
7.	Arvind Kejriwal	2013-2014	Aam Aadmi Party
		2015-2020	Aam Aadmi Party
		2020-2024	Aam Aadmi Party
8.	Atishi Marlena	2024-2025	Aam Aadmi Party

journalist and editor of The Statesman, Surendra Nihal Singh (1929-2018) was Gurmukh Nihal Singh's son.

As after that States Reorganisation Act, 1956 was passed which made Delhi a Union Territory. Thus, no one was appointed the next CM of Delhi until legislative assembly elections in Delhi were held in 1993, (succeeded by Madan Lal Khurana) when Union Territory of Delhi was formally declared as National Capital Territory of Delhi by the Sixty-ninth Amendment to the Indian constitution and formed Delhi Metropolitan Council.

**NO OFFICE:** The Delhi Chief Minister Office was abolished during 1st November 1956 to 1st December 1993. So there was no

chief minister during that period.

**Madan Lal Khurana:** He was an Indian politician who served as the 3rd Chief Minister of Delhi from 1993 to 1996. He was also the Governor of Rajasthan in 2004. Born in British India, Khurana was known as Dilli ka Sher in his party. He was the Union Minister of Parliamentary affairs and Tourism in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government. Khurana was a member of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the Bharatiya Janata Party. BJP suffered badly in 1984 general elections, held after the death of Indira Gandhi. Khurana is credited with reviving the party in India's capital, New Delhi. He worked tirelessly, which earned him the title of 'Dilli Ka Sher' (Lion of Delhi). He was the Chief Minister of Delhi from 1993 until he resigned in 1996. The party declined to re-instate him and preferred staying with Sahib Singh Verma. He along with Kedar Nath Sahani and Vijay Kumar Malhotra kept the party afloat in New Delhi for more than four decades spanning from 1960 to 2000.

**Sushma Swaraj:** She was an Indian lawyer, politician and diplomat who served as the Former Chief Minister of

Delhi, and also the Minister of External Affairs of India in the first Narendra Modi government from 2014 to 2019. She was the second person to complete a 5-year term as the Minister of External Affairs, after Jawaharlal Nehru. A senior leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Swaraj was the second woman to hold the office of Minister of External Affairs, after Indira Gandhi. She was elected seven times as a Member of Parliament and three times as a Member of the Legislative Assembly. At the age of 25 in 1977, she became the youngest cabinet minister of the Indian state of Haryana. She also served as Chief Minister of Delhi for a short duration in 1998 and became the first female Chief Minister of Delhi.

In the 2014 Indian general election, Swaraj won the Vidisha constituency in Madhya Pradesh for a second term, retaining her seat by a margin of over 400,000 votes.[5] She became the Minister of External Affairs in the union cabinet on 26 May 2014. Swaraj was called India's "best-loved politician" by the US daily Wall Street Journal.[6][7] She decided not to contest the 2019 Indian general election as she



Former CMs of Delhi: Sheila Dikshit with Sushma Swaraj at the 14th meeting of National Integration Council in New Delhi in 2008. File Photo



Aam Aadmi Party convener Arvind Kejriwal takes charge of office as Delhi Chief Minister at Delhi Secretariat, in New Delhi, Monday, February 17, 2020. File Photo

was recovering from a kidney transplant and needed to "save herself from dust and stay safe from infection" and hence did not join the second Modi Ministry in 2019. According to the doctors at AIIMS New Delhi, Swaraj succumbed to a cardiac arrest following a heart attack on the night of 6 August 2019. She was awarded the Padma Vibhushan, In-

January 2019 to led general election in Delhi and remained in office until her death in July later that year.

**President's Rule:** There was President's Rule for one year beginning 14 February 2014 after 48 days of government of Arvind Kejriwal in Delhi from 28 December 2013.

**Arvind Kejriwal:** He, the 7th Chief Minister of Delhi,

Kejriwal was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in connection with a liquor scam involving the Delhi government. This made him the first sitting Chief Minister in India to be arrested. His party leaders, including Manish Sisodia and Satyendra Jain, also faced arrests. The arrest occurred just weeks before the 2024 general elections,



Madan Lal Khurana during election campaign in Delhi. File Photo

dia's second highest civilian award, posthumously in 2020 in the field of Public Affairs.

**Sheila Dikshit:** She was the longest-serving chief minister of Delhi, as well as the longest-serving female chief minister in Indian history; she served for a period of 15 years beginning in 1998. Dikshit led the Indian National Congress party to three consecutive electoral victories in Delhi. Dikshit lost the December 2013 elections of the Delhi Legislative Assembly to the Bharatiya Janata Party, though Aam Aadmi Party formed a minority government with outside support from the INC, with Arvind Kejriwal as the chief minister. She briefly served as the Governor of Kerala in 2014. Dikshit was later declared a chief ministerial candidate for the Indian National Congress in the 2017 Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly election, but withdrew her nomination (Akhilesh Yadav were announced as candidate). She was appointed president of Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee on 10

has been a prominent political figure since the formation of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in 2012. A former officer in the Indian Revenue Service and a graduate from IIT Kharagpur, Kejriwal was awarded the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 2006 for his work in using the Right to Information (RTI) to fight government corruption through the Parivartan movement. This activism laid the groundwork for his political career.

In 2013, Kejriwal became Delhi's Chief Minister but resigned after 49 days, citing his failure to push through an anti-corruption bill. His party, AAP, returned to power in 2015, securing an unprecedented majority in Delhi's Legislative Assembly elections. Kejriwal was re-elected and continued to push for better governance, education, healthcare, and infrastructure in Delhi, which earned him significant support. In 2020, AAP retained power in Delhi, further cementing Kejriwal's position as a leading figure.

However, in March 2024,

leading to accusations from opposition parties of political retaliation. Kejriwal was granted bail in May 2024, but his political future was marked by his resignation as Delhi's Chief Minister in September 2024. He lost his seat in the 2025 Delhi Legislative Assembly elections, marking a significant shift in his political journey.

**Atishi Marlena Singh:** She served as the 8th Chief Minister of Delhi since 21 September 2024 after resignation of Arvind Kejriwal till 8th February 2025 and is now serving as the Care-taker Chief Minister of Delhi until a new government is formed. She belongs to the Aam Aadmi Party and is a member of its Political Affairs Committee, the governing body of the party. Prior to her appointment as the chief minister, she also served as the Minister of Education, P.W.D, Culture and Tourism in the Delhi Government. Previously, she served as advisor to the former Deputy Chief Minister of Delhi, Manish Sisodia, primarily on education, from July 2015 to 17 April 2018.



Sahib Singh Verma (Centre) on stage during a rally in Delhi. File Photo



## SUPERANNUATION FUNDS: LIMIT OF DEDUCTION OF EMPLOYER'S CONTRIBUTION APPLIES TO INITIAL/ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION, NOT ADDITIONAL PAYMENTS, SAYS DELHI HIGH COURT

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court in the case The Commissioner Of Income Tax - International Taxation -3 v. Standard Chartered Grindlays Ltd observed and has held that the limit prescribed under Section 36(1)(iv) of the Income Tax Act 1961, on deductions that an employer can seek for contributions made towards superannuation funds, applies only at the stage of setting up the fund or making ordinary annual payments.

The Division bench comprising of Justice Yashwant Varma and Justice Harish Vaidyanathan Shankar was hearing the present matter.

The bench in the case stated that any contribution made additionally in discharge of an overarching obligation would not be rendered as a disallowable expense.

The court also upheld an ITAT order, wherein the court allowed an employer to fully claim the contributions of 9.81 crores it had made towards approved pension funds.

The court referred to the case of Commissioner of In-



come Tax vs. Sirpur Paper Mills, wherein the Supreme Court held that contributions not made for recognition or approval of the fund fall outside the limits that could be prescribed under Section 36(1)(iv).

The High Court in the case observed that the phraseology employed in Section 36(1)(iv) and when it speaks of 'subject to such conditions as the Board made deem fit to specify in cases' is to be read along and in juxtaposition with the expression 'for the purpose of recognising the provident fund or approving the superannuation fund.'

Adding to it, the court stated that the prescription of limits to the extent of contribution that could

be treated as deductible was hinged to the power of the CBDT impose such conditions for the purposes of recognition or approval of a provident fund or superannuation fund. These were thus recognised by the Supreme Court to be qualifying conditions for the purposes of recognition as distinguishable from the extent of contribution that may be made in a particular year.

Further, the court in the case pointed out that Section 40A(9), which relates to expenses not deductible in certain circumstances, also relates to deductions in connection with the 'setting up' or 'formation of' or 'as contribution to any fund'.

Adding to it, the court stat-

ed that the disqualification which is then introduced by sub-section (10) of Section 40A too is coupled to the limits that may be prescribed in the provisions specified therein including Section 36(1)(iv).

The dispute relates to as to this case was whether ITAT erred in allowing deduction of 9.81 crores as expenditure on account of contribution to approved pension funds.

The Revenue argued before the court that such kind of deduction breached the limits prescribed by Section 36(1)(iv).

It has been stated that laws peg contribution at not exceeding 27% of the salary of an employee for each year.

The High Court cited

the case of Principal Commissioner of Income Tax vs. Exide Industries Ltd., wherein the Calcutta High Court had held that the limits that the CBDT could prescribe would only apply to an initial or an ordinary annual contribution.

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case held that, 'The limitations have been prescribed only for the initial contribution and ordinary annual contribution to the funds. Thus, the consequence that would follow is that any other contribution made other than initial contribution or an ordinary annual contribution, would not be covered under the rules and no ceiling has been fixed with regard to the amount of such contribution.'

Accordingly, the court dismissed the Revenue Appeal.

The counsel, Mr. Indruj Singh Rai, SSC with Mr. Sanjeev Menon, Mr. Rahul Singh, JSCs, Mr. Anmol Jagga & Mr. Gaurav Kumar, Advs for Appellant.

The counsel, Ms. Shashi M. Kapila, Mr. Praveesh Sharma & Mr. Sushil Kumar, Advs represented the Respondent.

## Allahabad High Court seeks details of UP govt's policy for withdrawal of stale and ineffective criminal cases



TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Allahabad High Court in the case observed and has called for the affidavits of top government officials seeking the responses of them on the state's policy to withdraw stale and ineffective criminal cases.

The bench headed by Justice Saurabh Lavania was hearing the present matter.

The bench in the case observed and has directed the government's Principal Secretary (Home), Director General of Prosecution, and Principal Secretary (Law) for filing their responses By March 19, 2025.

The court in the case was hearing the petition filed by an accused i.e., Madhukar Sharma, who sought for quashing of the Chargesheet and summoning order dated February 11, 1994 passed by the Court of ACJM, Lucknow, as well as the entire proceedings of a rioting case.

On January 10, the court stayed the entire criminal proceedings initiated in this 34-year-old case against Sharma, while taking into account the inordinate delay caused by the State or prosecution in concluding the case.

Further, the court directed the Uttar Pradesh

government's Director General (Prosecution) and Additional Chief Secretary (Home Department) to file their affidavits regarding the State Government's litigation policy.

On January 30, the bench examined the policies formulated by the states of Assam and Himachal Pradesh for the withdrawal of stale and ineffective criminal cases.

Further, the court decided to seek details of any similar policy, if framed, by the Government of Uttar Pradesh.

The counsel, Advocate Ali Bin Saif, assisted by Advocate Kaif Hasan, appeared for the accused applicant.

## Punjab and Haryana High Court: State must ensure only competent lawyers are appointed to represent it, cannot afford misinformation in matters of life and liberty

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Punjab and Haryana High Court in the case Subhash Chander Dutt v. State of Haryana observed and has stated that, 'the State is obligated to ensure that only competent and ethical professionals are entrusted with the responsibility of representing the State before the Court.'

The bench headed by Justice Manjari Nehru Kaul stated that, 'the legal system cannot afford the luxury of laxity or misinformation in matters where liberty and life are at stake.'

The said development came following the demise of an an undertrial awaiting medical bail, the Court flagged the failure of Haryana government counsel who made misleading submissions before the Court.

The court in the case reminded that it being incumbent upon a State counsel to present facts with absolute accuracy, without suppression, distortion or misrepresenta-



*The bench headed by Justice Manjari Nehru Kaul stated that, 'the legal system cannot afford the luxury of laxity or misinformation in matters where liberty and life are at stake.'*

tion.

The court observed that the Supreme Court has repeatedly emphasized that 'a public prosecutor must uphold the highest standards of integrity and objectivity, ensuring that justice is not compromised due to negligence, misrepresentation, or concealment of facts.'

The court stated that

certain foundational principles governing the conduct of public prosecutors and State counsel including following:

- a public prosecutor is an officer of the Court, not a mouthpiece for the police or the State. The duty of them is to ensure that justice is served, irrespective of the verdict of the Court.
- Suppressing material

facts, misrepresenting or misleading the Court in any manner constitutes a serious violation of prosecutorial ethics and an affront to judicial integrity.

It has been observed that it being pertinent to note that the Supreme Court recently bemoaned the trend of Governments appointing Government Pleaders and Public Prosecutors in High Courts on political considerations.

The court in the case stated that 'favouritism and nepotism' should not be factors while appointing Government Pleaders and Public Prosecutors.

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court in the case Aditya Birla Fashion And Retail Limited Versus Friends Inc And Anr observed and has declared 'Peter England', an international menswear brand, as a well-known trademark under Section 2(1)(zg) of the Trade Marks Act, 1999.

The bench headed by Justice Mini Pushkarna in the case stated that, 'This court is of the view that the mark of the plaintiff, "PETER ENGLAND" is entitled to be declared as a "Well-Known" mark. Accordingly, it is so declared'

The court in the case noted that the brand has spent a huge amount on the endorsement of its products by various actors like Ayushman Khurrana as well as players of Chennai Super Kings Cricket Team.

The court also stated that, 'The said public figures have regularly acted as the brand ambassador of the plaintiff's product and represented the plaintiff's product on various leading newspapers, journals,



including, Times of India.'

The bench headed by Justice Pushkarna noted that the trademark 'PETER ENGLAND' has become distinctive and has acquired secondary significance with respect to its goods and business.

The court in the case stated that purchasing public, the trade and industry at large identify and distinguish the Aditya Birla Fashion's goods under the trademark 'PETER ENGLAND' with the company and from its source and origin alone.

The court noted that the

*The court in the case noted that the brand has spent a huge amount on the endorsement of its products by various actors like Ayushman Khurrana as well as players of Chennai Super Kings Cricket Team.*

brand sales turnover was of approximately Rs. 1289 Crores for the year 2023-2024 and that approximately Rs. 31 Crores were spent on advertisement promotional expenses for the year in question.

The court while considering the facts and circum-

stances of the case stated that the decree is passed in favour of the plaintiff in terms of prayer (e) of the plaint, declaring the plaintiff's trademark PETER ENGLAND as a well-known trademark under Section 2(1)(zg) of the Trade Marks Act, 1999.

## CB-CID informs Madras High Court: Chargesheet filed against three for mixing feces in water tank

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Madras High Court in the case K Rajkamal v. Secretary to Government and others has informed the CB-CID that it has filed a chargesheet against three persons in connection with the unfortunate incident of mixing human feces in an overhead water tank in Vengaiyaval in Pudukottai District.

In 2022, the unfortunate incident came to light, when human feces were found dumped in a water tank which was the only source of potable water for the people belonging

to the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities in the area. Thus, unaware of the mixing, the villagers (mostly belonging to scheduled caste communities) consumed the water for almost a week causing various health problems and agony.

The counsel, Additional Advocate General J Ravindran submitted before the bench comprising of Chief Justice KR Shriram and Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy.

The court in the case was hearing the two petitions filed seeking a CBI inquiry into the matter.



In 2023, the court had also appointed a One-Man Commission of Justice M

Sathyannarayanan (retired judge of Madras High Court) to look into the is-

sue. Thus, the one-man commission had also filed an interim report regard-

*The counsel, Additional Advocate General J Ravindran submitted before the bench comprising of Chief Justice KR Shriram and Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy.*

ing the tardy investigation conducted by the CBCID.

Following the same, the court had also censured the CBCID regarding the long delay in conducting the investigation.

The CBCID filed an affidavit informing the court that it had filed a chargesheet against three persons in connection with the case.

The affidavit filed also

suggested that the incident was a result of a personal enmity between the accused persons and the husband of the Panchayat President.

The counsel, Advocate GS Mani, appearing for the petitioners, argued before the court that the CB-CID's chargesheet did not inspire confidence.

The Advocate GS Mani also pointed out that

though the case was initially registered under the SC/ST Act, the present chargesheet did not mention any offense under the Act.

It has also been pointed out by Advocate GS Mani the interim report of the one-man commission and argued that the CB-CID seemed to have filed the chargesheet merely to close the case and had not conducted a proper investigation. Thus, he also sought time to reply to the CB-CID's affidavit.

Accordingly, the court listed the matter for further consideration on March 27, 2025.



TOP OF THE DAY

EARTHQUAKE OF  
MAGNITUDE 4  
JOLTS TIBET

TIBET: An earthquake of 4.0 magnitude on Richter Scale jolted Tibet on Sunday, a statement by the National Center of Seismology said. As per the NCS, the earthquake occurred at a depth of 16km, making it susceptible to aftershocks. "EQ of M: 4.0, On: 09/02/2025 13:07:04 IST, Lat: 29.13 N, Long: 86.64 E, Depth: 16 Km, Location: Tibet," NCS said in a post on X. On February 2, an earthquake of 4.1 magnitude on Richter Scale occurred in the area at a depth of 5km.

TAIWAN LAUNCHES  
HEALTH PROJECT IN  
GUATEMALA

TAIPEI :Taiwan Embassy in Guatemala on Saturday donated 990 tons of white rice and launched a new public health project in partnership with the Taiwan International Cooperation and Development Fund (ICDF) and the US-based NGO Food For The Poor, Taiwan News reported. Ambassador Vivia Chang highlighted that the rice donation represents Taiwan's successful partnership with international NGOs to improve food security in Guatemala.

SRI LANKAN NAVY  
ARRESTS 14 INDIAN  
FISHERMEN

COLOMBO: Sri Lankan authorities have arrested 14 Indian fishermen and seized their trawlers for allegedly venturing into the territorial waters of the island nation, the Navy said on Sunday. The arrests took place during a special operation conducted in the sea area north of Mannar on Saturday, the Sri Lankan Navy said in a statement. "The Sri Lanka Navy seized 2 Indian fishing boats and apprehended 14 Indian fishermen while they were poaching in Sri Lankan waters," it said. Sri Lanka is the neighbor of India and shares water borders with it near Tamil Nadu. Indian fishermen while fishing sometimes crossed the water border unknowingly and get caught by the Sri Lankan border force.

PAK SECURITY FORCES  
DEMOLISH BUNKERS  
IN KURRAM

PESHAWAR: Pakistani security forces have demolished 10 more bunkers in the strife-torn Kurram district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province as part of a peace agreement reached between warring Sunni and Shia tribes, officials said on Sunday. The peace accord was signed between Alizai and Bagan tribes on January 4 after sectarian clashes resulted in the killing of 133 people in the district between November 21 and December 2. Under the agreement, residents pledged to surrender their weapons to the government in different phases within 15 days, while the dismantling of local bunkers is set to be completed by the end of February.

ISRAELI FORCE WITHDRAWS FROM  
GAZA'S NETZARIM CORRIDOR: HAMAS

AGENCIES  
JERUSALEM

The Israeli military has withdrawn from an area of Gaza known as the Netzarim corridor that bisects the enclave, Hamas said on Sunday, a move that was expected under the ceasefire agreement between Israel and the Palestinian militant group.

An Israeli security source, requesting anonymity as they were not authorized to speak publicly, confirmed the Israeli military was withdrawing from its positions in central Gaza. Israeli forces had already reduced their presence there.

Hamas celebrated the withdrawal as a victory and the Hamas-run police force deployed to the area to manage the flow Palestinians crossing through. The Israeli military had no immediate comment.

Media footage showed what appeared to be Israeli military vehicles moving away from the coast and towards the Israeli border.

Since the early months of the war Israeli forces had occupied the roughly 4 mile-long corridor south of Gaza City that stretches

SUMMARY



Palestinians wait to cross through a checkpoint run by U.S. and Egyptian security contractors after Israeli forces withdrew from the Netzarim Corridor amid a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, near Gaza City, February 9, 2025.

- No immediate comment from Israeli military on withdrawal
- Israel established corridor in early months of the war
- Corridor had cut off Gaza's north from south
- Thousands of Palestinians return north in recent weeks

from the Israeli border to the Mediterranean Sea.

The corridor cut off Gaza's northern communities, including its largest metropolitan area, from the south.

Thousands of Palestinians have streamed through the corridor in recent weeks, returning to their homes in the north from southern Gaza where they had sought shelter from the war.

Some who crossed over have described their shock after seeing the destruc-

tion of communities and discovering what they said were human remains in areas where Israeli forces had withdrawn. Much of northern Gaza has become a wasteland following Israel's devastating campaign.

After finding their homes destroyed, some Gazans have gone back to the south, while others have set up tents where their homes once stood.

Former American sol-

diers employed as private contractors have been deployed to inspect vehicles passing through the corridor in recent weeks following the ceasefire agreement that was implemented on January 19 after more than 15 months of war.

Crowds of people were seen traversing the corridor on Sunday as Hamas announced the Israeli military had withdrawn, while a long line of cars gathered, waiting to pass through.

Egypt to host Arab summit  
to discuss Palestinian woes

AGENCIES  
CAIRO

Egypt will host an emergency Arab summit on 27 February to discuss what it described as "serious" developments for Palestinians, according to a statement from the Egyptian foreign ministry on Sunday.

The summit comes amid regional and global condemnation of U.S. President Donald Trump's suggestion to "take over the Gaza Strip" from Israel and create a "Riviera of the Middle East" after resettling Palestinians elsewhere.

Egypt has called for an emergency Arab summit to be held on 27 February, focusing on what it considers to be "serious" developments regarding the Palestinian issue.

The summit, announced by the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Sunday, comes at a time of heightened regional and global concern over the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The gathering will address the implications of U.S. President Donald Trump's controversial remarks, in which he suggested that Israel could take control of the Gaza Strip and transform it into a "Riviera of the Middle East." This propos-



A view shows destroyed buildings, amid a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, as seen from Israel's border with Gaza, Israel February 6, 2025. File Photo

al would involve resettling Palestinians to other areas, a notion that has been widely criticized across the Arab world and beyond.

Trump's comments have sparked outrage among Palestinian leaders and have drawn condemnation from various Arab governments and international organizations, who view the idea as a violation of Palestinian rights and sovereignty.

The suggestion to relocate Palestinians from Gaza to other areas has been seen as an attempt to disregard the long-standing principle of Palestinian self-determination and the international consensus on the two-state solution. The proposed plan has also raised concerns over the potential

for further destabilization in the region, already embroiled in complex geopolitical struggles.

The Egyptian-led summit aims to strengthen the Arab position on the Palestinian cause and discuss possible diplomatic actions in response to Trump's provocative proposal.

Egypt, historically a key player in the Arab-Israeli peace process, is taking a leading role in coordinating the response to these developments. The summit will likely involve discussions on how Arab states can present a unified stance to challenge any moves that threaten the rights and future of the Palestinian people, including potential diplomatic or economic measures.

Japan PM optimist over averting US tariffs

AGENCIES  
TOKYO

Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba expressed optimism on Sunday that his country could avoid higher U.S. tariffs, saying President Donald Trump had "recognised" Japan's huge investment in the U.S. and the American jobs that it creates.

At his first White House summit on Friday, Ishiba told public broadcaster NHK, he explained to Trump how many Japanese automakers were creating jobs in the United States.

The two did not specifically discuss auto tariffs, Ishiba said, although he said he did not know whether Japan would be subject to the reciprocal tariffs that Trump has said he plans to impose on imports.

Tokyo has so far escaped the trade war Trump unleashed in his first weeks in office. He has announced tariffs on goods from Canada, Mexico and China, although he postponed the 25% duties on his North American neighbours to allow for talks.



U.S. President Donald Trump holds a joint press conference with Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba in the East Room at the White House in Washington, U.S., February 7, 2025. File Photo

The escalating trade tensions since Trump returned to the White House on January 20 threaten to rupture the global economy.

Ishiba said he believes Trump "recognised the fact Japan has been the world's largest investor in the United States for five straight years, and is therefore different from other countries."

"Japan is creating many U.S. jobs. I believe (Washington) won't go straight to the idea of higher tariffs," he said.

Ishiba voiced optimism that Japan and the U.S. can avoid a tit-for-tat tariff war, stressing that tariffs should be put in place in a way that

"benefits both sides".

"Any action that exploits or excludes the other side won't last," Ishiba said. "The question is whether there is any problem between Japan and the United States that warrants imposing higher tariffs," he added.

Japan had the highest foreign direct investment in the United States in 2023 at \$783.3 billion, followed by Canada and Germany, according to the most recent U.S. Commerce Department data.

Trump pressed Ishiba to close Japan's \$68.5 billion annual trade surplus with Washington but expressed optimism this could be done

quickly, given a promise by Ishiba to bring Japanese investment in the U.S. to \$1 trillion.

On Sunday, Ishiba identified liquefied natural gas, steel, AI and autos as areas that Japanese companies could invest in.

He also touched on Trump's promise to look at Nippon Steel (\$401.T), opens new tab investing in U.S. Steel (X.N), opens new tab, as opposed to buying the storied American company - a planned purchase opposed by Trump and blocked by his predecessor, Joe Biden.

"Investment is being made to ensure that it remains an American company. It will continue to operate under American management, with American employees," Ishiba said. "The key point is how to ensure it remains an American company. From President Trump's perspective, this is of utmost importance."

On military spending, another area where Trump has pressed allies for increases, Ishiba said Japan would not increase its defence budget without first winning public backing.

North Korean leader vows  
to develop nuclear forces

AGENCIES  
SEOUL

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un criticised trilateral military cooperation among the United States, Japan and South Korea for raising tensions in the region and vowed countermeasures, including the further development of nuclear forces.

Kim said U.S. deployments of nuclear strategic assets, war exercises and military cooperation with Japan and South Korea were inviting military imbalance in the region and raising a grave challenge to the security environment, state media KCNA reported on Sunday.

"The DPRK does not want unnecessary tension of the regional situation but will take sustained countermeasures to ensure the regional military balance," Kim said during a visit to the defence ministry on Saturday to commemorate the founding day of its Army.

DPRK stands for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, North Korea's official name. U.S. President Donald Trump, after a meeting on



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un visits the Ministry of National Defence on the day the Korean People's Army was founded, in Pyongyang, North Korea February 8, 2025. Agency.

Friday with Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, said he would have relations with North Korea, as they expressed concern over its nuclear program.

But during the visit, Kim "clarified once again the unshakable policy of more highly developing the nuclear forces," according to the report. On Russia's war with Ukraine, Kim said: "The army and people of the DPRK will invariably support and encourage the just cause of the Russian army and people to defend their sovereignty, security and territorial integrity in keeping with the spirit of the treaty on the comprehensive strategic partnership between the DPRK and Russia."

40 arrested in  
Bangladesh  
after violence

AGENCIES  
DHAKA

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus's government ordered "Operation Devil Hunt" on Saturday after the attack on students and civilians in the Gazipur district on Friday night. Forty people have been arrested in Bangladesh in an operation launched following a violent attack on a student group's activists during vandalism at an Awami League leader's house on the outskirts of Dhaka that left several people injured, according to a media report.

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus's government ordered "Operation Devil Hunt" on Saturday after the attack on students and civilians in the Gazipur district on Friday night.

Superintendent of Police (SP) of Gazipur Chowdhury Jaber Sadek said that the 40 people were rounded up from parts of the district as part of the operation, United News of Bangladesh reported.

42 Afghan migrants return from Pakistani prisons: Taliban

AGENCIES  
KABUL

Taliban-led Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations has announced the release and return of 42 Afghan migrants who were in prisons in Pakistan, Khaama Press reported.

In a statement shared on February 8, Taliban-led Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations said that these migrants, including women and children, were held at the "Haji Camp" prison in Pakistan for two to five months. According to the statement, these Afghan nationals were arrested in Islamabad due to lack of legal documents.

Pakistan's continued detention and expulsion of Afghan migrants have been met with international reactions from organizations like Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the United Nations, calling



Representative Image

According to the statement, these Afghan nationals were arrested in Islamabad due to lack of legal documents.

on Islamabad to stop these actions.

About 31,000 Afghan migrants were detained and imprisoned by Pakistan's security forces by December 31 last year, according to the UN. In the past year, more than 4,268 Afghan migrants, including women and children, have been re-

leased from prisons in Pakistan's Sindh province and returned to Afghanistan, Khaama Press reported.

The forced deportation of Afghan migrants from Pakistan and Iran has worsened the already dire humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, where millions of people are struggling to

survive amid harsh winter conditions. The deportation leaves many refugees vulnerable to extreme weather, poverty, and lack of access to basic services.

Human rights organizations have criticised the expulsions, calling on Pakistan and Iran to reconsider their policies and find a more humane approach to handling the refugee crisis. The situation remains critical, as Afghan people, who have been deported, face life-threatening conditions because they are forced to come back to a country grappling with economic collapse and ongoing conflict.

Earlier on February 6, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) have voiced concern over Pakistan's plan for the mass expulsion of Afghan refugees.



ICE CASTLES



People trek through the caverns and snow at Ice Castles in New Hampshire. Since 2011, Ice Castles has been dedicated to creating a world of ice caves, frozen waterfalls and glaciers formed into archways, caverns, slides and tunnels in North Woodstock, US. Source: Joseph Prezioso

# Trump reveals he has spoken to Putin in bid to negotiate Russia-Ukraine crisis

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump on Saturday told New York Post that he spoke to Russian President Vladimir Putin on the phone to try to negotiate an end to the Ukraine crisis.

“I’d better not say,” said Trump when New York Post asked how many times the two leaders have spoken. But he believes Putin “does care” about the killing on the battlefield.

“He wants to see people stop dying,” Trump told the Post adding, “All those dead people. Young, young, beautiful people. They’re like your kids, two million of them - and for no reason.”

Trump said that the three-year-old war “never would have happened” if he had been president in 2022. “I always had a good relationship



Donald Trump.

with Putin,” he said, unlike his predecessor Joe Biden.

“Biden was an embarrassment to our nation. A complete embarrassment,” Trump told the New York Post Trump further told the publication that he has a concrete plan to end the crisis.

“I hope it’s fast. Every day people are dying. This war is so bad in Ukraine. I want to end this damn thing.”

Addressing National Se-

curity Advisor Mike Waltz, who joined him in his study aboard Air Force One Friday night, Trump said: “Let’s get these meetings going. They want to meet. Every day people are dying. Young handsome soldiers are being killed. Young men, like my sons. On both sides. All over the battlefield.”

US Vice President JD Vance will meet Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at the Munich

*“I’d better not say,” said Trump when New York Post asked how many times the two leaders have spoken. But he believes Putin “does care” about the killing on the battlefield.*

Security Conference next week.

Trump has said he wants to strike a USD 500 million deal with Zelenskyy to access rare-earth minerals and gas in Ukraine in exchange for security guarantees in any potential peace settlement.

# Protesters denounce Trump immigration policies outside his Florida golf club

AGENCIES  
WEST PALM BEACH

A handful of demonstrators gathered outside Trump International Golf Club on Saturday to protest President Donald Trump’s immigration policies while the commander-in-chief spent leisure time at the club.

Carrying signs and Mexican, Guatemalan and U.S. flags and chanting “Immigrants Make America Great,” the small group of people shouted loudly and was visible as Trump, who spent several hours at the club, exited in his motorcade and drove by on Saturday afternoon.

Their chant was a reference to the president’s “Make America Great Again” campaign slogan.

One sign in Spanish said “the American Dream is also ours.”

Trump, a Republican who has been in office just shy of



three weeks, won the presidency in large part on the back of a promise to crack down on illegal immigration.

He has implemented that promise with speed, starting on the day he was inaugurated, by tasking the U.S. military to help with border security, issuing a broad ban on asylum and seeking to restrict citizenship for children born on U.S. soil.

Protesters and supporters frequently gather outside ven-

ues where Trump is staying to show their disdain or their enthusiasm for his policies.

Donald Trump’s immigration policy, particularly during his tenure as U President, was marked by a hardline approach aimed at reducing illegal immigration and tightening border security. One of the most notable aspects of his policy was the construction of a border wall between the U.S. and Mexico, intended to prevent illegal crossings.

# Canopy row: Serbian students protest to mark 100 days

TDG NETWORK  
BELGRADE (SERBIA)

Striking university students in Serbia blocked a bridge in Belgrade as well as roads throughout the Balkan country on Sunday to mark 100 days since the collapse of a concrete canopy at a train station which killed 15 people. Many residents joined the students for a 7-hour blockade of the the Gazela, or Gazelle, bridge over the Sava River in the Serbian capital. Simultaneously, a three-hour blockade of key roads started in Novi Sad, while students in Nis blocked a highway pay toll station at the entrance of the southern city. The blockades are part of a campaign of protests led by striking university students who are demanding justice over the Nov 1 disaster at a train station in Novi Sad, which critics have blamed on government corruption.

# \$100 BILLION FRAUD PER YEAR IN US GOVT PAYMENT SYSTEMS: MUSK

Treasury Department has reached an agreement changing reporting requirements for all outgoing govt payments, Musk said.

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON

Elon Musk, the CEO of Tesla and SpaceX, on Sunday voiced strong concerns about the US government’s payment systems, revealing troubling ‘inefficiencies’ and potential ‘fraud’ worth over USD 100 billion every year.

In a post on X, Musk said that the Treasury Department and his Department of Government Efficiency have reached an agreement changing reporting requirements for all outgoing government payments.

The government payments will now have a ‘payment categorization code’ for auditing purposes, he wrote in a post on X.

Highlighting key reforms that need to be implemented, he stated, “Require that all outgoing government payments have a payment categorization code, which is necessary in order to pass financial audits. This is frequently left blank, making audits almost impossible.”

“All payments must also include a rationale for the payment in the comment

## FRAUDULENT ENTITIES

- New agreement between the Treasury Department and the Department of Government Efficiency to change reporting requirements for outgoing government payments.
- Payment categorization code will be introduced for auditing purposes, which was previously missing.
- Rationale for payments must be included in the comment field, currently often left blank.
- Implementation of “DO-NOT-PAY list” to identify fraudulent entities; Musk calls for it to be updated regularly.
- \$100B/year of entitlements paid to individuals with no Social Security Number or temporary ID, raising suspicions of fraud.
- Musk estimates that half of these payments may be fraudulent, equating to about \$50B/year or \$1B/week.



Elon Musk

field, which is currently left blank. Importantly, we are not yet applying ANY judgment to this rationale, but simply requiring that SOME attempt be made to explain the payment more than NOTHING!,” he added.

Further, Musk raised the implementation of the “DO-NOT-PAY list”, which identifies entities involved in fraudulent activities and called for the list to be updated at least weekly, if not daily.

“The DO-NOT-PAY list of

entities known to be fraudulent or people who are dead or are probable fronts for terrorist organizations or do not match Congressional appropriations must actually be implemented and not ignored. Also, it can currently take up to a year to get on this list, which is far too long. This list should be updated at least weekly, if not daily,” he said.

“The above super obvious and necessary changes are being implemented by existing, long-time career government employees, not

anyone from @DOGE. It is ridiculous that these changes didn’t exist already!,” he added.

Pointing out to USD 100 billion/year to individuals with no Social Security Number (SSN) or temporary ID number, he called it “extremely suspicious.”

“Yesterday, I was told that there are currently over \$100B/year of entitlements payments to individuals with no SSN or even a temporary ID number. If accurate, this is extremely suspicious,” he said

# Ukraine: NATO’s Dragone meets Zelenskyy to discuss military aid

AGENCIES  
KYIV

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met Giuseppe Cavo Dragone, Chair of the NATO Military Committee on Saturday, and the two held discussions on Ukraine’s long-range weaponry, preparations for the upcoming Ramstein meeting, continued military aid from NATO allies, and investments in the production of long-range drones.



Volodymyr Zelenskyy (Right) meets NATO’s Giuseppe Dragone (Centre). Agency

Sharing a post on X, Zelenskyy wrote, “I met with the Chair of the NATO Military

Committee, Giuseppe Cavo Dragone @CMC.NATO. During our visit to a defense indus-

try enterprise, we reviewed the capacities and characteristics of Ukraine’s long-range weaponry.”

Zelenskyy also expressed gratitude for Dragone’s first foreign visit to Ukraine.

The post added, “Key topics of our discussion included preparations for the upcoming Ramstein meeting, continued military assistance from NATO member states, and direct investments in domestic production of long-range drones.

# British junior minister sacked by PM over WhatsApp messages

AGENCIES  
LONDON

A British junior minister was sacked by Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Saturday and suspended from the governing Labour Party over WhatsApp messages which the minister said were “badly misjudged”.

Andrew Gwynne, who was a health minister, apologised on social media platform X following a report by the Mail on Sunday that he had sent WhatsApp messages insulting constituents and other members of parliament.

“I deeply regret my badly misjudged comments and apologise for any offense I’ve caused,” he said. “I entirely understand the decisions the PM (prime minister) and the party have taken and, while very sad to have been sus-



A view of the Palace of Westminster which houses Britain’s parliament, during the general election, in London, Britain, July 5, 2024. File Photo

pended, will support them in any way I can.”

A government spokesperson said Starmer was determined to uphold high standards of conduct in public office.

“He will not hesitate to take action against any minister who fails to meet these stan-

dards, as he has in this case,” the spokesperson said.

Labour won a large majority in an election last July but opinion polls show its popularity has fallen since then, with the party struggling after early missteps over donations and to boost economic growth.

# Canada seeks stronger EU trade ties in face of Trump tariffs

TDG NETWORK  
BRUSSELS

Canada wants to deepen its economic ties with the EU and uphold global trading rules in the face of threatened U.S. tariffs, its trade minister Mary Ng told Reuters on Saturday.

The EU and Canada have benefited from a free trade agreement since 2017, which has boosted bilateral trade by 65%, and set up a raw materials partnership in 2021.

Ng met EU trade chief Maros Sefcovic for a lunch on Saturday following a meeting with Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the director general of the World Trade Organization in Geneva on Friday.

# Trump rules out deporting Prince Harry: ‘He’s got enough problems with his wife’

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump has ruled out deporting Prince Harry from the United States, despite ongoing litigation questioning the Duke of Sussex’s immigration status, the New York Post reported.

In an interview with The New York Post on Friday, Trump made it clear that he does not want to take action against Harry.

“I don’t want to do that,” he said. “I’ll leave him alone.

He’s got enough problems with his wife. She’s terrible,” Trump added while speaking with the New York Post.

This statement comes amid legal challenges involving Harry’s visa, particularly from the Heritage Foundation, which has raised concerns over Harry’s potential failure to disclose past illegal drug use during his visa application process, the report added.

The New York Post also stated that Trump took the opportunity to express

admiration for Harry’s estranged older brother, Prince William, calling him “a great young man.” The two had met privately in Paris during the reopening of Notre-Dame Cathedral in December 2024, a meeting that stood in stark contrast to Trump’s strained relationship with Harry and his wife.

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex have long been vocal critics of Trump. Meghan Markle referred to him as “divisive” and “misogynis-



Prince Harry with Meghan (Left), and US President Donald Trump.

tic” in previous public statements, while Trump has regularly ridiculed Harry, claiming that the prince is “whipped” by Meghan. “I

think poor Harry is being led around by the nose,” Trump remarked in a previous interview, the New York Post reported.

*This statement comes amid legal challenges involving Harry’s visa, particularly from the Heritage Foundation, which has raised concerns over Harry’s potential failure to disclose past illegal drug use during his visa application process, the report added.*

The Heritage Foundation’s lawsuit against the Department of Homeland Security has called into question Harry’s honesty in his US visa application, citing admis-

sions in Harry’s autobiography Spare about his past drug use, including cocaine, cannabis, and psychedelics. Nile Gardiner of the Heritage Foundation said, “Any-

one who applies to the United States has to be truthful on their application, and it is not clear that is the case with Prince Harry,” the New York Post reported.

The conservative think tank has also suggested that Harry may have received favourable treatment from the Biden administration after he and Meghan relocated to California in 2020, following their departure from the British royal family, a move widely known as “Megxit”, the report added.

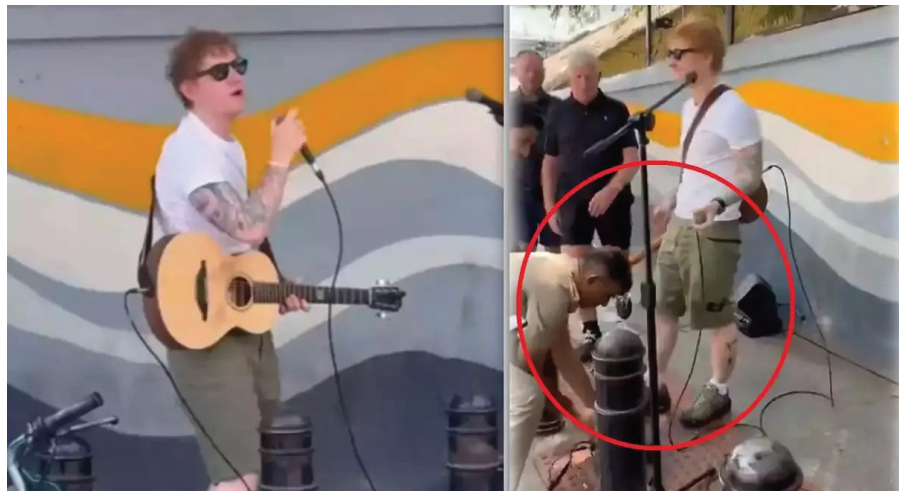


PICTURE PERFECT



Janhvi Kapoor poses for her social media (Instagram)

## Bengaluru Police stops Ed Sheeran's street show citing lack of permission



TDG NETWORK  
BENGALURU

Bengaluru Police on Sunday morning halted British musician Ed Sheeran's live street performance in the city, citing lack of permission by the popular singer-songwriter.

The police stopped the gig, which was underway at Church Street, when the Grammy winner was midway into the performance of his chartbuster "Shape of You".

In one of the clips, Sheeran -- who performed in Bengaluru on Saturday night and will once again take the

stage in the city on Sunday evening -- can be seen arriving with his security personnel at the venue when he was greeted by cheering onlookers.

"We were going to play more than one song but we're being asked to play one song," he said on the microphone, before he started strumming the interlude of "Shape of You" on his guitar.

Just before he could finish the refrain of the song, a policeman stepped in and pulled the cables attached to the microphone and musical instruments.

A senior police official of the Cubbon Park police

station said Sheeran was performing "without any permission so they had to stop."

"The police got there because someone had complained of public nuisance," he told PTI, adding if the musician and his team had the permit they could have shown it to the cops.

Church Street is a busy area in Bengaluru known for its nightlife and cultural events.

Also known for tracks like "Perfect Duet", "Thinking Out Loud" and "Shivers", Sheeran is currently on the India leg of his Mathematics (+--x) Tour.

## Songwriter Camille opens up about controversy surrounding Oscar campaign

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON

Songwriter Camille, best known for her work on the score for 'Emilia Perez', has broken her silence regarding the recent controversy surrounding the film's Oscar campaign.

Speaking in an interview with Deadline, Camille expressed both relief and concern, noting the importance of addressing the issues head-on.

"It's actually a relief to be able to talk about it, and it's important to talk about these things," Camille shared, ac-



knowledging the strain the controversy has placed on the cast and crew.

"It's been very painful for us because you cannot control what other people choose to say, but we don't support hate speech or racist speech," she added.

The 'Emilia Perez' campaign had a remarkable start, earning an impressive 13 nominations, almost breaking records for the most nominations for a film in the same category.

However, the momentum was disrupted when social media posts from lead ac-

## BIG B'S CRYPTIC TWEET LEAVES FANS ANXIOUS

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

Bollywood legend Amitabh Bachchan, who often shares philosophical social media posts, has once again left his millions of fans in a state of confusion and concern following a cryptic tweet he posted on his official X handle.

The 82-year-old actor, who remains a powerhouse in the entertainment industry, shared a tweet, "T 5281--time to go..."

The tweet, which was sparse in details, immediately sent a wave of worry across his fanbase.

Many speculated that the post could hint at Bachchan's potential retirement, health issues, or even a final farewell.

Fans flooded the comments section, asking



questions such as "Sir, take care. u are an inspiration to lack of people."

Another asked, "Wherever you Go Be Happy Al-

ways..."

Some even expressed emotional concerns, pleading with Bachchan, "Dear Amitabh sir, your tweet feels

personal. Wishing you good health and well-being."

However, others tried to ease the tension by suggesting that the tweet might simply indicate that Bachchan was signing off after a long day.

The cryptic tweet came just days after Bachchan celebrated his son Abhishek Bachchan's 49th birthday. In a heartfelt gesture, the veteran actor shared a nostalgic photo from 1976, showing a rare moment from Abhishek's birth in the hospital.

On the professional front, Amitabh Bachchan is currently hosting the popular TV quiz show 'Kaun Banega Crorepati 16' and was last seen on the big screen in 'Vetliyan', where he starred alongside Rajinikanth, Fahadh Faasil, and Rana Daggubati.

## 'Sanam Teri Kasam' re-release: Film hits INR 11 crore in two days

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Also starring Pakistani actor Mawra Hocane, the romance drama released in 2016 but didn't perform well at the box office. Directed by Radhika Rao and Vinay Sapru, the film was re-released in cinemas on Friday. It has earned Rs 11.36 crore by Saturday.

Rane shared the box office update on Instagram, expressing gratitude to the audience. According to the actor's posts, Sanam Teri Kasam collected Rs 5.14 crore (net) at the box office



on Friday and went on to earn Rs 6.22 crore on Saturday. The total collection of the film now stands at Rs

11.36 crore.

Mounted on a budget of Rs 25 crore, the film earned Rs 8 crore at the box office

when it released in 2016.

Actors John Abraham and Arjun Rampal congratulated Rane on social media.

## Khushi Kapoor-Junaaid Khan's rom-com earns Rs 2.65 cr

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Loveyapa box office collection day 2: Junaaid Khan and Khushi Kapoor-starrer Loveyapa is off to a slow start at the box office. According to industry tracker Sacnilk, the Advait Chandra directorial earned Rs 1.50 crore in India on its second day, following an opening-day collection of Rs 1.15 crore. The total box office collection in India stands at Rs 2.65 crore.

On Saturday, Loveyapa, also starring Grusha Kapoor, Ashutosh Rana, Tanvika Parlikar, Kiku Sharda, Devishi Mandan, Aaditya Kulshreshtha, Nikhil Mehta, Jason Tham, Yusus Khan,



Yuktam Kholsa, and Kunj Anand, witnessed an overall 14.35 per cent occupancy for the Hindi version. While Chennai had the highest occupancy of 56% from just 9 shows, it was followed by Bengaluru, Pune and Mumbai with 25.67%, 20.33% and 20% occupancy, respectively.

On the other hand, Himesh Reshammiya and

Prabhudeva's Badass Ravikumar gave strong competition to Khushi Kapoor and Junaaid Khan's coming-of-age film, which released on the same day. As per Sacnilk, it opened at Rs 2.75 crore and earned Rs 2 crore on its second day. While Loveyapa received mixed reviews, Badass Ravikumar was panned by critics.

## Tom Cruise reveals he passed out on set of 'Mission: Impossible 8'

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON

Known for his dedication to performing his own stunts, Tom Cruise has once again shown just how far he's willing to go for his roles. He revealed in a recent interview that he passed out several times while filming a particularly intense action sequence for 'Mission: Im-



possible -- The Final Reckoning'.

The star, who has built a reputation for pushing physical boundaries, recounted the ordeal in a preview for the upcoming blockbuster during a recent interview, as per Deadline.

One of the standout stunts featured in the film's teaser

trailer shows Cruise's character, Ethan Hunt, hanging perilously from the wing of a 1930s Boeing Stearman biplane, racing through the skies over South Africa at 10,000 feet.

The high-speed stunt, where Cruise's face is exposed to the wind at speeds of over 120 miles per hour, presented a serious chal-

lenge for the actor.

"When you stick your face out, going over 120 to 130 miles an hour, you're not getting oxygen," Cruise shared as quoted by Deadline, adding, "So I had to train myself how to breathe. There were times I would pass out physically; I was unable to get back into the cockpit."

## Vicky Kaushal gives fans peek into 'Good Old' 'Chhaava' prep days

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

The upcoming historical drama 'Chhaava' is just around the corner, and actor Vicky Kaushal is reminding about the "good old days" of his intense training for the role.

The 'Raazi' actor on Sunday, took to his Instagram to share behind-the-scenes moments from his preparation to play Maratha warrior Sambhaji Maharaj.

Sharing a series of pictures

and videos, Vicky wrote, "Good old \*Chhaava prep days! See you all on 14th Feb. WORLDWIDE ADVANCE BOOKINGS ARE NOW OPEN!"

The pictures and clips offer a peek into the rigorous physical and combat training he underwent for the film.

Take a look

Vicky has been actively promoting the film. The actor recently visited Patna and enjoyed the famous dish of Bihar -- "litti chokha."

Vicky took to his Instagram

account on Saturday, to share a series of pictures and videos, showing him happily savouring the traditional Bihari dish at a street stall. His excitement and love for local flavours were clearly visible in the video, where he enjoyed the food while interacting with fans.

Along with the post, the actor added a caption that read, "Patna aakar Litti Chokha kaise miss kar jaayein??? Garda uda diya!" (How can one miss Litti Chokha when in Patna? It was amazing!)



# WHEN IN VAGATOR: HEAD TO THIS PROPERTY FOR A STYLISH STAY!

BY SANJANA CHAWLA

There's never a bad time to be in and visit Goa and well, guess what? 2025 is only two months and I have already taken my second Goan trip of the year! I am a total beach baby and nothing screams more to me than a beachy trip. This time, I opted to stay in Ibis Styles Vagator considering its accessible location and close proximity to all popular tourist attractions. As I stepped into the vibrant lobby of the property, I was greeted with happy faces and a warm welcome that set the tone for a fantastic stay. The reception team greeted me with their bright smiles and a quick and efficient check-in process, ensuring that I felt right at home!

**Spacious Rooms with Balcony:** My room was a delightful surprise, with its sleek design, aesthetic wall arts, bright colored paint, plush bedding, and ample space to unwind. The balcony, overlooking the lush green surroundings, was the perfect spot to soak in the tranquil breeze while enjoying the refreshing Kokam drink and french fries. The room's modern amenities and the butler on call ensured that I had



everything I needed for a comfortable stay.

**Pool, Cabanas, and Bar Access:** The hotel's pool area was a haven for relaxation, with its sparkling waters, comfortable cabanas, and poolside bar serving up refreshing cock-

tails. I spent many an hour lounging by the pool, which looked straight out of a Vincent Van Gogh painting. Soaking up the sun and enjoying the serene ambiance was my favourite part of the property! The bar's happy hour offers and live music

added to the excitement, making it the perfect spot to unwind and enjoy.

**Recreational Rooms with Gyms, Board Games, and Play Area:** Ibis Styles Vagator truly has something for everyone as their recreational rooms offer a range



of activities, including a well-equipped gym, board games, and a play area for kids. I was impressed by the attention to detail and the variety of options available, ensuring that guests

of all ages could stay entertained and engaged.

**Exploring North Goa's Charm:** One of the highlights of my stay was the hotel's proximity to North Goa's popular tourist at-

tractions. The famous Vagator Beach, with its stunning sunset views, was just a 15 minutes walk away. Other popular spots, such as Anjuna Beach, Chapora Fort, and

the Saturday Night Market, were easily accessible by taxi or scooter and the hotel's concierge team was happy to assist with arrangements, making it easy to explore the region's charm!

My stay at Ibis Styles Vagator was an enjoyable experience, and from the warm welcome to the spacious rooms, excellent amenities, and accessibility to nearby attractions, this hotel has it all. Whether you're looking for a relaxing getaway, an adventure-filled vacation, or a family-friendly holiday, this property is an excellent choice for anyone looking for a memorable stay in North Goa.



## Cultural tourism 2.0: The demand for authentic, local & heritage-rich experiences

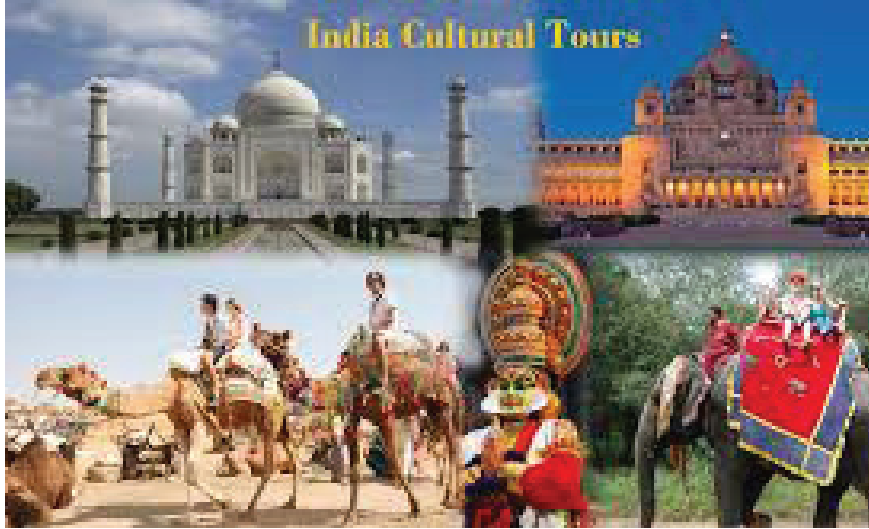


JYOTI MAYAL

The essence of travel lies in its ability to connect people with stories, traditions, and the cultural heartbeat of a place. Cultural tourism has always been a cornerstone of the global travel industry, but today, we are witnessing its evolution into something more profound - an immersive, authentic experience that taps into the soul of a destination. This shift, often referred to as Cultural Tourism 2.0, highlights the growing demand for experiences steeped in local heritage, authentic interactions, and the preservation of cultural legacies. Overall, this new wave of cultural tourism celebrates authenticity.

### SKILLING: THE BACKBONE OF CULTURAL TOURISM

For India, with its unparalleled cultural diversity, the potential to lead this movement is immense. However, the key lies in ensuring that communities are equipped to meet the demands of these discerning travellers. This is where skilling plays a pivotal role. Through the Government's vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat and the Prime Minister's



emphasis to Skill India, cultural tourism is being redefined. Cultural Tourism is in our very fabric. It is a part of our DNA. In line with the same, programs are being designed to train artisans, local guides, performers, and culinary experts, enabling them to preserve their heritage while presenting it to the world. Skilling initiatives for traditional crafts, such as Pashmina weaving in Kashmir, Madhubani painting in Bihar, or the making of Banarasi saris, are preserving art forms and creating livelihoods. These skills empower local communities to cater to global travellers while maintaining the authenticity that makes their art so special.

### THE ROLE OF TRAVEL IN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Cultural tourism, when aligned with skilling, has a transformative ripple effect on local economies. A skilled artisan finds opportunities to showcase their

work on larger platforms. A trained local guide becomes the storyteller, narrating the history of a destination in a way that leaves a lasting impression on visitors. Culinary experts elevate regional flavors into sought-after experiences, creating a new gastronomic identity for their community.

These micro-level changes translate into macro-level growth for the travel and tourism sector. The government's focus on tourism as a key pillar of the economy is evident in initiatives like Dekho Apna Desh and the promotion of cultural circuits like the Buddhist trail, Ramayana circuit, and Northeast festivals. These efforts, coupled with skilling programs, ensure that communities actively participate in tourism, not as bystanders but as key stakeholders.

### A VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Cultural Tourism 2.0 isn't

merely about creating unforgettable travel experiences. It is also about ensuring that growth is sustainable. With the rising demand for heritage-rich experiences, there's a renewed focus on environmental and cultural preservation. Skilling plays a critical role here as well. When local communities understand the value of their cultural and natural resources, they become the most passionate advocates for their protection. You can consider a case where a local community in Ladakh is trained in sustainable trekking practices or in creating eco-friendly homestays. Such initiatives help preserve the fragile Himalayan ecosystem while providing authentic travel experiences. Similarly, skilling programs can focus on training artisans to use eco-friendly materials or revive dying art forms, ensuring they thrive in a modern, sustainable context.

### A GLOBAL STAGE FOR INDIAN CULTURE

India's rich cultural history, and our roots has always fascinated the world. It has the power to connect us to our past and pave the way for the future. However, the challenge has been to present it in a way that balances authenticity with modern expectations. Skilling initiatives bridge this gap. Through equip-

ping communities with the tools they need to showcase their heritage confidently, India is preparing to reclaim its position as a global cultural powerhouse. The government's focus on platforms like the G20 and partnerships with global tourism bodies underscores this ambition. With skilled locals leading the charge, Indian culture is not confined to being showcased. Rather, it's being experienced in its truest, most authentic form.

### TRAVELLERS AS CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE

As travellers increasingly seek cultural depth, they inadvertently become catalysts for local empowerment. Every trip to a heritage village, every purchase of a handcrafted souvenir, and every meal at a family-run homestay contributes to the preservation of culture and the creation of jobs. Travellers today understand their role in this cycle and actively choose experiences that give back to the community. This is the beauty of Cultural Tourism 2.0. It creates a symbiotic relationship between travellers and locals. While they leave with memories of a lifetime, communities gain the confidence and resources to sustain their heritage.

As we look toward the future, the demand for authentic, heritage-rich experiences is only set to grow. With the government's focus on skilling, sustainability, and cultural preservation, India is poised to become a global leader in cultural tourism. The travel industry, together with skilled locals, has the opportunity to present India's story to the world - one that is rich, diverse, and deeply rooted in its heritage.

The author is the Chairperson of The Tourism and Hospitality Skill Council (THSC).

## Luxury travel is about crafting experiences, not just destinations: Abhishek Varma



VAIBHAV SADHWANI

Abhishek Varma is a seasoned entrepreneur in the luxury travel industry with over two decades of experience. As the founder of Luxuriousness and CEO of Europe Van Tour, he has redefined high-end travel by curating exclusive, highly personalized experiences for elite clients. His expertise lies in blending opulence with unique, transformative journeys. In an insightful conversation, he shares his vision for luxury travel and what sets his companies apart.

*Q. How has the concept of luxury travel evolved over the years?*

A. Luxury travel has undergone a significant transformation. Earlier, it was all about five-star hotels and fine dining. Today, discerning travelers seek seclusion, personalization, and immersive experiences. It's no longer just about luxury accommodations but about creating moments that stay with them forever. Whether it's a private island retreat, VIP access to cultural landmarks, or exclusive interactions with world-renowned artists, the focus is on bespoke experiences.

*Q. Tell us about Luxuriousness and how it caters to the modern traveler.*

A. Luxuriousness was founded with the aim of offering exceptionally curated journeys. We cater to an elite clientele, from small-group tours to private jet experiences. With my experience in the industry, I wanted to go beyond conventional luxury travel by crafting itiner-

aries that evoke wonder and delight. Whether it's a private estate visit or an invitation-only gala, we ensure that every journey is a masterpiece of exclusivity.

*Q. You're also the CEO of Europe Van Tour. How does it complement Luxuriousness?*

Europe Van Tour enhances the luxury travel experience by providing seamless, high-end ground transportation. We offer a fleet of Mercedes G-Wagons, Range Rovers, and Mercedes Minivans to ensure that the journey is as elegant as the destination. From scenic drives across Europe to private airport



Abhishek Varma

transfers, we ensure that every movement is effortless and luxurious.

*Q. What differentiates Luxuriousness from other luxury travel companies?*

A. Personalization is at the heart of what we do.

transforms you.

*Q. What keeps clients coming back for more to a particular Travel Company?*

A. I believe it's the meticulous attention to detail and the level of personal service we provide. Clients trust us to create something extraordinary each time. We don't offer pre-designed trips; instead, we design immersive experiences that align with their dreams and aspirations. That personal touch makes all the difference.

*Q. Where do you see the future of luxury travel heading?*

A. The future of luxury travel lies in hyper-personalization and off-the-beaten-path experiences. We are already seeing a growing demand for private, secluded getaways and exclusive cultural encounters. I'm also exploring partnerships with airports for personalized meet-and-greet services, ensuring that luxury is woven into every step of the journey. The goal is to continuously evolve and surprise our clients with something new and extraordinary.

For someone seeking an unparalleled travel experience, how can they reach out?

If you are looking for a

*His expertise lies in blending opulence with unique, transformative journeys. In an insightful conversation, he shares his vision for luxury travel and what sets his companies apart.*





# ART WORLD PRESENTS AMITABH SENGUPTA'S ODYSSEY

## TDG NETWORK

Art World proudly presents ODYSSEY, an exhibition showcasing the profound artistic journey of Amitabh Sengupta at Bikaner House, New Delhi. Spanning over six decades, Sengupta's career has been marked by his ability to merge European modernism with Indian cross-cultural experiences, establishing him as a distinguished figure in the global art landscape.

Following his retrospective at the Birla Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata, last year, ODYSSEY features 30 carefully curated works from that seminal exhibition. Among the highlights are three monumental canvases, including the iconic pair Banadevi and Banadevta. These masterpieces interweave abstraction with mythic figures, exemplifying Sengupta's exceptional ability to balance figurative and abstract art while maintaining a deep connection to tradition and modernity.

Renowned art critic Uma Nair praises Sengupta, noting, "Sengupta is both an intellectual and an aesthete of a rare order. His most prominent Indian collector, Kiran Nadar, acquired his work in 2005 at Taj Mansingh in Delhi." Nair further elaborates on the artist's inspiration, which stems from his deep engagement with antiquity, including influences from rock paintings, pyramidal structures,



and ancient hieroglyphics. "Through his textured terrains, we can imagine the beauty and power of ancient scripts, evoking sunrises and sunsets in subtle, resonant shades," she adds.

Sarala Bannerjee of Artworld Chennai, who discovered Sengupta years ago, commends his diverse mastery over mediums. She highlights the tactile quality of his works, stating, "In this exhibition, it is the register of his touch and his tensile and tactile understanding that define the beauty of his pliant brush. Viewers are left to imagine the fluid flow of molten lava as well as landscapes bathed in a sea of prismatic colors."

Sengupta's artistic voyage began with his education at the prestigious École des Beaux-Arts in Paris from 1966 to 1969. Throughout

the 1970s and 1980s, he exhibited extensively in Paris, refining his abstract and symbolic language. His time in Nigeria added another layer to his artistic lexicon, as he incorporated African cultural motifs into his modern abstract style, culminating in an exhibition at the National Museum in Lagos.

Returning to India in the 1990s, Sengupta cemented his legacy within the Indian art scene. His major solo exhibitions at the Jehangir Art Gallery in Mumbai, the Birla Academy of Art & Culture in Kolkata, and Artworld Sarala's Centre in Chennai, among others, have solidified his status as a formidable force in contemporary art. His work has also reached international audiences in New York, London, and Tokyo, underscoring his global appeal.

The ODYSSEY exhibition was graced by esteemed guests Meera Ali and Manoj Arora, adding to the event's grandeur. As part of the India Art Fair celebrations, the book Life and Work of Amitabh Sengupta was launched. Authored by Dr. Ashrafi Bhagat and Uma Nair, the book offers an in-depth exploration of Sengupta's artistic evolution. Featuring over 120 images of his works, it presents a definitive portrait of a silent yet persevering perfectionist who played a transformative role in India's post-independence cultural landscape. Sengupta's years in Paris imbued his work with a distinct aesthetic, while his Indian influences instilled in him a love for texture and the varied tenors and timbres of originality.

## Perceiving Pneuma Energy: Sculptures by Vijay Kowshik

### TDG NETWORK NEW DELHI

Perceiving Pneuma Energy, an exhibition by senior artist Vijay Kowshik, will be on display at the Gandhi-King Memorial Plaza from February 2 to 10, 2025, between 11:00 AM and 7:00 PM daily. Best known for his innovative glasswork, Kowshik ventures into the realm of bronze sculpture in this exhibition, bringing a new depth and dimension to his artistic expression. The exhibition was inaugurated on Saturday, February 1, 2025, at 5:00 PM.

Kowshik's transition from glass to bronze allows him to explore the interplay of solidity and fluidity, embodying the concept of pneuma—the vital spirit or life force. Each sculpture in the collection reflects his deep engagement with energy and motion, inviting viewers to perceive the invisible forces that shape our reality. The bronze medium lends a timeless, tactile quality to his work, highlighting the tension



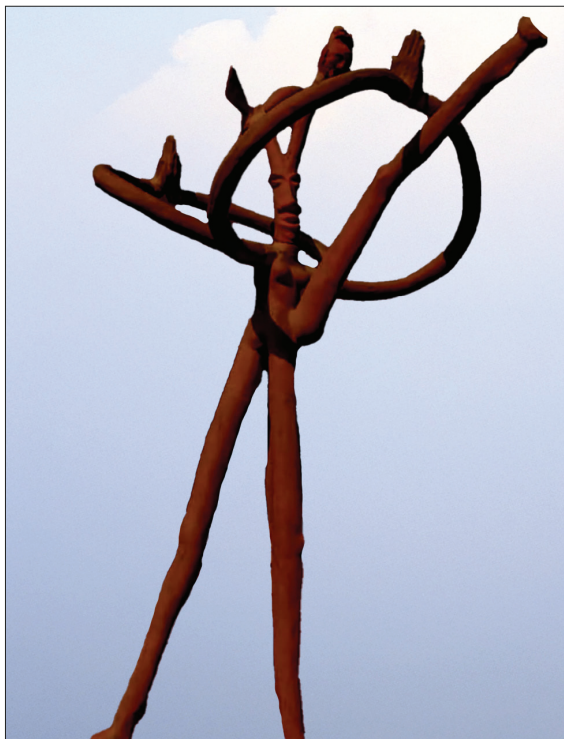
the relationship between form, spirit, and space. Per-

*Through his sculptures, Kowshik transcends the physical, encouraging a meditative exploration of the relationship between form, spirit, and space. Perceiving Pneuma Energy is not just a visual experience but an invitation to connect with the unseen, making it a must-visit for art enthusiasts and seekers of deeper meaning alike.*

between material permanence and the ephemeral nature of energy.

Through his sculptures, Kowshik transcends the physical, encouraging a meditative exploration of

ceiving Pneuma Energy is not just a visual experience but an invitation to connect with the unseen, making it a must-visit for art enthusiasts and seekers of deeper meaning alike.



## Kathakar International Storytellers Festival debuts in Shimla with global tales and musical legends

### TDG NETWORK

The Kathakar International Storytellers Festival took place at the historic Gothic Hall, Gaiety Theatre in Shimla. Organized by Nivesh, HHACH, and Babaji Music in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Tourism (Government of India), the festival is curated and produced by the Gehlot sisters — Rachna, Prarthana, and Shaguna.

The event featured performances by renowned international storytellers Usifu Jaloh (Sierra Leone) and Polina Tserkasova (Estonia). Alongside these performances, veteran musician Shantanu Moitra engaged in a lively conversation with singer Mohit Chauhan during the Kisse Kahaniyan aur Matargashti session, moderated by Prarthana Gahilote. The festival also showcased a musical performance by Satpal Wadali and Group from Punjab.

Expressing her excitement about the festival, Estonian storyteller Polina Tserkasova shared a captivating folktale about a hunter who rescues a trapped white swan. The swan, later revealed to be a woman, secretly cares for the hunter in his absence. Upon discovering her true identity, the hunter gives her the choice to leave or stay as his wife. She chooses to stay, and they live happily, raising a son together. One day, as other swans call her to the



clouds, she refuses, choosing to remain with her family forever.

Usifu Jaloh began his performance with a song, captivating the audience with his storytelling. He then sang a Hindi and Punjabi song, including "Tujhe Dekha To Yeh Jaana Sanam," "Tum Paas Aaye," and "Kuch Kuch Hota Hai and many others"

In his story he narrated, that a woman wanted to cook for her husband but struggled to pick vegetables from a tree. She asked her husband to cut the tree, and when he chopped a branch, it magically transformed into a man.

Satpal Wadali started his performance with the first song "Sanson ki Mala pe simrun mein Pi ka Naam",

then "Tujhe Dekha to aisa laga jaise meri eed ho gayee, then he sung "Tu maane ya na maane, assan taan tenu yaar maneya". Then he sung "Yeh jo halka halka suroor hai", Lagan lagi tumse man ki lagan, Lal Meri bat rakhiyo bhala jhule lalan

Mohit Chauhan, the festival's Chief Patron and Cultural Ambassador of Mongolia to India, expressed his joy at bringing the festival to his home state. "Himachal is my home, and it's a wonderful experience to see the Kathakar Festival here. This festival is close to my heart as it revives traditional storytelling, allowing people to explore different cultures, values, and traditions. Through Kathakar, we not only tell stories but also discuss their significance in everyday life, cinema, and music." He also said that the Storytellers Festival has been organized for the past 15 years, but this is the first time it is being held in Shimla. He mentioned that storytelling is an art, just like how

we used to listen to stories from our grandparents in childhood.

Famous music composer Shantanu Moitra stated that storytelling encompasses numerous tales, and the mountains too hold many stories. These stories can be taken across the country and abroad. He added that emotions in stories are the same worldwide; only the language differs.

During the discussion session, Mohit Chauhan shared that his journey began with superhit songs like Ab Ke Sawan and has led him to where he is today. He also mentioned that he hails from Himachal Pradesh, where many hidden stories exist, and music is the best medium to narrate these stories.

Prarthana Gahilote, Director of Kathakar, highlighted the festival's milestone: "Celebrating 15 glorious years, we are hosting the festival across four cities—Delhi, Shimla, Jodhpur, and Jaipur. Over 14 years and 18 editions, Kathakar has become synonymous with Indian and international storytelling, both in India and globally." She further added, "Shimla residents got to watch a unique treat of stories, music, and melodies. Two music legends, Shantanu Moitra and Mohit Chauhan, shared the stage, which is a treat for the audience, they offered insights into the evolution of music, storytelling, and adapting to changing times."

## Easel Stories Art Gallery is showcasing solo art exhibition of artist Vikash Kalra

### TDG NETWORK

Easel Stories Art Gallery, based in Noida, is showcasing month-long exhibition, 'Contrasting Realms: Intersection of Calm & Chaos,' featuring the compelling works of senior artist Vikash Kalra. The exhibition will run until February 28th, 2025 at the prestigious Arpana Fine Arts Gallery in Delhi.

Vikash Kalra's artistic journey spans both serene landscapes and the vibrant pulse of city life, creating a remarkable interplay between nature's tranquility and urban chaos. Through layers of texture, color, and form, Kalra invites us to experience a world where nature and the urban landscape coexist in a harmonious, vibrant balance.

In 'Contrasting Realms', Kalra explores the tension between serenity and unrest through abstract landscapes and cityscapes. His pieces are a striking blend of chaotic brushstrokes and peaceful spaces, creating an emotional journey that contrasts structure with freedom. The collection reflects the raw, honest dualities of the human experience, offering viewers a glimpse into the balance between inner peace and the turmoil of the external world.

Through his distinctive technique, Kalra masterfully conveys how calm and chaos can coexist, inviting viewers to connect with the emotional depth of each piece and contemplate their own experiences of these contrasting forces.

Easel Stories Art Gal-



*The collection reflects the raw, honest dualities of the human experience, offering viewers a glimpse into the balance between inner peace and the turmoil of the external world.*

lery, located in Noida, is a curated platform dedicated to showcasing the works of talented contemporary artists. Through its exhibitions, the gallery seeks to connect art lovers with meaningful expressions that inspire, provoke thought, and spark dialogue.



# 2ND ODI: ROHIT'S TON POWERS INDIA TO 4-WICKET WIN

Men in Blue clinch ODI series over England 2-0.

TDG NETWORK  
CUTTACK

Rohit Sharma's explosive century powered India to clinch a four-wicket triumph over England in the second ODI match of the series at the Barabati Stadium in Cuttack on Sunday.

With the stunning victory on Sunday, the Men in Blue clinched the ODI series over England 2-0.

Sunday was all about Rohit Sharma, it was his day fully. The skipper gave a reply to his critics from his bat as he smashed a 76-ball century. The 37-year-old entertained the fans in Cuttack as he powered rains of sixes.

Rohit Sharma (119 runs from 90 balls, 12 fours and 7 sixes) and Shubman Gill (60 runs from 52 balls, 9 fours and 1 six) opened for the Men in Blue aiming to chase down a target of 305 runs. The captain and his



India's captain Rohit Sharma celebrates his century during the 2nd ODI match against England, at Barabati Stadium in Cuttack on Sunday. ANI

deputy cemented a stand of 136 runs which made it easier for the hosts.

As the Three Lions got tired of conceding runs of the Indian openers, England seamer Jamie Overton drew the first blood in the second inning as he removed Gill in the 17th over.

Virat Kohli replaced the India vice-captain, but the talisman batter failed to make a mark in Cuttack. Kohli smashed just one four during his short time on the crease. Soon, Kohli was removed by Adil Rashid in the 20th over.

Shreyas Iyer came in place of Kohli and continued his solid form in the first match of the series. Iyer solidified a partnership of 70 runs with Rohit.

In the 26th over, Rohit smashed it over the long-off for a maximum and completed his 32nd ODI century in style.

However, in the 30th over England's Liam Livingstone removed the India skipper for 119 runs, giving hope to the visitors to turn around the match.

England got the upper hand in the game following Rohit's dismissal, as they picked up a few quick wickets.

Shreyas Iyer (44 runs from 47 balls, 3 fours and 1 six) was unlucky to lose his wicket following a silly run-out in the 37th over. Later in the 41st over, KL Rahul (10 runs from 14 balls, 1 four) was dismissed by Overton.

Hardik Pandya replaced Rahul on the crease and added a few crucial runs on the board. The Men in Blue all-rounder spent a short time on the crease but made a mark. Hardik scored 10 runs from 6 balls, smashing 2 fours at a strike rate of 166.67. However, he lost his wicket in the 42nd over against Gus Atkinson.

## Banton to cover for injured Bethell in third ODI

AGENCIES  
LONDON

England have called up Somerset batter Tom Banton as a cover for all-rounder Jacob Bethell for the third ODI against India, which will take place on Wednesday.

The match, taking place at Ahmedabad's Narendra Modi Stadium, will be missed by Bethell, who sustained a left hamstring injury. He had featured in the first ODI at Nagpur.

The injury will be assessed further when the team arrive in Ahmedabad on Monday.

Banton, who last played for England in an ODI in August 2020, has been in outstanding form in T20 franchise cricket. He is currently the leading run-scorer in the UAE International League T20 (ILT20) competition, where he has amassed 493 runs from 11 innings at an average of 54.77,



including two centuries and three fifties, at a strike rate of 151.69. He is set to arrive in India tomorrow, as per a press release from the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

Banton has featured in six ODIs for England, having made 134 runs in five innings at an average of 26.80, with a half-century and best score of 58. In 14 ODIs, he has scored 327 runs at an average of 23.55, with a strike rate of 147.96, with two fifties. His best score is 73.

With India 1-0 up in the series after a four-wicket win in the first ODI at Nagpur, England would be aiming to make a comeback in the series and set up an exciting decider.

For India, Virat Kohli comes back after recovery from a sore knee and Yashasvi Jaiswal sits out. Varun Chakravathy is also set to make his ODI debut.

For England, Mark Wood, Gus Atkinson and Jamie Overton come back into the playing XI.

England (Playing XI): Philip Salt(w), Ben Duckett, Joe Root, Harry Brook, Jos Buttler(c), Liam Livingstone, Jamie Overton, Gus Atkinson, Adil Rashid, Mark Wood, Saqib Mahmood

India (Playing XI): Rohit Sharma(c), Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul(w), Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel, Ravindra Jadeja, Harshit Rana, Mohammed Shami, Varun Chakravathy.

## Ace all-rounder Deepti to lead UP Warriorz in Season 3 of WPL

TDG NETWORK  
LUCKNOW

The UP Warriorz are all geared up for Season 3 of the Women's Premier League (WPL), and have named a new captain. India's ace all-rounder Deepti Sharma, one of the mainstays of the UP Warriorz squad, was announced as captain, by the former India cricketer Suresh Raina, who also hails from Uttar Pradesh, as stated in a release from the



franchise.

Deepti, who was born in Agra in Uttar Pradesh, will be the first UP Warriorz

captain to lead the team out at their home stadium - the Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow. For the first time in WPL, the Captain announcement was done live on broadcast during the Amul cricket live show just ahead of India's ODI against England.

Season 3 of the WPL marks the first time that the tournament will come to Lucknow, the home ground for the UP Warriorz, who will also be led by a cricketer from the home state.

## Australia win series in Sri Lanka after 14 years

AGENCIES  
GALLE

An excellent performance from Australian spinners Matthew Kuhnemann and Nathan Lyon complemented fine centuries from Steve Smith and Alex Carey as visitors defeated Sri Lanka by nine wickets in the second Test at Galle on Sunday.

After 14 years, Australia has finally managed to secure a series win in Sri Lanka and for the first time since 2006, they have clean swept a series in Asia.

Sri Lanka won the toss and opted to bat first. Half-centuries from Kusal Men-



dis (85 in 139 balls, with 10 fours and a six) and Dinesh Chandimal (74 in 163 balls, with six fours and a six) took Sri Lanka to 257 in 97.4 overs. Sri Lanka lost their wickets regularly, but a 65-run seventh wicket stand between Kusal and Ramesh Mendis (28 in 94 balls, with two fours) stretched SL past the 200-

run mark.

Mitchell Starc (3/27), Matthew Kuhnemann (3/63), and Nathan Lyon (3/96) were top wicket-takers for Australia.

In their first innings, Australia lost Travis Head (21), Marnus Labuschagne (4), and Usman Khawaja (36) early, leaving the team struggling at 91/3.

However, centuries from Alex Carey (156 in 188 balls, with 15 fours and two sixes) and Steve Smith (131 in 254 balls, with 10 fours and a six) pushed Australia beyond the 300-run mark as they put on 259 runs for the fourth wicket. A valuable knock of 31 by Beau Webster took the Aussies to 414 runs, giving them a lead of 157 runs. Prabath Jayasuriya (5/151) took another five-wicket haul, while Nishan Peiris (3/94) and Ramesh (2/81) also delivered with the ball.

In their second innings, Sri Lanka lost wickets early once again, reduced to 81/4. Half-centuries from Angelo

Mathews (76 in 149 balls, with four boundaries and a six) and Kusal Mendis (50 in 54 balls, with five fours and a six) took the Lankan Lions to 231 runs, giving them a 74-run lead.

Kuhnemann (4/63) and Lyon (4/84) were top wicket-getters for Aussies yet again. Australia was given 75 runs to win, which they chased down with Usman Khawaja (27\*) and Marnus Labuschagne (26\*) unbeaten after Travis Head (20) fell to Jayasuriya.

Carey earned the 'Player of the Match' award for his knock of 156 while Smith earned the 'Player of the Series' for his two centuries.

## ISL: Odisha FC-Punjab FC playoff today

TDG NETWORK  
BHUBANESWAR

Odisha FC will host Punjab FC in the Indian Super League (ISL) 2024-25 at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar on Monday.

The Juggernauts will pursue recovering from their 2-1 setback to FC Goa in their previous match, whereas Punjab FC will have their sights set on a league double over the opponents, since they had clinched a 2-1 win in the reverse fixture on September 20, 2024. A win here could mark the maiden time that Punjab FC defeated an opponent twice in the same season, as stated in a release from ISL.

Odisha FC have been on a turbulent ride of late, losing and drawing thrice each in their previous seven matches, struggling for consistency. They have netted 12 times in these seven games, and in the entirety



of the season, the team has struck the woodwork on 13 instances - the most by any side. The hosts will bank on Diego Mauricio to produce heroics upfront, as he is one strike away from completing 10 goals for the fourth time in his ISL career.

In their most recent away game, Punjab FC were dealt with a 0-3 loss by the Mohun Bagan Super Giant. If they are unable to score again, it will be only the

second time when they fail to find the back of the net in consecutive games in the ISL.

Both these sides are out of the top-six positions presently. Odisha FC are seventh in the standings with 25 points from 19 games due to six victories and seven draws, trailing sixth-placed Bengaluru FC by three points (28). Punjab FC are ninth with 23 points, but they have a game in hand,

having featured in only 18 matches thus far. The two sides are well in contention to qualify for the playoffs but need to ensure that further time doesn't slip away before they begin getting a streak of positive outcomes under their belt.

Odisha FC have conceded multiple goals in their last two home games. If they do so again, it will be their outright longest streak of such a defensive track record in ISL history. Overall, they have kept just three clean sheets this season, which is the second-lowest in the league.

Odisha FC have scored the second-most goals in the league (37 strikes in 19 games). While Mauricio has been at the forefront, finding the back of the net nine times, Jerry Mawihmingthanga and Mourtada Fall have scored on five and four occasions too respectively.

## FIH Pro League: England women's team reaches India ahead of matches

TDG NETWORK  
BHUBANESWAR

The England Women's Hockey Team arrived at the Biju Patnaik International Airport in Bhubaneswar, Odisha on Sunday ahead of the FIH Hockey Pro League 2024/25 India leg matches.

The world number seven side will face the hosts India and current world number one Netherlands in the FIH Hockey Pro League 2024/25 India leg, scheduled to take place in Bhubaneswar from February 15-25.

With one win and three losses so far, England has made a rocky start to their FIH Pro League campaign and will be hoping to turn things around despite facing challenging opponents.

Forward Darcy Bourne



shared her excitement upon arriving in India saying, "We are very excited to be in India especially after the Hockey India League, expecting the atmosphere to be really big. This is my first time in India, but the buzz around hockey here is nothing like I have ever seen so I am extremely excited."

Despite struggling at the World Cups recently, Eng-

land is the current Commonwealth champions after the gold medal win in 2022. With big names in the squad this year, England is one of the teams to watch out for.

Head coach David Ralph also echoed the excitement and stated, "We are expecting the matches to be very challenging but we are excited. It is going to be wonderful for the girls to

*Forward Darcy Bourne shared her excitement upon arriving in India saying, "We are very excited to be in India especially after the Hockey India League, expecting the atmosphere to be really big."*

play in front of the Indian crowd. In hockey, this is one of the best things you can experience."

The FIH Pro League matches of the India leg will be televised on Jio Cinema and Sports 18.

## SG Pipers Cheetahs lifts World Padel League trophy

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

After four days of thrilling padel action, SG Pipers Cheetahs lifted the World Padel League title with a massive 24-15 victory over Vernost Jaguars in the finals on Saturday at the Nesco Center in Mumbai.

In the mixed doubles, SG Pipers Cheetahs' Pol Hernandez and Julieta Bidahorra raced to a 3-0 lead, but Vernost Jaguars' Alejandro Arroyo and Maria Riera fought back with three consecutive games to level at 3-3. SG Pipers Cheetahs responded strongly, winning two back-to-back games to go 5-3 up. However, Vernost Jaguars showed



great resilience, claiming four straight games to clinch the set 7-5, as stated in a release from World Padel League.

In the women's doubles, Vernost Jaguars' Alejandra Salazar and Tamara Icardo broke SG Pipers Cheetahs' Claudia Fernandez and Beatriz Gonzalez's opening serve, but Jaguars immediately responded with a break to level

at 1-1. From there, SG Pipers Cheetahs took complete control as they did not allow their opponents another game and sealed a dominant 6-1 victory, putting their team 11-8 ahead in the overall games.

The first men's doubles was a closely contested set, but SG Pipers Cheetahs' Enrique Goenaga and Teodoro Zapata held their nerve in the

tiebreak to edge past Vernost Jaguars' David Sanchez and Aris Patiniotis, securing a 7-6 win and also extending their lead to 18-14.

In the final set, SG Pipers Cheetahs' Francisco Guerrero and Juanlu Esbri dominated Vernost Jaguars' Lucas Campagnolo and Maximiliano Sanchez, securing a commanding 6-1 victory. Their emphatic performance sealed a massive 24-15 overall win, crowning SG Pipers Cheetahs champions of the competition.

With support from the Indian Padel Federation (IPF), the World Padel League made a spectacular debut in India. The tournament was nothing short of a spectacle, captivating a wide range of sports

enthusiasts and marking a new chapter in Indian padel history.

Following its resounding success, "The Greatest Show on Court!" is set to return in August 2025, promising an even bigger and more thrilling edition.

Speaking after the win, SG Pipers Cheetahs' Enrique Goenaga expressed that it has been an amazing week for them.

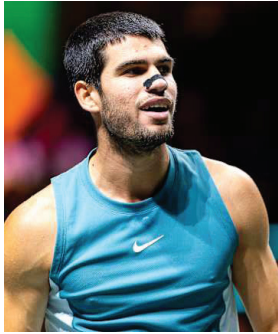
"It has been an amazing week for us, and I want to congratulate all my teammates for winning the title. We played at an amazing level and are really happy with how the season went by," Goenaga was quoted in a release from World Padel League as saying.

## Alcaraz one win away from first indoor title

AGENCIES  
ROTTERDAM

Spanish tennis sensation Carlos Alcaraz is just one step away from his maiden indoor title, as he secured a win over Hubert Hurkacz in the semifinal of the ongoing Rotterdam Open on Saturday night.

Alcaraz delivered a performance full of gems worth replaying, with a scoreline of 6-4, 6-7(5), 6-3. Now, he will be meeting Alex de Minaur in the title clash. Alcaraz managed to save three break points, avoiding a double break deficit and won the first set and the decider in an entertaining two-hour, 21-minute win, as per the



ATP official website.

"Great level, great match, that is all I could say. In that moment (at the end of the match) he was a bit tired. I know his frustrations at the end of the match, so I could not say so much about it. I am just really happy. I think we both played at such a high level, for the people as well. It was a great match,"

said Alcaraz.

Alcaraz, who has secured 16 tour-level titles across hard, clay and grass courts is just a win away from his indoor title which will boost his all-round game credentials heavily. De Minaur, his opponent in the title clash, ended the dream run of qualifier Mattia Bellucci with a 6-1, 6-2 victory in the semifinal.

Hurkacz made a fine start to the semifinal clash and was on serve early. He struck the ball cleanly off both wings, leading three points for a double-break lead at 4-1, 0/40. From there on, Alcaraz changed the game in the first set with some high-quality tennis and all-court points.