

2
CONG DISTANCES ITSELF
FROM SAM PITRODA'S
STATEMENTS ON CHINA



7
XI PROMISES POLICY STABILITY
IN MEETING WITH BUSINESS
LEADERS



11
SACHIN BABY
STANDS TALL WITH
UNBEATEN 69

NAME OF NEXT CEC FINALISED BY PM MODI-LED COMMITTEE

Panel comprising Home Minister Amit Shah and LoP in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi recommended name to President Droupadi Murmu

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The selection committee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi met here this evening and is learnt to have recommended the name of the next chief election commissioner (CEC) to the President, sources said.

Besides PM Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi are part of the three-member panel to select the CEC. The committee met here at the Prime Minister's Office in South Block and recommended the name to President Droupadi Murmu.

The sources in the government said the notification announcing the name of the next CEC could be issued "in the next few hours".

Incumbent CEC Rajiv Kumar demits office on Tuesday on attaining the age of 65.

As a matter of precedent, the senior-most Election Commissioner (EC) used



Matter pending in court, govt should have put off meeting: Cong

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Congress said on Monday that the government should have postponed the meeting of the committee to select the next Chief Election Commissioner in view of the petitions pending before the Supreme Court.

The Congress held a press conference on the day party leader Rahul Gandhi attended the committee meeting and said that the Act, which constitutes this committee, "creates a partisan and non-neutral mechanism for the selection of Election Commissioners".

Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi said

the government wants "only control but not credibility," and the most important aspect for the Election Commission is "credibility."

"Removing or trying to keep the Chief Justice out of the appointment (of CEC) process as an independent entity, the government has made it

■ P5

to get elevated as the CEC following the retirement of the incumbent.

However, a new law on the appointment of the CEC and ECs came into force in 2023 under which a search committee shortlists five names from among secretary-level officers for consideration and finalisation by the prime minister-led panel.

This law has been challenged in the SC and the next hearing is scheduled on February 19.

After Rajiv Kumar, Gyanesh Kumar is the senior-most election commissioner. His tenure as Election Commissioner is until January 26, 2029.

If Gyanesh Kumar is approved as the next CEC, a new EC could also be appointed to fill the vacancy created by his elevation.

According to sources, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was learnt to have asked the government to defer its decision on the new CEC till the Supreme Court hearing on February 19 on a petition challenging the composition of the selection panel.

Deposit cover limit likely to be raised

MUMBAI: The government is actively considering raising the deposit insurance scheme limit beyond Rs 5 lakh, said the secretary at the Department of Financial Services, M Nagaraju, on Monday. "As and when the government approves, we will notify it. This is under the consideration of the government," the top official told reporters at a press conference in Mumbai when asked to respond to the crisis-hit New India Cooperative Bank.

The secretary reiterated that increasing the insurance deposit insurance is under active consideration.

Deposit insurance, as we know it today, was introduced in India in 1962.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi shares a warm hug with the Amir of the State of Qatar, Tamim Bin Hamad AL Thani on his arrival for his second State visit to India, in New Delhi on Monday. ANI

Odisha varsity takes back Nepali students after diplomatic intervention

Students were allegedly forcefully evicted from campus after protest over death of student under suspicious circumstances



Nepali students forced to leave Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) after tensions flare up following the alleged suicide of a female student from Nepal, in Cuttack on Monday. (ANI Photo)

Nepali students staged protests, leading to a harsh crackdown by university authorities. Many were forcibly removed from their hostels and left stranded at railway stations.

Nepal Prime Minister wrote on his Facebook account in Nepali that it has come to his attention through media and social media that a student from Nepal had died in the hostel of Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology

(KIIT) University in Odisha and that Nepali students have been forcibly evicted from the hostel.

Oli said that his government is working on this matter through diplomatic channels and is in contact with the relevant authorities in India.

The Nepali Embassy has also called for an independent and impartial investigation into Lamsal's death. The university has reportedly assured full cooperation in

■ P5

No paper leak, CBSE warns of action against fake news

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on Monday rejected claims of question paper leaks in the ongoing Class 10 and 12 board examinations, terming them as "baseless" and as an attempt to create panic among students and parents.

The CBSE board exams began on February 15, with over 42 lakh students appearing at more than 7,800 centres across India and abroad. According to board officials, a total of 24.12 lakh Class 10 students are taking exams in 84 subjects, while over 17.88 lakh Class 12 students are appearing for exams across 120 subjects.

In an official statement, CBSE said, "It has come to the Board's attention that certain unscrupulous elements are spreading rumours on YouTube, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and other social media platforms regarding paper leaks or claiming access to the 2025 examination question papers. These claims are baseless and are intended to create unnecessary panic."

The Board assured that it has implemented strict measures to ensure a smooth and fair examination process. It also warned

■ P5

Delhi shaken by early morning earthquake

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

An earthquake measuring 4.0 on the Richter scale hit Delhi-NCR early Monday at a depth of 5 km, according to the National Centre for Seismology (NCS).

The strong tremors were felt at 5:36 AM. The sudden jolts prompted residents to rush out of their homes in panic.

At New Delhi railway station, a vendor Anish said, "Everything was shaking...customers started screaming..."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged residents of Delhi and surrounding areas to stay calm and follow safety protocols.

In a post on X, the Prime Minister also advised everyone to remain alert for



A 20-25-year-old tree at Jheel Park gets uprooted following an earthquake of 4.0-magnitude with its epicentre at Dhaula Kuan, in New Delhi on Monday. (ANI Photo/Shrikant Singh)

potential aftershocks.

"Tremors were felt in Delhi and nearby areas. Urging everyone to stay calm and follow safety precautions, staying alert for possible aftershocks. Authorities are keeping a close watch on the situation," PM Modi said.

A 20-25-year-old tree was uprooted at Jheel Park in Dhaula Kuan, lo-

cated at the epicentre of this morning's 4.0-magnitude earthquake. Caretakers of the park confirmed the damage caused by the tremors.

Director of the National Centre for Seismology (NCS) Dr OP Mishra assured residents of the national capital that there is nothing to worry about as after-

■ P5

Twist in Lipsy murder case, police says husband, girlfriend plotted killing

TARUNI GANDHI
CHANDIGARH

In a twist to the murder of Lipsy Mittal, her husband and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Anokh Mittal and his 24-year-old friend woman friend Pratiksha have been arrested by Ludhiana police on Monday for orchestrating the murder.

The Police have also ar-

rested four contract killers hired by the duo—Amritpal Singh alias Balli (26), Gurdeep Singh alias Manni (25), Sonu Singh (24) — all residents of Nandpur, and Sagardeep Singh alias Teji (30) from Dhandari Kalan. Another key accused, Gurpreet Singh alias Gopi, remains absconding.

The crime took place



on Saturday night when Lipsy and Anokh were returning home after attending a party at a resort in Pohir village, along the Ludhiana-Malerkotla highway. As they stopped at a deserted stretch on the Dehlon bypass, the hired assailants, armed with sharp weapons, attacked Lipsy and killed her.

■ P5

TARUNI GANDHI
CHANDIGARH

Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) president Harjinder Singh Dhani resigned from his post on Monday, citing moral grounds. His decision follows strong condemnation by Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Raghbir Singh over the SGPC's dismissal of Giani Harpreet Singh as the jathedar of Takht Sri Damdama Sahib.

Addressing the media in Amritsar, Dhani emphasized his commitment to the Akal Takht and took full responsibility for the developments,

Dhani has also requested his removal from the seven-member committee formed by the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) to oversee its membership drive.

stating, "I, being the president of SGPC, take responsibility and resign from the post on moral grounds with immedi-

ate effect."

Dhani has also requested his removal from the seven-member committee formed by the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) to oversee its membership drive. He confirmed that he has submitted his resignation to the SGPC executive committee.

Referring to a February 13 Facebook post by Jathedar Raghbir Singh, where the jathedar termed Giani Harpreet Singh's removal as "highly condemnable" and "unfortunate," Dhani acknowledged the criticism and stepped down.

CONG DISTANCES ITSELF FROM SAM PITRODA'S STATEMENTS ON CHINA

Not the view of INC, says party General Secretary Jairam, reminds BJP of PM Modi giving clean chit to China; BJP slams statements

ANAND SINGH
NEW DELHI

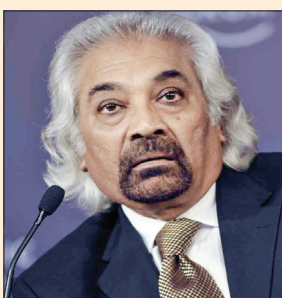
Congress on Monday again distanced itself from the views expressed by Indian Overseas Congress chairman Sam Pitroda, who stirred a hornet nest with his remarks that the threat from China is often blown out of proportion and suggested that India needs to stop considering the neighbouring country as an enemy.

In a post on X, Ramesh said, "The views reportedly expressed by Sam Pitroda on China are most definitely NOT the views of the Indian National Congress."

He said, "China remains our foremost foreign policy, external security, as well as economic challenge. The INC (Indian National Congress) has repeatedly raised questions on the Modi government's approach to China, including the Prime Minister's public clean

'CHINA FOREMOST CHALLENGE'

- China remains our foremost foreign policy, external security, as well as economic challenge, says Jairam Ramesh
- The INC has repeatedly raised questions on the Modi Govt's approach to China, including the PM's public clean chit to it on June 19, 2020., Jairam wrote on X.
- Sam Pitroda has openly revealed the Congress party's agreement with China, says BJP's national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi



chit to it on June 19, 2020. Our most recent statement on China was on 28th January, 2025."

"It is also extremely regrettable that Parliament is being denied an opportunity to discuss the situation and express a collective resolve to meet these challenges effectively," the Congress leader added.

In an interview from US, Pitroda, who is not new to controversies, while speaking on how Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump would be able to control the threats from China stirred a new controversy with his comments giving fresh ammunition to the BJP.

The Indian Overseas Con-

gress chairman said, "I don't understand the threat from China. I think this issue is often blown out of proportion because the US has a tendency to define an enemy. I believe the time has come for all nations to collaborate, not confront. Our approach has been confrontational from the very beginning, and

this attitude creates enemies, which in turn garners support within the country. We need to change this mindset and stop assuming that China is the enemy from day one."

However, soon Congress distanced the party from his comments and also said that China remains India's foremost foreign policy, external security as well as economic challenge.

Earlier, BJP's national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi lashed out at Congress over Sam Pitroda's statement on China saying that his statements are an "insult" to the soldiers who lost their lives in Galwan.

"Sam Pitroda has openly revealed the Congress party's agreement with China. The serious thing is that the kind of thing Sam Pitroda has said is a very deep blow to India's identity, diplomacy and sovereignty" Trivedi said.

Congress's Gaurav Gogoi takes a jibe at Assam CM on allegations against his wife

TDG NETWORK
GUWAHATI

The issue of Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi's wife's alleged links to a Pakistani national as claimed by Assam CM Himanta Sarma has snowballed into a major controversy. On Monday the Congress MP attacked the CM on the allegations saying said that something was bothering the CM and it is natural because he is scared.

Addressing a press conference, Gogoi said that the CM kept 'changing' his stand every day out of fear. He stated that he is in fear about the elections and knows that he will lose his post.

"People of Assam saw the CM's face yesterday. Look at his eyes, it was clear that something was amiss. There is something that is bothering the CM and it is natural because he is scared. He changes his stand every day out of fear...Congress' stand is clear. If they have to investigate anything, they can. We stand firm," Gogoi said addressing the conference.

"The fear among them is due to the elections that will be held 12 months from now. Their defeat is imminent in those elections and he knows this. He knows that



he will lose his post. So, he is scared for his own future when the Congress govt will be formed in Assam in future. He is worried..." Gogoi further added.

The Congress MP also questioned the CM's work done in the last 10 years for the people of Assam.

"For 10 years, people of Assam questioned the state government. But they did not get even one reply. In the last 4 and a half years, people of Assam have been questioning Himanta Biswa Sarma. But he did not answer even one question. But he will have to answer after the 2026 elections. So, he has doubts in his mind today," he further stated.

Gogoi also exuded confidence in the upcoming state elections and said that the

people would go to Congress with a united front to raise their issues.

"In these 12 months, Congress will go to the people with a united front and raise their issues. At the end, people of Assam will win," he said.

Assam's Congress President Bhupen K Borah assured Gogoi that the whole party was with him. He also threatened the probing police officers in that their power would not remain permanent and they would face harsh consequences if Congress came to power.

Meanwhile, the Assam Police registered a case against the Pakistani national Ali Tauqueer Sheikh whom the CM had alleged to be linked to Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi's wife.

USAID was 'funnelling' money into India to instigate protests: BJP MP

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

BJP leader Rajeev Chandrasekhar on Monday claimed that organisations such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) were "funnelling" large sums of money into India to instigate protests.

Chandrasekhar alleged that certain political figures and groups within the country are acting as tools of external forces to hinder India's progress and that they had become weapons in the hands of countries and people who don't want to see India rise.

The BJP leader further called for a united front against these alleged elements and urged citizens to demand accountability.

"Every Indian should come together and ask for these types of people and traitors to be exposed and prosecuted because anybody who is becoming a weapon in the hands of foreign forces is certainly working against the interests of India and Indians," he said.

In a self-made video on X, Rajeev Chandrasekhar said, "This shocking revelation

that organisations like USAID were funnelling Crores of Rupees to organisations in India confirm that all of these protests that we were seeing over the last several years were foreign-funded. They were being instigated and puppet-mastered from across the border and there are people in India, including political leaders, dynasts who have essentially become weapons in the hands of countries and people who don't want to see India rise."

"I have said this before and I am saying it again, India's rise, and transformation over the last 10 years under PM Narendra Modi has not been to the happiness and satisfaction of many people and forces around the world. They are trying their very best to undermine India and slow India's rise," he stated in the video. Adding further, he said, "There are people in India who have become the tools of these types of forces. So, my appeal is, that every Indian should come together and ask for these type of people and traitors to be exposed and them to be prosecuted because anybody who is becoming a weapon in the hands of foreign forces.

PIL in SC seeks guidelines to prevent future stampede

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A PIL has been filed in the Supreme Court in the wake of the recent stampede at the New Delhi Railway Station, seeking to constitute an expert committee to frame guidelines and suggest measures to prevent such incidents in the future.

The PIL sought direction from the Union and State governments to collectively constitute an expert committee to frame guidelines and measures to prevent the incidents of stampedes.

The plea filed by advocate Vishal Tiwari sought direction from Indian Railways to take measures for the safety of passengers at railway stations and platforms by widening corridors, constructing broader overbridges and platforms, and ensuring easy access to platforms through ramps and escalators. During peak hours, any changes to arrival or departure platforms should be strictly avoided.

"Utilising barriers, ropes, and crowd control gates to



manage passenger flow is essential and not to distribute tickets at a time above the number of passengers who may gather and accommodate on a railway station as per to the space available," the plea stated.

The petitioner also sought directions to the Union and the states to implement the report made by the National Disaster Management Authority in 2014 titled "Managing Crowd at Events and Venues of Mass Gathering."

The stampede occurred due to a last-minute change of the departure platform of the train to Prayagraj, said the petitioner, adding that such incidents have also occurred previously as well at

railway stations. "These recurring tragedies highlight the urgent need for enhanced crowd management and safety measures at significant transport hubs such as New Delhi Railway Station," submitted the plea. It further stated, "The government and railway ministry are very well aware that when Maha Kumbh is going on and lakhs of people are boarding from the railway stations from all states. Then the railways should have made adequate arrangements and safety measures. There have been many videos on social media and news reports that show the chaotic condition at the railway stations where the people are suffering.

Akhilesh urges to extend Maha Kumbh, slams UP govt for 'bad' facilities, chaos

TDG NETWORK
KANNAUJ

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Monday urged the Uttar Pradesh government to extend the dates for Mahakumbh, saying that many devotees have not visited the holy congregation because of "bad" facilities and recent incidents.

Yadav also accused the Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath-led government of 'hiding' the death toll of the stampede that happened in Prayagraj on January 29. Speaking to press, Yadav



said, "As per the information received nowadays from people who have returned from there, the facilities there are really bad. CM had said that they are making arrangements for 100 crore people but that many

people haven't even gone, only a few crores have gone but still, all the facilities have gone down the hill, stampede happened, till now, the actual death toll has not come out."

"People spent hours on the road during night due to long traffic jams, so many people lost lives in various accidents. I demand that the time of Kumbh should be extended," Yadav added.

30 people reportedly lost their lives at the stampede that occurred on the occasion of the Mauni Amavasya bathing ritual on January 29.

THE MAHA KUMBH 2025



Devotees gather to take a dip at Triveni Sangam during the ongoing 'Maha Kumbh Mela 2025', in Prayagraj on Monday. As Prayagraj continues to witness a huge footfall of devotees gathering at Maha Kumbh, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that so far, 53 crore devotees have taken a holy dip in the Triveni Sangam and this process will continue for the next nine days. ANI

How Cong's new team is focused on Rahul's narrative to provide leadership to underprivileged

ANAND SINGH
NEW DELHI

Even as Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge carried out a major reshuffling in the grand old party amid back-to-back setbacks in three assembly polls, the party has towed the line of party leader Rahul Gandhi as he has been echoing the sentiment of providing their share as per the population.

Rahul Gandhi has been echoing the voice for providing equal opportunity to the youths as per their population share across the country.

He has also been voicing for the caste-based census across the country.

With the new list, where the party appointed two new general secretaries and nine in-charges, the party has tried to present a balance of caste and religion in the party, which Rahul Gan-



dhi has been advocating for last two years.

The party made former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, an OBC face and Congress Rajya Sabha MP Syed Naseer Hussain, a Muslim face as general secretaries of Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh respectively.

Similarly, the party also appointed nine in-charges with three Brahmin face and rest from the SC, OBC and backward and tribal

community.

The party appointed Meenakshi Natrajan as Telangana in-charge, Krishna Allavaru as Bihar in-charge and Girish Chodankar as Tamil Nadu and Puducherry in-charge, all three Brahmin faces and Rajani Patil, a Kunbi Maratha OBC face has been made the in-charge of Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh.

Meanwhile, K Raju, a Dalit face coming from SC community has been made the in-charge of Jharkhand, while BK Hariprasad also an OBC face has been given the charge of Haryana.

Similarly, Ajay Kumar Lallu, who is also the party's OBC face has been given the charge of Odisha while Harish Chaudhary, also an OBC face has been made the in-charge of Madhya Pradesh.

Meanwhile, Saptgiri San-

kar Ulaka, a tribal face from

Odisha has been made the in-charge of Nagaland, Manipur, Sikkim and Tripura.

Similarly, Rajani Patil has been made the in-charge of Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh in the fresh reshuffling in the party.

Even, interestingly, when Rahul Gandhi was appointed General Secretary of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) as in-charge of the party's two important frontals - Indian Youth Congress and the National Students Union of India (NSUI) in 2007, Natrajan, Allavaru, Chaudhary, Lallu and Raju groomed under the leadership of Rahul Gandhi.

The new reshuffling carried out by Kharge to continue party's General Secretary (Organisation) KC Venugopal has made him more stronger as he has cemented his position in the party.

AJIT MAINDOLA
NEW DELHI

There has been ongoing debate within the Congress party over recent organizational changes made by Rahul Gandhi, which include both appointments and removals. These decisions have sparked discussions among leaders and workers, with many questioning the rationale behind these changes. A prevailing concern is whether Rahul Gandhi no longer trusts his North Indian leaders, as he seems to be assigning more significant roles to leaders from South India. A worker from Kota, Rajasthan, has provided an insightful analysis, suggesting that these changes may reflect a shift in strategy or trust. This analysis has resonated with several party members and seems to hold some merit. If Rahul Gandhi himself were



to evaluate this internal debate, he might recognize that the changes may not have been received as he intended. The uncertainty surrounding these decisions could have implications for party cohesion and leadership dynamics moving forward.

There has been considerable discussion and debate within the Congress party regarding the recent appointments and removals made by Congress Nation-

al President Mallikarjun Kharge and other senior leaders. Kharge, hailing from Karnataka, has made several key appointments that have sparked questions about the party's direction. The second most significant position in the party, that of Organization General Secretary, is held by KC Venugopal from Kerala. In a series of moves, Kharge has appointed several South Indian leaders to important roles, leading to speculation that the Congress may be shifting its focus toward southern leadership.

For instance, Kharge has elevated his supporter Syed Nasir Hussain, also from Karnataka, to the position of National General Secretary, entrusting him with the responsibility of Jammu and Kashmir.

Additionally, Kharge has brought back veteran Con-

gress leader BK Hariprasad from Karnataka to manage Haryana. Similarly, Krishna Allavaru, another Karnataka leader, was made the national in-charge of Bihar. These moves have raised questions among Congress workers, with many wondering if this is a strategy to safeguard the Karnataka government or if Kharge and Rahul Gandhi have lost faith in their North Indian leaders.

One of the points of contention is the appointment of Krishna Allavaru, a non-Hindi speaking South Indian, as the in-charge of Bihar, a state with its own unique political landscape. This decision is viewed by many as unusual, especially given that just a few months ago, Mohan Prakash from Rajasthan was assigned the responsibility of Bihar but was removed shortly after.

NEP ROW: TAMIL NADU DEPUTY CM ACCUSES CENTRE OF IMPOSING HINDI

Centre is attempting Hindi imposition on state, alleges Udhayanidhi

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) leader Udhayanidhi Stalin on Monday hit out at the BJP-led Union government, which he alleged was attempting a Hindi imposition on the Southern state. "The Union Government has not allotted funds to us in the union budget and even Tamil Nadu's name is not there in the budget. After the cyclonic disaster happened in Tamil Nadu, we asked for funds from the central government to release funds, but they still have not allotted it; only SDRF funds were given to us. Tamil Nadu people are watching their actions and when the time comes, they

'OUR CHIEF MINISTER WILL NOT ACCEPT IT'

- "Education was in the state list before and it is in the concurrent list now. The Union government is trying to impose Hindi and our Chief Minister will not accept it, the deputy chief minister of Tamil Nadu said.
- DMK leader Saravanan Annadurai also hit out at Tamil Nadu BJP chief K Annamalai for supporting Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's statement on the New Education Policy (NEP).
- DMK MP Kanimozhi said, "All those in the BJP should understand the difference between taking a language as a preferred language and studying it when there is no other way and when there is a need to study it."



UNION GOVERNMENT COMMITTED TO IMPLEMENTING NEP: UNION MIN PRADHAN

New Delhi: Following the allegations of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) government of language imposition and funds not been released for the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) in Tamil Nadu, Union Education Minister Dharmendra said that the Central government is committed to implementing National Education Policy. Dharmendra Pradhan said, "To create competition among students, to create a level-playing field, we have to come to a common platform. NEP is the new aspirational common platform. I respect all languages. This NEP, envisioned by PM Modi is giving emphasis to the mother tongue." He further said that though Tamil was one of the oldest languages there was nothing wrong if students in Tamil Nadu receive a multilingual education. "Tamil is one of the oldest languages of our civilisation. But what is wrong if a student in Tamil Nadu will learn multilingual aspect in education? It can be Tamil, English and other Indian languages.



will reply to them," Stalin said. "Education was in the state list before and it is in the concurrent list now. The Union government is trying to impose Hindi

and our Chief Minister will not accept it. The Union government is trying to impose Hindi on us and please don't impose Hindi on us," the deputy chief minister of Tamil Nadu

said. DMK leader Saravanan Annadurai also hit out at Tamil Nadu BJP chief K Annamalai for supporting Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's statement

on the New Education Policy (NEP) and refused the need to study Hindi. Annadurai alleged that Annamalai was made the chief of Tamil Nadu BJP so that he could be a "puppet".

Andhra CM reviews GBS situation after state reports first death

TDG NETWORK
AMARAVATI

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Monday held a review meeting at his residence in Undavalli to assess the situation concerning Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS) in the state. A woman in Andhra Pradesh has succumbed to Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS), marking the first reported death due to this rare condition in the state. The deceased, identified as Kamamma, was undergoing treatment at Guntur Government General Hospital (GGH) and passed away on Sunday. The woman, a resident of Komarolu Mandal in Prakasam District, was diagnosed with the syndrome. She developed high fever and experienced paralysis in her



legs. As her condition worsened, her family rushed her to Guntur Government General Hospital (GGH), Guntur. The patient, identified as Kamamma, passed away on Sunday. Superintendent of Guntur Government General Hospital (GGH), Dr SSV Ramana spoke to ANI about the case.



"A lady from the Prakasam district named Kamamma, aged 55 years, succumbed to Guillain-Barre syndrome yesterday evening. She had a cardiac arrest because of the GB syndrome affecting the respiratory and cardiac muscles." "She was admitted to the hospital on February 3 and treated for three days. On February 10, she was given

ventilatory support after which she was provided with haemoglobin. Her condition, however, became unstable and she later succumbed to cardiac arrest due to her syndrome," he said. He said another patient named John is on the ventilator after also being diagnosed with Guillain-Barre syndrome, but appears to be in a stable condition.

Karnataka Dy CM hits out at LoP for criticising his city rounds for inspection

TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Monday lashed out at the Leader of Opposition in Karnataka Assembly and BJP Leader R Ashoka for criticising his rounds for inspecting road construction in the city and questioned if BJP Chief Ministers conducting rounds in Bengaluru are for photo shoots. "When BJP CMs were doing city rounds, R Ashok accompanied them. Was all that a gimmick? Was it for photo shoot? BJP is jobless, and hence it is nitpicking," he said while speaking to reporters at his Sadashivanagar residence. He was replying to R Ashok's social media post alleging that his city rounds

were a photo shoot rather than genuine inspection. "We are doing our job. Whitetopping is a big-budget project. It is imperative for us to ensure that the project is progressing well and hence I wanted to I oversee it personally. We would like to complete the Rs 1700 crore project on time," he said. He said that the aid under Anna Bhagya and Gruhalakshmi schemes had been pending for three months and would be released soon. "We walk the talk," he said. Earlier in a post on X, R Ashoka asked DK Shivakumar if taking photos in the name of whitetopping work solves Bengaluru's problems. "As the Minister for Bengaluru Development, if you truly care about Brand

Bengaluru, you have a lot of work to do. Despite spending Rs 660 crore, thousands of potholes are still open across Bengaluru city. The summer season, from March to April, is a good time to close potholes and repair roads. If the government does not wake up now, it is guaranteed that potholes will once again become death traps for the public in the next monsoon season," R Ashoka said in the post. "Last year, you colluded with the tanker mafia and extorted people. Are you taking any action to ensure that the people of Bengaluru do not suffer for water during the summer season this year, or are you leaving the people to the mercy of the tanker mafia?" he further asked.

He said that Dy CM Shivakumar should take precautions this year to prevent water from flowing into Tamil Nadu from the KRS network. "No matter how much water is released, it is guaranteed that the people of Tamil Nadu will take it. Prepare for a legal fight now. Get ready to present a strong argument in favour of Karnataka. By the way, you were nowhere to be seen as Deputy Chief Minister in the pre-Budget meetings held by CM Siddaramaiah. Did you even make an effort to convince the Chief Minister about what projects Bengaluru city needs in the Budget and how much funding will be required for them, or did you forget your duty in the tussle for a chair?" he asked.

Man sentenced to life for rape-murder of British-Irish national in 2017

TDG NETWORK
MARGAO

A sessions court in Goa sentenced Vikat Bhagat to life imprisonment for the rape and murder of a British-Irish national who was found dead near a beach in Goa in 2017. Reacting to the imprisonment, investigating officer Inspector Filomeno Costa said, "The main part of the investigation was that we cordoned off the area and called the forensic team and we collected scientific evidence...we had many challenges. As the investigating officer, I was present in court at every hearing...today the court has given its verdict and the accused has been

sentenced to life imprisonment." Advocate Vikram Varma, representing the victim's family, said that the police have done a very good job in this case. He further said that tourism will suffer if the police in any country protect criminals. "...If the police in any country try to protect criminals, tourism will suffer. But here the police have done a very good job in showing that if a crime takes place, they will take action," Varma said. Bhagat was found guilty of murder, rape, robbery and destruction of evidence. The victim, was discovered dead in an isolated field in Canacona, Goa in 2017.

BJP alleges anti-national conspiracy after Hamas' leaders' posters seen in Kerala fest

TDG NETWORK
PALAKKAD

The photos of Hamas leaders were found displayed at the top of elephants during a cultural festival in Kerala's Palakkad. The regional festival which is called 'Thrithala' by the locals and is organised every year. As per the locals the event is a yearly fest which is organised by the people of the Thrithala panchayat. The organisers claimed that these photos were put by some of the groups which participated in the festival. The closing ceremony of the festival was celebrated on Sunday and several groups came up to become a part of it. BJP Kerala president K Surendran alleged that anti-



national organisations and radical elements are working in the state of Kerala. He added that all the activities are being done by the support of incumbent CPI(M) government for the purpose of vote bank politics. Surendran said that only BJP is against the anti-national and terror activities in Kerala.

BJP Kerala president K Surendran alleged that anti-national organisations and radical elements are working in the state of Kerala.

Surendran said while speaking to media on Monday, "Radical elements and anti-national organizations are working in Kerala with the support and help of the CPI-M government. The tragic incident happened to criminal radical elements for vote bank politics. So, only the BJP in Kerala is working against the anti-

national and terror organizations." Earlier in his post the BJP leader posted a video of the event and said, "One year ago, when BJP warned against a rally in Kerala where a Hamas leader virtually participated, the LDF govt took no action. Now, in Palakkad, at a Urus festival, terrorists who killed thousands were glorified-pictures of Ismail Haniyeh & Yahya Sinwar were paraded on elephants, where a Communist Minister and a former Congress MLA were also present." "What message is being sent here? Why is Pinarayi Vijayan silent again? If he has even an ounce of spine left, take action! If not, just resign and accept that you are a total 'Parajayan'".

Three women killed, eight injured as bus collides with autorickshaw in Guntur

TDG NETWORK
GUNTUR

Three women were killed and eight others were injured after an Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (AP-SRTC) bus collided with an autorickshaw in Guntur district, police said on Monday. The accident occurred in Chebrolu mandal area of the district. The deceased were identified as Aruna, Nacharamma, and Seetharavamma -- all residents of Shuddapalli village in Chebrolu mandal. According to officials, the accident occurred when an RTC bus collided with an autorickshaw carrying labourers to work in a chilli field in Neerukonda village.

The three women labourers travelling in the autorickshaw died on the spot. Five others, including the auto driver, were injured in the accident and were rushed to Guntur General Hospital for treatment. The Chebrolu police have registered a case and are investigating the circumstances surrounding the accident. Andhra Pradesh Transport Minister Mandali Ramprasad Reddy expressed shock and grief over the incident and directed officials to provide better medical treatment to the injured at Guntur General Hospital (GGH). He also conveyed his condolences to the families of the deceased agricultural labourers.

No Marathi school will be shut, assures Maharashtra CM Fadnavis

TDG NETWORK
JALGAON

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis reaffirmed the government's commitment to preserving Marathi education, stating that no Marathi school would be closed. Speaking to reporters on Sunday, CM said, "We have constantly given instructions that no

Marathi school should be closed. Secondly, we have made it compulsory to teach Marathi in schools, be it Marathi or Hindi schools. And we are setting up a mechanism to ensure that this instruction is followed properly..." Ahead of this, speaking about the Maharashtra government forming a committee against 'love jihad', Chief Min-



ister Devendra Fadnavis said that these incidents were "very serious and action must be taken." CM Fadnavis said, "The Supreme Court has also shown the reality of love jihad in its decision and endorsed it. And even in a state like Maharashtra, we are constantly seeing that such cases are increasing. First of all, we all should understand that

it is not wrong for a person of one religion to marry a person of another religion. But marrying someone by lying and showing false identity is wrong. These incidents that are happening are very serious, action must be taken on this." The Maharashtra government has set up a seven-member committee to explore legal

options for a potential law against forced religious conversions and 'love jihad'. A panel led by the Director General of Police (DGP) includes senior officials from key departments such as women and child welfare, minority affairs, law and judiciary, social justice, special assistance, and home affairs to probe the matter. The committee will

review similar laws in other states and suggest legal provisions to address complaints related to forced conversions and love jihad. Earlier, Union Minister Ramdas Athawale and other BJP leaders on Saturday welcomed Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis' decision to form a committee to address the issue of 'love jihad'.



against TDP's undemocratic practices. Kasu Mahesh Reddy echoed similar sentiments, criticizing TDP for its "hypocrisy" and descent into "regressive" politics. He recalled the 100 per cent victory YSRCP achieved in municipal elections under the leadership of former Chief Minister YS Jagan, contrasting this with TDP's failure to uphold democratic principles. Mahesh Reddy specifically highlighted the incidents in Pedakurapadu, where TDP leaders orchestrated attacks on YSRCP councillors, including the kidnapping and intimidation of councillors and even the ransacking of one councillor's house. He praised the resilience of 29th Ward Councillor Munira and her family for standing firm with YSRCP despite facing intimidation and threats.

MUNICIPAL BODIES TO SERVE AS THIRD TIER OF GOVERNMENT

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini announced the formation of municipal bodies as a third tier of city government to ensure that the benefits of government schemes reach every household. This new structure, alongside the Central and State governments, aims to accelerate the development process across the state. Saini expressed confidence that BJP candidates for Mayor, Chairman, and Councillors will secure a significant majority in the upcoming civic elections. He made these remarks while interacting with party



workers in Thanesar, Kurukshetra, on Monday. The Chief Minister highlighted the continued trust of the populace in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's

public welfare policies. He noted that in the Haryana Assembly elections, the BJP was elected for a third consecutive term, and in the recent Delhi elections, the

party achieved a resounding victory. Saini expressed confidence that the BJP will also emerge victorious in the forthcoming civic elections in Haryana. He emphasized

the party's commitment to elections, with workers dedicating themselves wholeheartedly to local body elections with enthusiasm and diligence.

Saini stated that after assuming the responsibility of public service with the commitment to 'service through good governance,' the current state government is continuously working for the progress and upliftment of all of Haryana and every Haryanvi. Guided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mottos, 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' and 'Haryana Ek, Haryanvi Ek,' the government aims to accelerate development threefold following the civic elections.

Ranbir Gangwa to attend National Water Conference in Udaipur

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

Haryana's Public Health Engineering and Public Works Minister, Ranbir Gangwa, will participate in the 2nd All India State Water Ministers' Conference in Udaipur, Rajasthan, on February 18-19, 2025. The conference, organized by the National Water Mission under the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti, will see participation from Public Health Engineering Ministers of various states.

Themed "India@2047 – A Water Secure Nation," the conference aligns with Prime Minister Narendra



Modi's vision of a developed, water-secure India. Discussions will focus on water sustainability and security across states, covering key topics such as the 'Har Ghar Nal, Har Ghar Jal' initiative, the 'Jal Jeevan Mission,' achieving 100%

reuse of treated wastewater, and the installation of energy-efficient, five-star rated pumping systems in 44 cities under the AM-RUT-2 scheme in Haryana. Strategies to make Haryana a water-secure state by 2047 will also be deliberated.

School bus accident in Kaithal injures eight students

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

In a tragic incident on Monday morning, a private school bus carrying students from nearby villages to Guru Nanak Academy in Pehowa plunged into the Sutlej Yamuna Link (SYL) Canal near Noch village in Haryana's Kaithal district. The accident occurred around 8:15 am when the driver lost control of the vehicle due to a steering wheel malfunction. The bus was transporting a total of 12 individuals, including eight students, the driver, a woman attendant, and two other women.

Passersby and local residents immediately rushed to the scene upon hearing the students' cries for help. They bravely entered the canal to rescue the trapped



passengers, successfully pulling all injured individuals from the submerged bus.

The victims were promptly transported to a nearby hospital for medical treatment. According to Sub-Inspector Ramesh Chandra of Keorak Police Station, the children sustained minor injuries, and an investigation into the exact cause of the accident is currently underway.

This incident has raised concerns about the safety standards of school transportation in the region. Authorities are being urged to conduct thorough inspections of school buses to prevent such accidents in the future.

Haryana govt criticized for transporting deportees in police buses

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Congress have criticized the BJP-led Haryana government for allegedly using buses designated for prisoners to transport deportees from the United States. On Sunday, a third flight carrying 112 Indian deportees landed at Amritsar airport, with 44 individuals hailing from Haryana. Unlike previous instances where police buses were used, the Haryana government dispatched a Volvo bus to bring its residents back from the airport.

Punjab NRI Affairs Minister Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal condemned the Haryana government's earlier actions, stating that the deportees, already subjected to inhumane treatment in the U.S., were further humiliated by being trans-

Unlike previous instances where police buses were used, the Haryana government dispatched a Volvo bus to bring its residents back from the airport.

ported in police buses upon their return. He questioned why Haryana's Transport Minister, Anil Vij, did not make appropriate arrangements for the deportees' dignified return.

This controversy highlights the need for state governments to handle the return of deportees with sensitivity and respect, ensuring that individuals are treated with dignity during their reintegration process.

SC stays P&H High Court's remarks against AAG

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

On February 17, 2025, the Supreme Court of India stayed the adverse observations made by the Punjab and Haryana High Court against Haryana's Additional Advocate General, Deepak Sabharwal. These observations were made during a regular bail application hearing concerning an undertrial prisoner who died while his bail application was pending.

The bench, comprising Justice BV Nagarathna and Justice Satish Chandra Sharma, issued the interim order in response to a Special Leave Petition filed by the State of Haryana. The Court stated, "All observations of the High Court contained in the impugned order vis-a-vis the Additional Advocate General who appeared in the matter



representing the petitioner State are stayed until further orders."

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta and Senior Advocate Siddharth Luthra, representing the State, requested the stay on the High Court's observations against the State Counsel. Senior Advocate Shoeb Alam appeared for the respondent.

The High Court had criticized Sabharwal for allegedly making incorrect sub-

missions, suggesting that the applicant had filed a second bail application despite the first being pending. It was later revealed that the State Counsel had omitted an annexure indicating that the application was filed under NALSA's special campaign for undertrial prisoners. Additionally, the High Court noted that the counsel misled the court regarding the respondent's medical condition.

Haryana woman booked for alleged blackmail of soldier

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

A woman from Bhiwani, Haryana, identified as Priyanka, has been booked for allegedly blackmailing a soldier named Naveen. The two reportedly connected via Instagram two months prior, where Priyanka offered to assist Naveen in obtaining a discounted airline ticket to Chandigarh. On January 8, upon Naveen's arrival from Srinagar, he met Priyanka at a hotel in Zirakpur, as per her suggestion. After a brief meeting, Priyanka left, citing poor signal issues. Subsequently, she filed a complaint against Naveen, accusing him of indecent behavior. Fearing repercussions, Naveen paid her ₹99,000 as a settlement. However, Priyanka later demanded an additional



The accused woman in police custody in Gurugram.

₹1 lakh, continuing her blackmail. Naveen then approached the police, leading to the registration of a case against Priyanka.

This incident sheds light on the growing concern of individuals being tar-

geted through social media platforms for extortion. Authorities advise users to exercise caution while interacting with unknown individuals online and to report any suspicious activities to the police promptly.

Internal rift may affect BJP's performance in upcoming civic polls

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Haryana is facing internal dissent ahead of the upcoming municipal elections, which could potentially impact its performance.

In Faridabad, the ruling party is confident of victory but is conscious of internal dissidence that may affect the chances of official candidates. The party is particularly concerned about members who, denied tickets, might contest as independents, thereby splitting the vote. This internal rift is evident from the recent change in candidates within 24 hours of the initial announcement, indicating underlying tensions and a growing number of

aspirants.

In Ambala Sadar, the BJP faced protests from local leaders after the initial list of candidates excluded several individuals recommended by Cabinet Minister Anil Vij. Supporters expressed their dissatisfaction, leading the party to issue a revised list, replacing at least ten candidates. This swift change underscores the challenges the BJP faces in managing internal dynamics and maintaining unity ahead of the polls.

These internal conflicts come at a critical time, with the municipal elections scheduled for March 2 and counting of votes on March 12. The BJP's ability to address these issues may significantly influence its performance in the upcoming civic polls.

Man's Rs 35L US dream ends in 220 days

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

In a harrowing journey spanning 220 days and traversing ten countries, Ravi, a 26-year-old from Haryana's Jind district, endured severe hardships in an attempt to reach the United States. Despite paying approximately Rs 35 lakh to unauthorized travel agents, his pursuit of a better life ended in deportation merely 20 days after his arrival in the U.S.

After finally reaching the U.S. by scaling a wall, Ravi was apprehended and deported within 20 days.

Ravi's ordeal began on July 10, 2024, when he was promised legal passage to the U.S. for Rs 29 lakh. Initially sent to Dubai, he was held there for several months before being routed through perilous paths, including Panama's dense jungles. During his five to six-month stay in Panama,

Ravi faced starvation and was allegedly taken hostage. The agents demanded an additional 6 lakh, compelling his family to sell farmland and secure loans to raise the amount. His brother, Amit, recounted, "When the agent asked for an additional Rs 6 lakh, our father sold our farmland

and took out a loan to raise the money. This was then given to the agent."

After finally reaching the U.S. by scaling a wall, Ravi was apprehended and deported within 20 days. The family has identified three agents—Deepak Malik, Rajat Mor, and Manish Pandit—as responsible for his plight. However, local police have stated that no official complaint has been filed yet. "If that is done, action will be taken," an official remarked.

In a related development, a U.S. military aircraft carrying 112 Indian deportees landed at Amritsar's Sri Guru Ram Dass Jee International Airport on February 16, 2025. This marks the third such flight amid the Trump administration's intensified crackdown on illegal immigration. Of the deportees, 44 are from Haryana, 33 from Gujarat, 31 from Punjab, two from Uttar Pradesh, and one each from Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

cate and time-consuming, requiring clearances from state governments, governors, the Supreme Court collegium, and the Union Law Ministry. This multifaceted procedure often spans several months, contributing to delays in filling judicial vacancies and exacerbating the challenges faced by the judicial system.

With these appointments, the number of sitting judges in the Punjab and Haryana High Court has increased to 53. However, the court continues to face a substantial shortage, operating with 32 vacancies against a sanctioned strength of 85 judges. Additionally, three judges are slated for retirement within the current year, which may further impact the court's capacity.

The process of appointing judges is notably intri-

as of January 2025, nearly 85% of these cases have remained unresolved for over a year, with some pending for nearly four decades. The pending cases comprise 2,68,279 civil matters and 1,63,948 criminal cases, directly affecting fundamental rights such as life and liberty.

The prolonged and complex appointment process, coupled with the existing vacancies and impending retirements, underscores the pressing need for systemic reforms to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the judicial system in the region.



Harmeet Singh Grewal and Deepinder Singh Nalwa were administered the oath of office as additional judges.

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON PAKISTAN AIRSTRIKE ON AFGHANISTAN

77% believe TTP attacks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will rise post-airstrike.

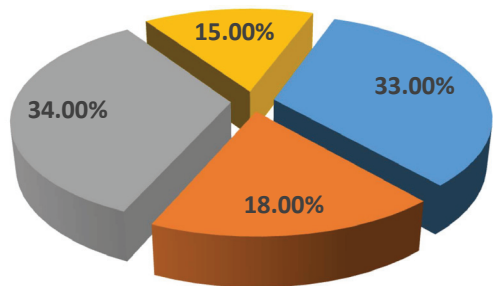
The survey on Pakistan's airstrike in Afghanistan reveals strong opinions. 77% believe TTP attacks will rise, while 76% think Pakistan

struck civilian areas. 74% see Pakistan's army as weak against TTP. Reactions to Taliban's response vary, with 34% expecting retaliation.

The results highlight concerns over escalating regional tensions.

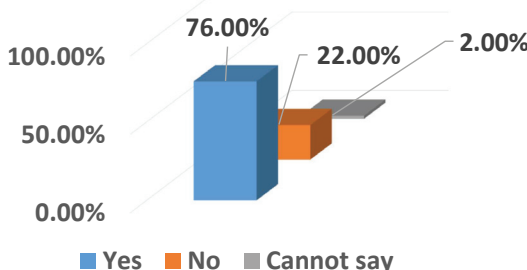
Q1.

Pakistan conducted an airstrike on TTP in Afghanistan using F-17 and JF-17 AM fighter jets. What will the Taliban do?



Strongly condemn it
Wait for the right opportunity
Attack Pakistan directly
Cannot say

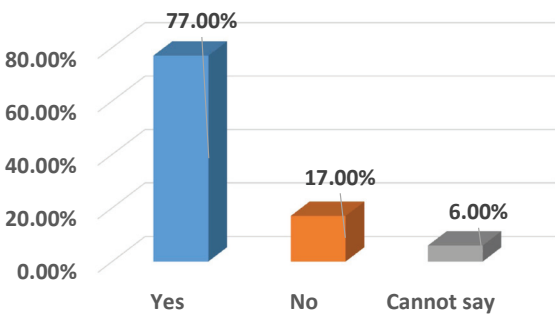
Q2.



Afghanistan claims that Pakistani airstrikes killed civilians. Did Pakistan attack civilian areas in Jalalabad?

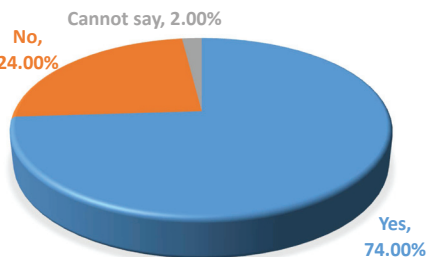
Q3.

After this airstrike by Pakistan, will TTP attacks increase in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa?



Q4.

Does the Pakistani army appear weaker against TTP in tribal areas?



THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON DELHI EARTHQUAKE

75% of respondents felt strong tremors this morning.

An earthquake measuring 4.0 on the Richter scale hit Delhi-NCR early Monday at a depth of 5 km, according to the National Center for Seismology (NCS).

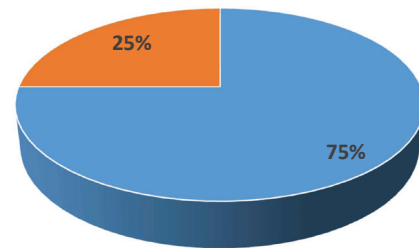
The strong tremors were felt at 5:36 AM. The sudden jolts prompted residents to rush out of their homes in panic. "Earthquake of Magnitude:4.0, Oc-

curred on 17-02-24, 5:36 AM IST, Lat: 28.59°N & Long: 77.16°E, Depth: 5 Km, Location: 9km E of New Delhi," NCS posted on X.

Q1.

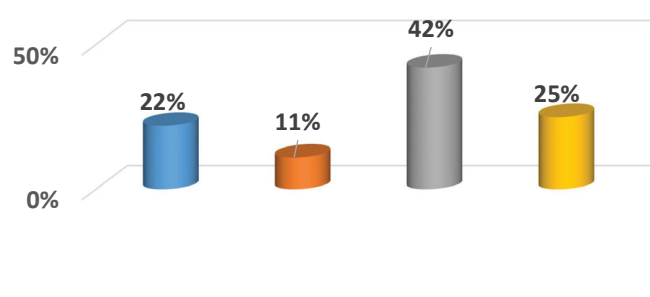
Did you feel the strong tremors this morning?

Yes
No



Q2.

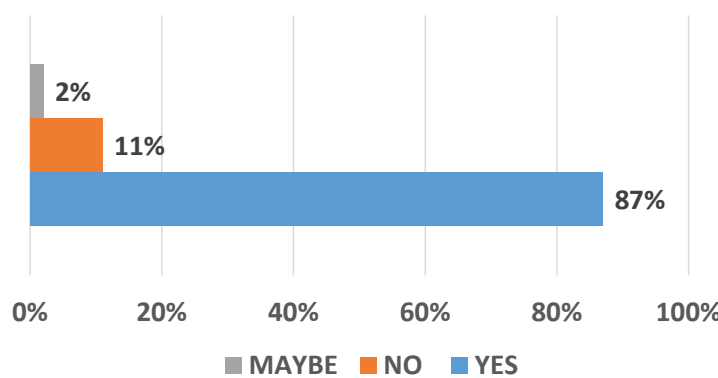
What was your immediate response to the earthquake?



Didn't move in shock
Hid under a table
Rushed out of my home
Didn't feel the quake

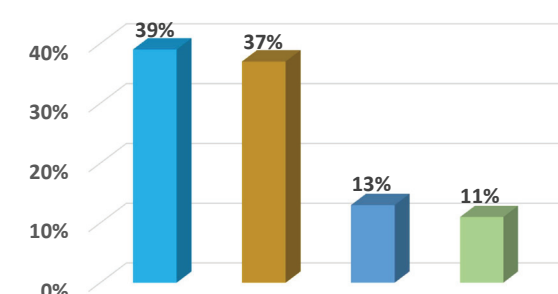
Q3.

Are you aware of the steps that should be taken during an earthquake?



Q4.

Is the govt prepared for earthquake management in Delhi?



Yes
No
Maybe
Can't say

Matter pending in court: Congress

CONTINUED FROM P1

clear, they want only control but not credibility. The most important thing for the Election Commission is credibility," he said.

Party leader Ajay Maken said the meeting of the panel should have been postponed.

"Today, a meeting related to the election of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) was held. The Congress party believes that since the Supreme Court had said that the matter would be heard on February 19th and a decision would be given on what the constitution of the committee should be like. In such a situation, today's meeting should have been postponed," he said.

Singhvi said the Chief Election Commissioner and the Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Office, Terms of Office), Act 2023, creates "a partisan mechanism" for the selection of Election Commissioners.

"At the outset, we cannot ignore that this Committee is in clear and direct violation of the Supreme Court's

Judgement of March 2nd, 2023 where a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court in Anoop Baranwal v. Union of India declared that the CEC and the EC's should be appointed by a Committee comprising of the PM, the LOP and the CJI," he said.

Singhvi said the Court, highlighting the need for the independence of the Committee that appoints Election Commissioners, had said "the executive alone being involved in the appointment, ensures that the Commission becomes and remains a partisan Body and a branch of the executive. The independence of the Commission is intimately interlinked with the process of appointment".

"The Election Commissioners, including the Chief Election Commissioner blessed with nearly infinite powers and who are to abide by the fundamental rights, must be chosen not by the Executive exclusively and particularly without any objective yardstick," Singhvi said, quoting the court order.

"Para 119. In order to allow independence in the

functioning of the Election Commission as a Constitutional body, the office of Chief Election Commissioners as well as the Election Commissioners have to be insulated from the executive interference," he said.

Singhvi said the committee constituted by the government, "which has been purposefully balanced, or unbalanced if we may say so," with a two-third vote being given to the Centre, "directly offends these clear and precise caveats of the Supreme Court of India" and is "therefore neither bona fide in its purpose or constitution".

He said the case challenging the Act is currently pending before the Supreme Court which has issued notice.

"The matter is listed for February 19, 2025 i.e. in less than 48 hours. It is our suggestion that the Central Government adjourn this meeting until after the hearing and instruct its counsels to appear and assist the court so that the hearing may be an effective one. Only then, can a decision be taken in earnest," he said.

Delhi shaken by earthquake

CONTINUED FROM P1

shocks of lesser magnitude are "natural" and will heal by the earthquake of magnitude 4.0 that had struck Delhi early Monday.

Mishra stated the epicentre of the earthquake was in Dhaula Kuan, which falls under a seismic zone.

"Delhi has been experiencing minor earthquakes. This earthquake occurred in Dhaula Kuan. In 2007, an earthquake of 4.7 magnitude had occurred there.

No paper leak, says CBSE

CONTINUED FROM P1

against engaging with such misinformation, stating, "Students found involved in such activities will face consequences under CBSE's Unfair Means rules and relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC)." CBSE is closely monitoring the situation and work-

ing with law enforcement agencies to take action against those responsible for spreading false information. "CBSE will pursue legal action against anyone found responsible for spreading misinformation to uphold the integrity of the examination process," the statement added.

The Board urged students, parents, and schools to rely only on official communications available on the CBSE website (www.cbse.gov.in) and verified public channels. It also advised parents to guide their children against believing or engaging with unverified news

There is nothing to worry about. It is a seismic zone there," Mishra said.

Elaborating on the cause of the earthquake, the NCS Director said, "The earthquake occurred due to in-situ material heterogeneity... After 4.0 magnitude, the aftershock will be less by 1.2 magnitudes; it is natural as it will heal it."

Hours after the earthquake hit Delhi, tremors were felt in Bihar at around 8.02 am on Monday, and it originated from just 10 km under the Earth's surface.

Bengal BJP cries conspiracy as MLAs face suspension

SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA

Four BJP legislators in West Bengal, including Leader of the Opposition Suwendu Adhikari and the party's state general secretary Agnimitra Paul, were suspended from the West Bengal Assembly for 30 days for allegedly tearing up official documents and throwing them at the Speaker while staging a protest in the House. Bankim Ghosh and Biswanath Karak were the other two BJP MLAs to be suspended for alleged unruly behaviour during the ongoing Budget session of the House. This is for the fourth time that Adhikari has been suspended.

Speaker Biman Banerjee suspended the four BJP MLAs till the end of this Budget session or for 30 days, whichever is earlier. While the Trinamool

Congress bristled with outrage, the BJP alleged that this "drama was a conspiracy to ensure that the Leader of the Opposition could not attend the House tomorrow when the Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was supposed to give her speech."

Suwendu Adhikari alleged that it was he alone who had walked into the well of the House and that Agnimitra Paul had only read out a statement after receiving the Speaker's permission. "Our MLA Biswanath Karak was not even present in the House. This is a conspiracy to exclude our members who are vocal about the mis-governance of Mamata Banerjee Government," he alleged.

The BJP leaders were protesting against alleged attempts to stall Saraswati

Puja in various educational institutions in the State. An adjournment motion was brought by the BJP to highlight alleged intimidation at some places in the state over organising Saraswati Puja earlier this month.

"The way the Leader of the Opposition and some MLAs behaved today is condemnable. They tore official documents and threw them at the Speaker's chair. Trinamool Congress chief whip Nirmal Ghosh brought a motion to suspend them for 30 days. The motion was put to vote. The MLAs voted for this, and it was carried. Accordingly, they (BJP legislators) have been suspended for 30 days or till the end of the session, whichever is earlier," Biman Banerjee, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

Twist in Lipsy Mittal murder case

CONTINUED FROM P1

Initially, Anokh told police that unidentified miscreants had attacked the couple, looted their car, mobile, and jewellery before fleeing. However, investigations revealed that he was the mastermind behind the murder.

Police officials stated that Anokh conspired with Pratiksha, with whom he was allegedly having an extramarital affair. The duo hired five contract killers for Rs 2.50 lakh, paying Rs 50,000 in advance, with the rest to be paid after the murder.

Odisha varsity takes back Nepali students

CONTINUED FROM P1

the matter. Later, Nepal Foreign Minister Arzu Rana Deuba held a telephonic conversation with Indian Ambassador to Nepal over the issue. Deuba stated that she held a telephonic conversation with Indian Ambassador to Nepal, Naveen Srivastava regarding the issue.

"After the news of Nepali student Prakriti Lamsal's death in the hostel of Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) University in Odisha, India, and then the Nepalese student being shifted to hostel, came to the media, we immediately took this issue seriously and started diplomatic initiatives. Regarding this incident, I have been contacting the concerned body this morning.

This morning I instructed the Nepali Ambassador to India, Dr. Shankar Sharmal, to understand the reality of the incident and take necessary action regarding the problem faced by Nepali students. He is working accordingly and has recently published a communique from the Nepalese Embassy in New Delhi," Deuba said in a post on X. Fur-

ther adding, "Similarly, this afternoon I also had a phone call with the Indian Ambassador to Nepal, Mr. Navin Srivastava. He has also informed about the necessary initiatives and coordination measures for the safety of Nepali students. The Ministry of External Affairs is taking initiative in this matter and would like to provide information about the latest situation."

Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, issued a release announcing that it has agreed to allow over 700 Nepali students to return to their hostels and resume their studies.

The Nepali Embassy in New Delhi issued a statement, confirming that KIIT had agreed to provide hostel accommodations and continue classes for Nepali students. "The embassy requested the university to ensure the safety of Nepali students and make arrangements for them to stay in hostels while continuing their studies," the statement read. "In response, the university has agreed to these requests and assured that classes will be conducted as usual."



School students of Visva-Bharati University dance during 'Basanta Abahan' (to welcome spring), at Santiniketan in Birbhum on Monday. ANI

UNION MINISTER TO LAUNCH ‘NAKSHA’ PROJECT

The initiative aims to digitally transform urban land record management using geospatial technology.

AJAY JANDYAL
JAMMU

Union Minister of Rural Development and Agriculture & Farmers’ Welfare Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan will inaugurate the National Geospatial Knowledge-based Land Survey of Urban Habitations (NAKSHA) in 152 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) across 26 States and 3 Union Territories (UTs) at an event in Raisen, Madhya Pradesh, on Tuesday.

The pilot project, spearheaded by the Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development, is set to digitally transform urban land record management by utilizing advanced geospatial technology for accurate and transparent property documentation. The event will witness the presence of Union Minister of State for Rural Development & Communications, Dr. Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav, and other senior dignitaries, including



Revenue Minister Karan Singh Verma, Minister for Panchayati Raj and Rural Development Shri Prahlad Singh Patel, and Secretary, Department of Land Resources, Manoj Joshi. The launch ceremony will feature drone demonstrations, unveiling of a Standard Operating Procedure (SoP) booklet, screening of an official NAKSHA program video, and the flagging off of the Watershed Development Component (WDC) Yatra.

NAKSHA: A Game-Changer for Urban Land Management The NAKSHA program aims to modernize and update land records in urban areas, ensuring clear

ownership documentation, streamlined urban planning, and a reduction in land-related disputes. This IT-driven initiative will improve ease of living by fostering transparency, efficiency, and sustainable development. The Survey of India is the technical partner for the project, responsible for conducting aerial surveys and providing high-resolution orthorectified imagery to state and UT governments.

The Madhya Pradesh State Electronic Development Corporation (MPSED) will develop an end-to-end web-GIS platform, while National Informatics Centre Services Inc. (NICSI) will provide

NAKSHA: A Game-Changer for Urban Land Management The NAKSHA program aims to modernize and update land records in urban areas, ensuring clear ownership documentation, streamlined urban planning, and a reduction in land-related disputes

data storage facilities. State and UT governments will conduct field surveys and validation processes using geospatial data, ultimately leading to digitized urban and semi-urban land records. The Government of India is fully funding the Rs.194 crore project, which is expected to set a precedent for future land administration reforms.

J&K Among Beneficiaries: NAKSHA to Cover Four Urban Local Bodies The initiative will also be rolled out in four selected ULBs of Jammu and Kashmir, namely: Bishnah

(Jammu district) – Green View Resort, Bishnah Katra (Reasi district) – Auditorium, Spiritual Growth Centre, Katra Awantipora (Pulwama district) – Lal Ded Auditorium, IUST, Awantipora Pattan (Baramulla district) – Auditorium Hall, Government Degree College, Pattan With its cutting-edge geospatial approach, NAKSHA is poised to redefine urban land management in India, ensuring greater security of land tenure and facilitating ease of property transactions.

Light to moderate rain, snow expected in J&K on Feb 19-20: MeT

AJAY JANDYAL
SRINAGAR

The Meteorological Centre in Srinagar has forecast light to moderate rain and snowfall across several parts of Jammu and Kashmir on February 19 and 20.

According to the MeT department, no significant weather activity is expected until February 18. However, from the late afternoon of February 19 until the evening of February 20, cloudy conditions will prevail with widespread precipitation likely.



The Meteorological Centre in Srinagar has forecast light to moderate rain and snowfall across several parts of Jammu and Kashmir on February 19 and 20.

Plains in both Kashmir and Jammu divisions may experience light to moderate rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms and gusty winds at some locations. Meanwhile, the higher reaches of Chenab Valley and South Kashmir are expected to receive moderate snowfall, accumulating between 6 to 10 inches, while the upper reaches of North and Central Kashmir could see 4 to 8 inches of snow.

Temperatures across the region have shown variations, with daytime temperatures rising by 2 to 4°C in several areas. Jammu

recorded the highest maximum temperature at 24.9°C, followed by Katra at 23.6°C. In the Kashmir Valley, Srinagar registered a maximum of 18.2°C, while Qazigund recorded 17.4°C.

Night temperatures, however, dropped by 0 to 1°C across many areas of Jammu and Kashmir. Jammu recorded the highest minimum temperature at 10.2°C,

followed by Katra at 9.6°C. In Kashmir, Srinagar’s night temperature rose to 2.1°C, while Qazigund recorded -0.2°C.

Meanwhile, the famed ski resort of Gulmarg in north Kashmir’s Baramulla district received 0.6 mm of rainfall, while Kupwara in the frontier region recorded 5.3 mm of precipitation in the past 24 hours.

Omar Abdullah calls for probe into mysterious deaths in Kathua

AJAY JANDYAL
JAMMU

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday expressed grief over the mysterious deaths of two men in a remote village of Kathua district and called for a thorough investigation



Notably, Kathua, including Billawar, has witnessed a surge in terror-related incidents in the past year, including an attack on an Army patrol that claimed the lives of five soldiers.

into the incident.

The bodies of Roshan Lal (45) and Shamsher (37) were found along the banks of a stream in Batheri village, Billawar, on Sunday. Preliminary reports indicate that both men were strangled to death. “Deeply anguished by the tragic death of two persons at Billawar, Kathua. My thoughts and prayers are with their families during this difficult time. My office is in touch with the local MLA, and the concerned officers have been asked to investigate the cause of these deaths,”

Abdullah posted on X. Billawar Police Station’s Station House Officer (SHO) Jitender Singh confirmed that a murder case has been registered, and investigations are underway to identify and apprehend the culprits.

He also stated that a terror angle cannot be ruled out at this stage.

Notably, Kathua, including Billawar, has witnessed a surge in terror-related incidents in the past year, including an attack on an Army patrol that claimed the lives of five soldiers.

Deputy CM reviews Baramulla’s development, emphasizes timely project execution

AJAY JANDYAL
BARAMULLA

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary on Saturday chaired a high-level review meeting in Baramulla, focusing on the ongoing developmental projects, addressing implementation challenges, and ensuring their timely execution across various sectors.

During the meeting, the Deputy CM assessed progress in key departments, including Public Works (PWD), Health, Rural Development (RDD), Education, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Jal Jeevan Mission, and KPDCCL, among others.

Legislators Raise Concerns, Demand Expedited Work Legislators from various constituencies raised pressing local issues, including:



Mining concerns in Uri sub-division Development of Parihaspora, Pattan, as a heritage village Expedited drainage work in Sopore Macadamization of roads in Wagoora-Kreeri

In response, Choudhary directed officials to accelerate the completion of ongoing projects, stressing seamless coordination between elected representatives and officials to address public grievances effectively.

Major Infrastructure Demands and Government’s Commitment

Earlier, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Minga Sherpa presented a detailed overview of Baramulla’s development needs, including:

Establishment of mini secretariats in Sopore, Tangmarg, Baramulla, and Uri Multi-level parking facilities in Sopore and Baramulla Upgradation of GMC Baramulla and availability of specialized doctors Eco-tourism development in Mund Daji, Kitar Daji, and Shrunz Fall Improvement of sewage networks in urban areas Installation of flood-

Choudhary sought updates from department heads and ordered immediate prioritization of critical projects to avoid unnecessary delays.

lights at the district stadium Choudhary sought updates from department heads and ordered immediate prioritization of critical projects to avoid unnecessary delays. He emphasized that legislators represent the people’s voice, and it is imperative that their concerns are addressed with urgency.

Reaffirming the government’s commitment to fast-tracking development, Choudhary called for a result-oriented approach to transform Baramulla into a model district in governance, infrastructure, and public services.

Push for Transparency and Welfare Initiatives Minister for Agriculture, Rural Development, and Elections, Javed Ahmad Dar, stressed the importance of transparency in development projects and warned officials against any leniency or unethical practices.

Later, the Deputy CM launched the Sheep Husbandry Wall Calendar and distributed:

Ayush Cards Marriage assistance sanction letters Subsidy release letters under PM-NREGA Education assistance worth Rs.4.05 crore to 9,507 beneficiaries

LG emphasises public-private partnerships for youth empowerment in J&K

AJAY JANDYAL
JAMMU

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday underscored the importance of public-private partnerships in empowering youth by enhancing infrastructure, expanding opportunities, and opening new avenues across diverse sectors in the Union Territory.



“Public-Private Partnerships can help us build an extensive network of skilling and entrepreneurship projects, reaching the grassroots level,” Sinha said while addressing a gathering at the inaugural edition of the Sikh Cricket Premier League here. He emphasized that achieving socio-economic development and youth empowerment must be a collaborative effort between the government and private sector.

The lieutenant governor recalled launching public-private partnership projects in 2020 and stressed that the administration continues to create an enabling policy environment where youth concerns are acknowledged and addressed efficiently.

Commending the All J&K Sikh Coordination Committee for its role in empowering the Sikh community and preserving its rich heritage, Sinha praised the initiative for instilling a sense of pride and responsibility among Sikh youth towards society and the nation.

“Jammu and Kashmir is committed to inclusive growth, ensuring the socio-economic upliftment of all sections of society. Such initiatives are key to fostering equitable development and driving social change while promoting values of unity, discipline, and harmony,” he said. Highlighting the contributions of Sikh youth in shaping the region’s progress, Sinha reaffirmed the government’s dedication to integrating them into the

mainstream development process. “Our Sikh youth are at the heart of socio-economic transformation, and we are working tirelessly to ensure their active participation in this journey,” he added.

Encouraging young people to uphold the legacy of their ancestors, the lieutenant governor urged them to make the Sikh community and the nation proud.

He also reiterated his commitment to building a robust ecosystem where Sikh youth have access to meaningful opportunities. “This is not just a sporting event but a cultural and social initiative, reflecting our dedication to holistic community development and a brighter future for Sikh youth in Jammu and Kashmir,” he said.

Tension rises along LoC, fresh alert in Rajouri

AJAY JANDYAL
RAJOURI

A fresh alert has been sounded along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir as a series of back-to-back skirmishes have heightened tensions in the region.

A similar explosive attack was reported on January 14 at Sair Makri in the Jhangar-Nowshera sector, injuring six Indian soldiers.

After a period of relative calm since the India-Pakistan ceasefire agreement four years ago, the LoC has witnessed six incidents in the past week, resulting in four Indian Army personnel injured, while an officer and a soldier lost their lives.

The latest escalation began last Sunday, when an Army patrolling team came under heavy fire in the forward Barat Gala area of the Keri sector, Rajouri. Though no casualties were reported, the incident further strained the security situation.

Sniper Fire and Explosions Add to Rising Tensions

On Monday evening, a Havaldar sustained injuries in a sniper attack at the Kalal forward post in Nowshera sector. The following day, a high-intensity IED explosion occurred in a forward location along the LoC in Akhnor, marking the third major incident in a span of three days.

Security officials suspect the IED blast was triggered remotely by terrorists or the Pakistan-based Border Action Team (BAT), as it was strategically planted along an Indian Army patrolling

route.

A similar explosive attack was reported on January 14 at Sair Makri in the Jhangar-Nowshera sector, injuring six Indian soldiers.

In the latest development, the Army foiled an attempt to detonate a massive explosive along the LoC in Tarkundi, Rajouri, four days ago, averting what could have been a major attack.

Given the intensifying security threats, forces remain on high alert along the LoC, with stepped-up surveillance and counter-measures to thwart further hostilities.

DIG Jammu cracks down on overcharging, tinted glass violations

AJAY JANDYAL
JAMMU

Amid rising complaints of overcharging by travel agencies and the illegal use of tinted glass and curtains in buses, DIG Traffic Jammu, Dr. Mohd. Haseeb Mughal, IPS, conducted an extensive inspection at Jammu Bus Stand on Monday. Accompanied by SSP Traffic City Jammu, Mohd. Fiesel Qureshi-JKPS, and other senior traffic officials, the DIG personally reviewed fare compliance and safety regulations among interstate travel operators.

The inspection comes in light of passenger vehicle shortages during the ongoing festive season, leading to reports of exorbitant fare hikes. During the visit, travel operators’ offices were checked for officially approved rate lists, but many stalls lacked proper fare displays.

Rate Lists Must Be Displayed or Face Legal Action In an on-the-spot interaction, DIG Traffic warned



travel agencies to display government-approved fare lists within three days or face strict legal consequences. Counterfoils of booking receipts were examined to verify allegations of overcharging. “Travel operators must adhere strictly to government-approved fare rates, failing which legal action will follow,” he asserted.

Crackdown on Tinted Glass and Illegal Modifications The DIG emphasized strict compliance with Supreme Court guidelines in the Avishek Goenka

vs. Union of India & Anr (2012) case, which prohibits the use of black films or any other material on safety glass, windscreens, and side windows beyond the prescribed 70% VLT (Visible Light Transmittance) for windscreens and 50% for side windows.

Helpline Installation & Travel Agency Compliance Review To assist passengers, the DIG directed DySP Traffic City North Jammu and DTI Bus Stand to install traffic police helpline numbers at prominent locations for lodging complaints related to overcharging.

TOP OF THE DAY

PAK JOURNALIST
EXPRESSES CONCERN
OVER RISING
DISAPPEARANCES

ISLAMABAD : Pakistani journalist Hamid Mir expressed his deep concern about the rising cases of enforced disappearances in the country on Monday. His response came after a post from the official account of Voice of Baloch Missing Persons, which highlighted a troubling incident in Gwadar's tehsil Pasni. According to the post, five individuals were arrested by security forces and taken to an unknown location. Since their detention, they have been missing, raising serious concerns.

INFLATION IN
KARACHI INCREASES
AHEAD OF RAMADAN

KARACHI :As the month of Ramadan approaches, residents of Karachi are facing a surge in inflation; with prices of essential commodities soaring, it is increasingly difficult for common people to celebrate in a carefree manner. Locals express their concerns over the rising cost of living, which seems to contradict the global trend of price reductions during the festive seasons.

IDEX AND NAVDEX
2025 KICK OFF IN
ABU DHABI

ABU DHABI: Under the patronage of President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the International Defence Exhibition (IDEX) and the Naval Defence Exhibition (NAVDEX) 2025 commenced today at the ADNEC Centre. Organised by ADNEC Group in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence and the Tawazun Council until February 21, the 17th edition of IDEX and the 8th edition of NAVDEX bring together leading global companies and experts in the defence industry to showcase the latest technologies and solutions in the sector, aimed at enhancing international peace and security.

TIBET AWARENESS
DAY ORGANISED
IN PARIS

Paris: The Bureau du Tibet in Paris, one of the offices of the official representation of the 14th Dalai Lama, organised a successful Tibet Awareness Day on Saturday under the guidance of Representative Rigzin Choedon Genkhang. According to information from the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), the event gathered 33 enthusiastic young Tibetans from different educational backgrounds. The goal was to help them better understand the Tibetan cause, history, and the ongoing Sino-Tibet conflict. The day began with an informative presentation by Thupten Tsering, the coordinator of the Bureau du Tibet in Paris. Using a detailed PowerPoint, Tsering explained the structure of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) and its crucial role in advocating for Tibet's freedom and preserving Tibetan identity.

XI PROMISES POLICY STABILITY IN
MEETING WITH BUSINESS LEADERS

Xi emphasized that the government's approach to the private sector is part of China's socialist system.

AGENCIES
BANGKOK

China's President Xi Jinping met with private sector business leaders on Monday, offering them assurances that policies regarding the private sector would not change, state media reported, as government officials work to revive an economy disrupted by a pandemic, regulatory crackdowns and a real estate crisis.

Among those present was Alibaba founder Jack Ma, who was the first to have been the focus of a crackdown on the tech industry in recent years.


Xi told the audience that the Communist Party and the government's approach towards the private sector has been incorporated into "the socialist system with Chinese characteristics," which is how the Party describes its governance, according to state broadcaster CCTV.

"They cannot and will not change," said Xi.

The president also said

KEY POINTS

- Xi assures private sector stability, emphasizing socialist governance and legal protections for businesses.
- Jack Ma, once targeted in the tech crackdown, attends meeting with other business leaders.
- Xi encourages private businesses to promote common prosperity, with major companies like Alibaba and Tencent pledging support.



the government would "sincerely protect the legal rights of private businesses and entrepreneurs, according to the law." But, "at the same time, we must realize that our country is a socialist country ruled by law, and any type of illegal activities by enterprises cannot avoid investigation and punishment."

The words of assurance were made after Beijing launched a crackdown on the tech sector in 2020 to break down monopolies and implement strict data

regulations.

One of the most public faces of that crackdown was Ma, who founded e-commerce firm Alibaba in the 1990s and was once China's richest man. He has kept a low profile with few public appearances in recent years after he publicly criticized China's regulators and financial systems during a speech in Shanghai.

Other business leaders at Monday's meeting in Beijing were Zeng Yuqun, the chairman of battery developer CATL, Wang Ch-

uanfu, chairman of electric cars manufacturer BYD, and Pony Ma, the CEO of Tencent, which owns WeChat, according to a video of the meeting from state broadcaster CCTV and a state media report.

Xi said he hoped private businesses will continue to "get rich first, and then promote common prosperity," a reference to a program to encourage development and close the wealth gap. Alibaba previously pledged \$15.5 billion to the cause, while Tencent pledged \$7.7 billion.

Israel sends negotiators to Cairo

AGENCIES
TEL AVIV

Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has instructed negotiators to depart for Cairo on Monday to discuss the continued implementation of the first stage of the deal.

Israel Prime Minister's Office said on Sunday that the decision has been taken in coordination with with US Presidential Special Envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff. According to the statement, the negotiation team will receive instructions of the negotiations regarding the second stage following Security Cabinet discussion scheduled to take place on Monday.

In a statement shared on X, Israel's Prime Minister's Office stated, "In coordination with US Presidential Special Envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff, Prime Min-



Israel PM also took a veiled swipe at the Biden administration, The Times of Israel reported.

ister Benjamin Netanyahu has instructed the negotiations team to leave for Cairo tomorrow in order to discuss the continued implementation of the first stage of the deal."

In another post on X, it wrote, "Following tomorrow's Security Cabinet discussion, the team will receive

instructions for the continuation of the negotiations regarding the second stage." Meanwhile, Israel PM Benjamin Netanyahu said that he and his US counterpart Donald Trump are working in "full cooperation and coordination," The Times of Israel reported. While addressing the opening of

the weekly cabinet meeting, Israel PM Benjamin Netanyahu emphasised that he and his US counterpart Donald Trump are in lockstep on the future of Gaza and what to do regarding Hamas. He made these remarks shortly after emphasising the same point during his joint press statement along with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio. Netanyahu said, "I cannot go into all the details -- but we have a joint strategy, including when and how the gates of hell will open if all of our hostages, all of them, are not released and do not return home."

He stressed that both leaders have same goals. He said, "Not only the release of the hostages, the elimination of Hamas, and of course ensuring that Gaza will not again be a threat to Israel, plus the president's plan that says that Gaza will be completely different."

Bangladesh seeks India's support to revive SAARC

AGENCIES
DHAKA

Bangladesh's interim government's Foreign Affairs Advisor Touhid Hossain has sought India's backing to revive the SAARC at a meeting with External Affairs S. Jaishankar at the sidelines of a multi-lateral conference in Muscat.

"Hossain sought to initiate discussions for the renewal of the Ganges Water Treaty signed in 1996 and emphasised the need for convening the SAARC Standing Committee meeting and requested New Delhi's support on the matter," a Bangladesh foreign ministry statement

Eyal Zamir appointed as
IDF Chief of Staff

AGENCIES
TEL AVIV

The Israeli government gave its approval for the appointment of Maj. Gen. (res.) Eyal Zamir as the next Israel Defense Forces chief of staff on Sunday.

Zamir will replace Lt.-Gen. Herzi Halevi, who announced on Jan. 21 he would resign over the military's October 7 failures.

Halevi is due to step down on March 5. Zamir, 59, was born and raised in Eilat. He would become the Chief of Staff to begin his career in the Armored Corps.

After joining the army in 1984 he became a tank commander, gradually climbing the ranks. He was eventually appointed as Netanyahu's military secretary from 2012-2015. From 2018 to 2021, he was deputy chief of staff before becoming a visiting research fellow at the Washington-based Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

Zamir was also considered for the Chief of Staff in 2018 and 2022. In 2023, he was appointed Director General of the Defense Ministry.

He also has degrees from Tel Aviv and Haifa Universities and is a graduate of Wharton University's Gen-



They may include personal recommendations about individuals under investigation, though the government is not bound to act on the recommendations.

eral Management Program.

The IDF Chief of Staff serves for three years with the possibility of a one-year extension. The last time chief of staff to leave the post before the end of his term was Lt.-Gen. Dan Halutz, who resigned in 2007 over IDF failures during the Second Lebanon War of 2006.

There have been growing calls for the government to appoint an independent

commission of inquiry to investigate political and military failures. Such commissions have broader authority to summon witnesses and collect evidence and are headed by a senior Supreme Court justice. They may include personal recommendations about individuals under investigation, though the government is not bound to act on the recommendations.

Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the governing coalition say an independent commission should only be appointed after the war.

The last state commission of inquiry, which investigated Israel's worst civilian disaster -- a stampede that killed 45 people at a holy site on Mount Meron -- held Netanyahu personally responsible for the tragedy in a report released in April.

China plays its
Trump card

AGENCIES
HONG KONG

As newly installed President Donald Trump pursues his personal agenda in the White House, Chairman Xi Jinping and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) elites must be rubbing their hands with glee. Trump and his senior officials are alarming or snubbing one country after another, thus providing China multiple opportunities to advance its own authoritarian cause. With regularity, the almost buffoonish actions of Trump are lowering respect for the USA around the world. Whether it is threats to seize control of the Panama Canal or Greenland, Trump is making a mockery of the rule of law. In language reminiscent of China's leaders, the American second-term president has not ruled out the use of force to "re-take" the Panama Canal.

the fear that many dissidents felt, even in Ireland. It said that the fear of retribution affected their ability to openly protest or express dissent without concern for the safety of their families, both in Ireland and abroad. It also underscored the Irish Government's responsibility to protect its citizens and residents from such threats, noting that transnational repression was becoming a growing concern across the EU. In their letter, the diaspora communities reminded the Irish Government of its historical commitment to human rights. They called on the government to challenge Chinese policies that were leading to the ongoing atrocities in Xinjiang, including the mass detention and forced assimilation of Uyghurs, as well as the suppression of freedoms in Hong Kong.

The human rights body also informed that the teenager's family had been a target of the Pakistani Army for long, with even their homes being burnt by the military.

said after the two leaders met during the 8th Indian Ocean Conference (IOC) in Muscat, Oman, on Sunday. Bangladesh's new interim government led by Muhammad Yunus has been insisting on the revival of the South Asian regional grouping SAARC which has been suspended for a long time due to the India-Pakistan conflict. Jaishankar in a post on X af-

ter the meeting did not mention SAARC. "Met Foreign Affairs Adviser Md. Touhid Hossain of the Interim Government of Bangladesh. The conversation was focused on our bilateral relationship, as also on BIMSTEC," Jaishankar posted on X. 40 arrested in Bangladesh after violence, vandalism at Awami League leader's house 40 arrested

in Bangladesh after violence, vandalism at Awami League leader's house. Bangladesh protesters torch ousted PM Hasina's father's home Bangladesh protesters torch ousted PM Hasina's father's home Bangladesh will replace Thailand as chairman after the 6th BIMSTEC summit scheduled to take place in Bangkok from April 2 to 4 this year.

"Both sides recognised the challenges the two neighbours are facing in terms of bilateral relations and discussed the necessity to work together to address those," the statement said.

Taiwan appreciates counterparts
from US, Japan and South Korea

AGENCIES
TAIPEI

Taiwan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Lin Chia-lung has appreciated his US counterpart Marco Rubio, Japanese counterpart Iwaya Takeshi and South Korean counterpart Cho Tae-yul for supporting peace, stability and Taiwan's international participation. Lin Chia-lung expressed Taiwan's willingness to working with partners to uphold regional security and called the security of Taiwan Strait a "global consensus"



In a post on X, Lin Chia-lung wrote, "The #Taiwan Strait's security is a global consensus. I appreciate US Secretary of State @MarcoRubio, Japan's FM Iwaya Takeshi & ROK FM Cho Tae-

yul for supporting peace, stability & Taiwan's international participation. We'll keep working with partners to uphold regional security." His statement came after US Secretary of State Marco Rubio held a meeting with Japanese counterpart Iwaya Takeshi and South Korea's Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul met in Munich on February 15 and emphasised the importance of maintaining peace and stability across Taiwan Strait as an "indispensable element" of security and prosperity for the international community.

Nepal FM Deuba discusses KIIT issue with Indian Ambassador

AGENCIES
KATHMANDU

Nepal Foreign Minister Arzu Rana Deuba held a telephonic conversation with Indian Ambassador to Nepal over the issue of arising situation at Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT).

Deuba stated that she held a telephonic conversation with Indian Ambassador

to Nepal, Naveen Srivastava regarding the issue. "After the news of Nepali student Prakriti Lamsal's death in the hostel of Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) University in Odisha, India, and then the Nepalese student being shifted to hostel, came to the media, we immediately took this issue seriously and started diplomatic initiatives

Further adding, "Similarly, this afternoon I also had a phone call with the Indian Ambassador to Nepal, Mr. Navin Srivastava.

Regarding this incident, I have been contacting the concerned body this morning. This morning I instructed the Nepali Ambassador to India, Dr. Shankar Sharma, to understand the reality of the incident and take

necessary action regarding the problem faced by Nepali students.

He is working accordingly and has recently published a communique from the Nepalese Embassy in New Delhi,"

Deuba said in a post on X. Further adding, "Similarly, this afternoon I also had a phone call with the Indian Ambassador to Nepal, Mr. Navin Srivastava. He has also informed about the necessary initiatives and coordination measures for the safety of Nepali students. The Ministry of External Affairs is taking initiative in this matter and would

like to provide information about the latest situation." Late on Sunday evening, the Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, issuing a release announced that it grees to allow over 700 Nepali students to return to their hostels and resume their studies. Earlier, the university had forcibly evicted these stu-

dents, using police force and baton charges, after they protested the mysterious death of Nepali student Prakriti Lamsal.

Following diplomatic intervention, the Nepali Embassy in New Delhi issued a statement on Monday, confirming that KIIT had agreed to provide hostel accommodations and continue classes for Nepali students.

ILLEGAL INDIAN IMMIGRANTS DEPORTED FROM US TO AMRITSAR BEING SENT TO RESPECTIVE STATES

The third batch of deported Indian immigrants from the US is being sent to their home states.

TDG NETWORK
AMRITSAR

The third batch of illegal Indian immigrants who were deported from the US to Punjab's Amritsar are now being sent to their respective states. The visuals outside the Amritsar airport showed Indian nationals onboard a bus as they made way to their respective homes.

Earlier, Amritsar Deputy Commissioner Sakshi Sawhney said that 112 people were in the plane carrying third batch of Indian nationals who allegedly illegally migrated to the US, that landed in Amritsar on Sunday.

Speaking to reporters, Sawhney stated that the people have been provided with whatever things they need like food and diapers. She said that

KEY POINTS

- Third Batch of Deportees: 112 Indian nationals, including women and children, deported from the US to Amritsar, provided necessary arrangements and sent to their respective states.
- Government Support: Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann ensures deportees are treated properly, with food, accommodation, and transportation arrangements made for their return.
- PM Modi's Statement: PM Modi emphasizes India's commitment to taking back nationals living illegally in the US, urging cooperation to end human trafficking.

the arrangements have been made for them to return to their homes. She said, "112 people have come in this flight. Their immigration is going on right

now. Whatever they needed, food, diapers, formula, we have provided everything. We have arranged for everything. Arrangements have been made for them to

go home. So, immigration is being conducted and it will take quite some time." When asked about the number of women and children who have arrived

CM urges newly inducted PCS officers to ensure benefits

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann on Monday called upon the newly inducted officers of the Punjab Civil Service (PCS) to discharge their duty with utmost dedication, commitment and integrity so that the benefits of flagship schemes of the state government are further percolated to people at grass root level.

The newly promoted PCS officers from A II and C register called on the Chief Minister here at his official residence. Interacting with the officers, the Chief Minister, while congratulating the officers, said that it is a matter of immense pride that they have selected for this coveted post adding that they should serve the people with missionary zeal. Bhagwant Singh

The newly promoted PCS officers from A II and C register called on the Chief Minister here at his official residence.

Mann hoped that the PCS Officers will use their pen for helping the needy and underprivileged sections of society. He exhorted the officers to ensure maximum welfare of the public so that every section of society is benefited from it.

The Chief Minister advised the officers to render their services to the best of their ability for delivering the goals of good governance, effective delivery of citizen centric services and time-bound implementation of welfare and development schemes. He expressed hope that these

officers, who already have a good experience of public service, will play a pivotal role in taking the state to the zenith of its glory. Bhagwant Singh Mann envisioned that these officers will carve a niche for them with their hard work, sincerity, capability and professional acumen.

The Chief Minister appealed to the officers to utilize their experience, education and training for the betterment of the people by becoming their friend and guide. He hoped that the officers will set a new benchmark in public service by dealing with the people in a humane manner. Bhagwant Singh Mann said that the state government is making concerted efforts for carving out a Rangla Punjab adding that the new officers are welcomed to be part of the team working on this mission.

Muktsar DC removed and suspended

TARUNI GANDHI
CHANDIGARH

In a major action against corruption in the state, the Bhagwant Mann Government has removed and suspended the Deputy Commissioner of Sri Muktsar Sahib following the serious complaints of corruption.

Disclosing this here today a spokesperson of the Punjab Government said that in consonance with the 'zero tolerance towards corruption' of the Mann Government, the state government had recently issued detailed instructions to all the officers.

As per the instructions, the Punjab government had directed that officers function in a responsive and accountable manner, feedback about each Deputy Commissioner, SSP, SDM, Tehsildar, Naib Tehsildar, SP, DSP, SHO and other field officers/officials will be

in the flight, Sakshi Sawhney responded, "We will share the data. Let us finish the immigration finish." The aircraft carrying third batch of Indian nationals arrived just a day after the second batch of Indian nationals who allegedly illegally migrated to the US landed in Amritsar.

Earlier on Saturday, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann assured that the deportees would be treated properly and that all arrangements had been made.

The Chief Minister said the deportees would stay in Amritsar for a few hours before being taken to their respective states. "Our kids are the ones who are coming here anyway, so from here no one can go hungry, we will make arrangements. We have also made staying arrangements for them.

taken not only from the general public but also from the elected representatives like MPs and MLAs. It was further directed that the said feedback will automatically lead to rewards and punishments for the officers.

Further, based on the said feedback the state government has taken action against Deputy Commissioner Sri Muktsar Sahib. The state government had received serious complaints of corruption against the Deputy Commissioner after which a thorough enquiry was conducted against the officer. Based on the preliminary enquiry the state government has suspended the Deputy Commissioner Sri Muktsar Sahib with immediate effect.

The Deputy Commissioner has been removed from his post and a Vigilance enquiry has been marked against him.

Police arrests two in Bathinda murder case

TARUNI GANDHI
CHANDIGARH

Carrying forward the investigation in the sensational Bathinda Murder case, Punjab Anti-Gangster Task Force (AGTF) in a joint operation with Bathinda Police has arrested two associates of the deceased criminal Overseer Singh alias Satinder Singh alias Satti in cross-FIR and recovered two .32 bore pistols along with five cartridges from their possession, said Director General of Police (DGP) Punjab Gaurav Yadav here on Monday.

Those arrested have been identified as Lakhwinder Singh Gill, a resident of village Burj Gill in Bathinda and Avtar Singh alias Dhillon, a resident of village Bhai Rupa in Bathinda.

The development came two days after Punjab Police has arrested four associates of Gurpreet Sekhon Gang for their involvement in sensational murder of Overseer Singh alias Satinder Singh alias Satti and recovered one .32 bore pistol along with six cartridges from their possession. As per the information, Overseer Singh of Bhai Rupa in Bathinda, a known his-



DGP Gaurav Yadav said that the arrested accused persons have a criminal history, with multiple criminal cases registered against them.

tory shooter was shot dead at his native village by their neighbour along with his associates due to personal enmity at around 4 am on February 5 this year.

DGP Gaurav Yadav said that the arrested accused persons have a criminal history, with multiple criminal cases registered against them. Further investigations are ongoing to establish forward and backward linkages in this case, he said.

Sharing more details, Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) AGTF Promod Ban said that during further investigations in the case, the role of duo arrested persons came to fore and

police teams have arrested both of them from village Bhai Rupa in Bathinda.

He said that arrested accused persons Lakhwinder Gill and Avtar Singh alias Dhillon are the associates of deceased Overseer Singh and had opened fire on the other party. Both the accused persons have been arrested in cross FIR case, he added. In this regard, a case FIR No. 11 dated 05.02.25 had been registered under sections 125 and 351(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and 25 and 27 of the Arms Act at Police Station Phul in Bathinda. While, section 109 of the BNS was added as part of the cross-FIR.

Punjab received investment worth Rs 94K crore in three years: Sond

TARUNI GANDHI
CHANDIGARH

The Green Stamp Paper initiative, introduced by Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann, is a unique move by the Punjab government for industries. This is an online process that has increased transparency and eliminated the possibility of fraud in land acquisition. The Green Stamp Paper is issued only after obtaining the necessary approvals for land acquisition, allowing industries to register their sale deeds seamlessly.

Minister Tarunpreet Singh Sond stated that, due to the Green Stamp Paper initiative and the Punjab government's commitment to industrial growth, the state has received investment proposals worth Rs. 94,203 crore between March 2022 and now, in nearly three years.

This investment is expected to generate employment for over four lakh individuals. He also invited other industrialists to invest in Punjab, emphasizing that the state's industry-friendly policies have attracted major industrial houses to establish their units here.

He further added that Punjab offers a favorable, suitable, and peaceful environment for invest-



This investment is expected to generate employment for over four lakh individuals.

ment. The government is working with complete dedication towards industrial development. He highlighted that the state's policies are pro-industry, allowing small and medium-scale entrepreneurs to start their businesses with just an affidavit, while the necessary documentation process can be completed within three years.

Minister of Industries, Commerce, and Investment Promotion, Tarun-

preet Singh Sond, mentioned that the Green Stamp Paper initiative has accelerated the legal documentation process for industrialists. The key advantage is that everything is done online, making transactions more efficient and accountable.

Sond also stated that the Green Stamp Paper ensures the rapid issuance of regulatory approvals for industries. Pre-approvals from six departments are granted within stipulated timeframes through a single-window system. These departments include Revenue, Housing & Urban Development, Local Government, Punjab Pollution Control Board, Forests & Wildlife, and Labour & Factories.

CM directs faster liquidation and movement of food grains

TARUNI GANDHI
CHANDIGARH

Department of Food & Civil Supplies is going to expedite the process of liquidation/ movement of the food grain stocks from the State. It is precautionary so that no problem of storage of food grains arises in the coming seasons and procurement of grains takes place in a smooth and hassle free manner.

Chairing a high level meeting of the Food and Civil Supplies Department here at his official residence, the Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann

said that due to persistent shortage of storage space during the previous season, the procurement/lifting of grains from mandis was adversely affected. He said that the State government is already in process of creating new covered godowns to store 60 Lakh Metric Ton of grains in the State in the coming few months.

Bhagwant Singh Mann said that Punjab produces grain for the National food security and the State government is duty bound that the farmers of the state face no problem in



selling of their grains during the procurement season.

The Chief Minister said that it is imperative to ensure that sufficient storage space is created to ensure that farmers do not face any sort of inconvenience. He said that the

Government of India is being requested repeatedly to undertake maximum movement of wheat and rice from the State, so that sufficient storage space is available for rice of ongoing KMS as well as wheat during ensuing RMS

2025-26. He said that during the KMS 2024-25, 171.86 LMT of paddy was stored in the State out of which 116.30 LMT of rice was deliverable. Till date, 33.74 LMT (29.02%) of the rice has been delivered and remaining 82.53 LMT has to be delivered by March 31, 2025. For the month of February, Bhagwant Singh Mann said that the state had requested for 1635 rice specials but FCI has planned only 197 rice specials for the month of February and till date only 109 rice specials have been provided.

RS MP Sahney hosts conference with Punjab's leading startups

TARUNI GANDHI
CHANDIGARH

A round table conference was organized at the initiative of Dr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney, Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha in association with Innovation mission Punjab bringing together Punjab's top startups, industry stalwarts, and government representatives.

Dr. Sahney informed that the conference served as a dynamic platform for over 30 high-growth startups and five leading incubators, to present their business

models and explore new avenues for growth and collaboration. Notable startups such as Burgerbae and Nautrik, Bartanwala which have been featured on the prestigious Shark Tank India, were among the participants. Along with these three, Jaggercane, Agri to Power, SAS software, Dr. Bipasha Sharma Healthy Food and co. made a presentation in the conference.

Dr. Sahney advocated for speedy release of GST refund to start ups, giving purchase preference to them in govt tenders, making paddy straw based



biofuel compulsory for industry and thermal plants

Dr. Sahney stated that Punjab's youth have im-

mense entrepreneurial talent, and our mission is

to empower them with the necessary ecosystem, mentorship, and financial support to scale their ventures globally.

This conference is a step towards ensuring that our startups not only sustain but thrive, creating employment and contributing significantly to the economy. With the right guidance and backing, these innovative ventures can put Punjab on the global startup map.

Punjab's Industry Minister, Tarunpreet Singh Sond, reaffirmed the government's commitment to

fostering a robust startup culture. Government will provide all necessary policy and infrastructural support to enable these ventures to reach their full potential.

He also said that there is immense possibility of punjabi nrri to invest in startups in state

Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema praised Dr. Sahney for organizing the conference and his relentless efforts in promoting entrepreneurship in Punjab. "This initiative will create new opportunities for our startups and entrepreneurs. I commend

Dr. Sahney for bringing together government, industry leaders, and startups on a common platform to facilitate growth and innovation." Rajinder Gupta, Chairman of Trident Group, highlighted the importance of industry mentorship in nurturing startups. "Established industry leaders have a responsibility to guide and support budding entrepreneurs. At Trident, we believe in fostering innovation and will extend our expertise to help these startups scale up and navigate industry challenges."

ENDURING LEGACY OF WARRIOR MONKS

For centuries, India's Akharas have been the guardians of Hindu tradition, blending martial discipline with deep spiritual practice.

Akharas, the traditional monastic orders of Hindu ascetics, have played a pivotal role in preserving and shaping Hindu traditions for centuries. These institutions, deeply rooted in spiritual practice, martial discipline, and community organization, have evolved over time, adapting to societal changes while maintaining their core values. Their resurgence, particularly evident during events like the Kumbh Mela, underscores their enduring significance in contemporary Hindu society.

ORIGINS
The term "Akharas" originates from the Sanskrit word "Akhada," meaning a place of practice or training. Historically, akharas served as centers for spiritual learning, martial training, and the preservation of religious teachings. Their establishment is often attributed to the 8th-century philosopher Adi Shankaracharya, who sought to unify and protect Hindu dharma during a period of religious and political upheaval. Adi Shankaracharya founded several major akharas, including Mahanirvani, Niranjani, Juna, Atal, Avahan, Agni, and Anand Akhara. These institutions were designed to foster spiritual growth and prepare ascetics to defend their faith.

However, the history of akharas predates Shankaracharya. Ancient Indian texts mention warrior-ascetics, known as Parivrajakas and Vratyas, who engaged in both meditation and military exercises. By the medieval period, these ascetics had organized themselves into structured groups, forming the basis of modern akharas.

One of the first mentions



wattpad.com

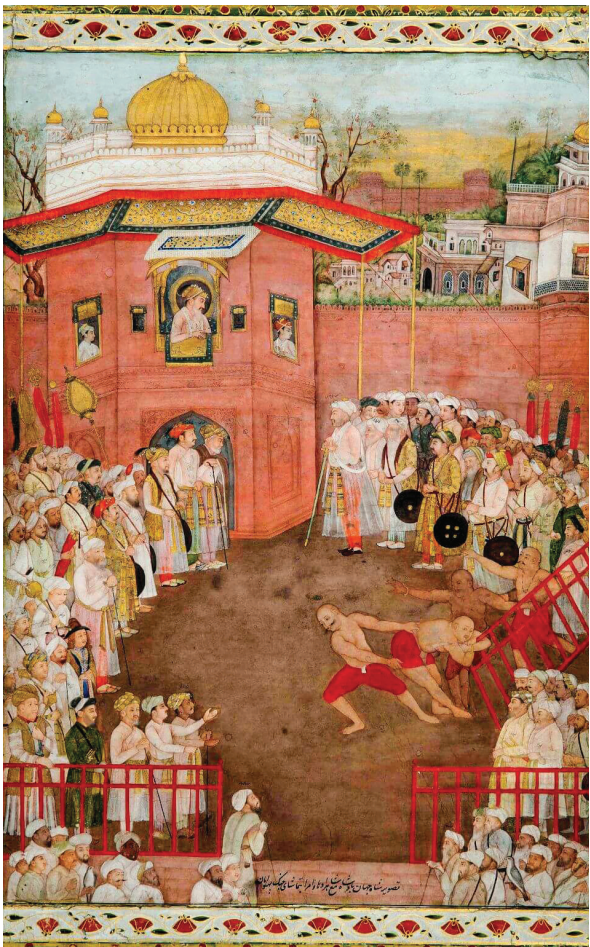
of organized akharas appears in the writings of Hiuen Tsang (7th century CE), who recorded the presence of militant monks in India. He described ascetic orders who had significant influence over religious and social matters, often receiving patronage from local rulers.

During the Mughal period, particularly under Akbar (1542-1605 CE), akharas played an instrumental role in resisting Islamic conversions. The rise of warrior-saints known as Naga Sadhus can be traced to this period, as they took up arms to defend Hindu temples and traditions from external threats. Some scholars have drawn parallels between the Akhara system and military orders like the Nihang Sikhs and Rajput war clans, highlighting the strategic role these ascetic warriors played in the socio-political landscape of medieval India.

Guru Ram Das, one of the revered Sikh Gurus, expressed a metaphor that can also be applied to the spiritual and martial discipline of akharas:

"The vast ocean is filled with treasures containing jewels and pearls. This is attainable by such [people] as are devoted to gurbani." (Guru Granth Sahib, p. 2)

In this context, the "ocean" is akin to the spiritual and philosophical depth that



The emperor Shah Jahan watching a wrestling match, attributable to Mir Kalan Khan, Delhi or Lucknow, CIRCA 1750 Sothebys. enroutetohindianhistory.com

ascetics in akharas strive to explore. Those who dedicate themselves to deep reflection and rigorous discipline, much like the followers of Gurbani, uncover great spiritual wealth. This insight reflects the path of akharas, where discipline, devotion, and spiritual insight converge.

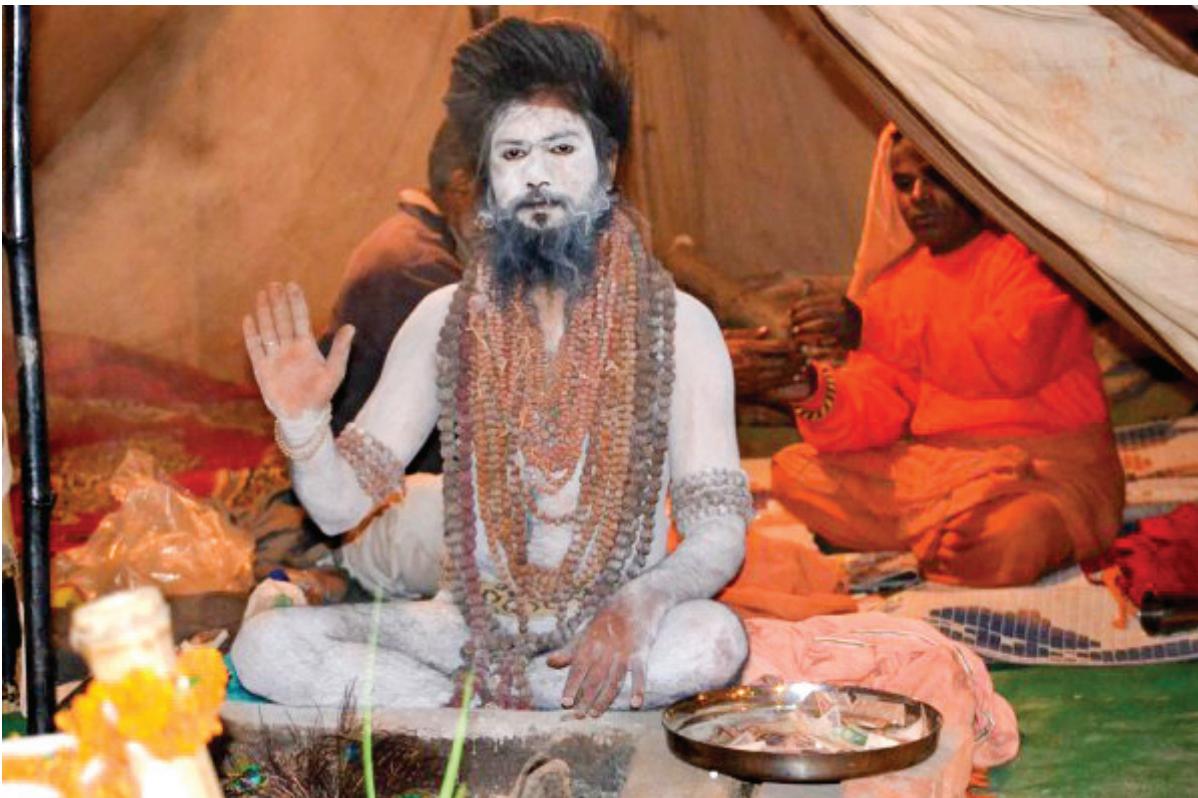
THE STRUCTURE

Over the centuries, akharas underwent significant transformations. Initially established as centers for spiritual and martial training, they evolved into organized monastic communities with distinct administrative structures. The leadership hierarchy typically includes positions such as Mahamandaleshwar (spiritual chief), Mandaleshwar (regional heads), and Mahant (local leaders). This structure ensures the effective governance and dissemination of spiritual teachings within the akhara.

Each akhara also follows a strict regimen of celibacy, ascetic practices, and rigorous training. The emphasis on martial arts and weaponry—using swords, spears, and maces—remains an essential component of their tradition, especially among



[KRISHNA AND BALARAMA FIGHT THE EVIL KING KAMSA'S WRESTLERS: PAGE FROM A DISPERSED BHAGAVATA PURANA, 1650, THE MET MUSEUM]. enroutetohindianhistory.com



Shri Nirvani Ani Akhara - Ayodhya. walkthroughindia



Shri Panchayati Akhara Naya Udaseen-Haridwar. walkthroughindia

the Naga Sadhus.

CONFLICTS IN THE EVOLUTION OF AKHARAS

Much like emergent communities in other spiritual traditions, akharas have faced struggles in defining their identity, particularly in the modern era. As scholars have noted in the study of Sikh traditions, religious communities often seek to establish clear-cut boundaries to assert their legitimacy and distinction from external influences. This process has parallels in the world of akharas, where internal debates about tradition, modernization, and socio-political roles have led to occasional rifts and conflicts.

In the same way that Bhai Gurdas observed in Sikh philosophy:

"In the same way [that the ocean is filled with riches], all treasures are contained in gurbani. Whatever one seeks from it, the same will one attain." (Guru Granth Sahib, p. 3)

A parallel can be drawn to akharas, where seekers may approach their teachings in different ways—some engaging deeply in the discipline, while others may remain at a surface level,

engaging only in rituals without fully grasping the deeper spiritual meaning.

AKHARAS-GOVT RELATIONSHIP

The Kumbh Mela, one of the largest religious gatherings globally, showcases the prominence of akharas in Hindu culture. During this event, akharas lead the Shahi Snan (Royal Bath), a ceremonial immersion in sacred rivers believed to purify the soul. The processions of sadhus (holy men) from various akharas, often adorned with ashes and minimal clothing, are a significant attraction for pilgrims. These rituals not only reinforce the spiritual significance of the festival but also highlight the akharas' role as custodians of ancient traditions.

GOVERNMENT

The relationship between akharas and the government has evolved significantly in modern India. During large-scale events like the Kumbh Mela, the government collaborates with akharas to ensure the smooth organization of the festival, providing infrastructure, security, and logistical support.

Moreover, the current political climate in India,

particularly under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration, has seen a resurgence of interest in Hindu traditions and institutions. This environment has provided akharas with increased visibility and influence. The government's emphasis on promoting Hindu cultural heritage has led to initiatives that support the activities of akharas, including the allocation of resources for their preservation.

CHALLENGES

Despite their enduring significance, akharas face several contemporary challenges:



Shri Panchayati Akhara Mahanirvani-Allahabad

- Modernization vs. Tradition: Balancing traditional practices with modern societal norms requires adaptability and openness to change.
- Internal Conflicts: Disputes over leadership and practices can lead to fragmentation within akharas, affecting their unity and public perception.
- Political Dynamics: While political support can bolster akharas' prominence, it also risks aligning them with specific political agendas, potentially compromising their spiritual objectives.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

Akharas have been integral to the preservation and propagation of Hindu traditions for centuries. Their ability to adapt to changing societal contexts while maintaining their core values underscores their resilience. As they navigate contemporary challenges, akharas continue to serve as vital pillars of spiritual guidance, cultural preservation, and communal identity within Hindu society.

Much like Pashaura Singh's observation on Sikh traditions:

"No single group can afford to monopolize the debate on any single issue... We must explore new ways of knowing the past and complement historical data with ethnographic study that can illuminate the lived experience." This principle applies equally to the study of akharas, where historical narratives, ethnographic research, and contemporary realities must converge to provide a holistic understanding of these enduring institutions.

Compiled by Ruchira Talapatra.



Shri Panchdashnaam Juna Akhara - Varanasi. walkthroughindia

ATTACK ON CULTURE THROUGH SEX!

Ranveer Allahbadia’s shameful comment on parents’ private relationship is just an example...



DR VIJAY DARDA

If I say that our culture is under attack through sex, it might sound strange to you. Some of you might even call it an exaggeration, but this is the reality. The kind of shameful remarks made by YouTuber Ranveer Allahbadia on Samay Raina’s YouTube show ‘India’s Got Talent’ is just a glimpse of a larger issue. The truth is that in the name of freedom of expression, the Internet has become a dumping ground for vulgarity, abuse and mental filth. A well-orchestrated conspiracy is at play, cunningly designed to fill the minds of our youths with impurity. Before understanding this conspiracy, let’s talk about the show ‘India’s Got Talent’.

We are all familiar with the popular TV show ‘India’s Got Talent’. By replacing ‘Talent’ with ‘Latent’, Samay Raina cleverly created a YouTube channel. While ‘Talent’ is a commonly understood term, ‘Latent’ is not. ‘Latent’ means hidden, concealed or dormant which signifies something that exists but is not openly expressed. This word was likely chosen carefully to ensure that legal loopholes could be exploited while serving up sexual content. They can argue that the topics discussed may not be openly spoken about, but they do exist! This show includes everything from obscene abuses to explicit discussions about male and female body parts. While this is vulgarity for us, for people like Ranveer Allahbadia and Samay Raina, it is a way to make money. YouTubers who use profanities on their podcasts earn millions because they have massive followings. Platforms like YouTube don’t care about the content being served. All that they are concerned about is the number of hits and subscrib-

ers. Whoever meets this criterion will fill their pockets! This time the controversy has become even more serious. Moving beyond just vulgar language and obscene descriptions of body parts and relationships, Allahbadia asked a contestant a question so repulsive that I cannot write it here verbatim because our conscience is still alive. However, I must explain it in the most decent words possible. He asked the contestant whether they would rather watch their parents engage in sexual relationships for their entire life or participate once and end it forever. The contestant laughed, but as I watched and listened, my blood boiled! What kind of ‘latent’ discussion is this? Who doesn’t know that intimacy is a natural act essential for the continuation of life? Does that mean we should start expressing it publicly? Today, almost all Internet platforms have become hubs of obscenity. Abuses are used so frequently that they would make even the listener embarrassed. Even young girls casually use profanities related

There is a very old saying that if you want to destroy a nation, destroy its culture. This is exactly what is happening today.

to women’s honour. Discussions about body parts happen as if people are talking about electronic gadgets. Stand-up comedians making sexual jokes attract audiences who pay thousands of rupees for tickets and those who cannot afford it get access to their videos on social media. These videos receive millions of likes, bringing in huge profits! Are you aware that Indian youths spend an average of 2.5 hours daily surfing various social media platforms, with approximately 40 minutes dedicated to watching reels? While good quality reels do exist, sexually explicit content is also rampant. Naturally, young people are more attracted to such content. And here, I am not even talking about

pornographic films or clips. Recently, I was reading a research paper on the Internet industry and I was shocked to learn that India ranks first in the world for watching porn, with the US coming in second. Now, some Indians have also started producing porn films. Some names from the film industry have already surfaced for creating and selling soft porn abroad. Some might argue that ‘Masturbation’ stories were available in the market earlier, and now they have simply taken the form of videos. But I do not agree with this argument. Those erotic stories served as a private escape and were read in secrecy. But what is happening today is a direct attack on our culture. It’s hard to say who to blame. A large section of people defends social sites by calling it ‘media’. Several prominent politicians have even appeared on Allahbadia’s shows, though those episodes did not contain profanities. But the question is why should such individuals be given legitimacy in the first place? There is an old saying: If you want to destroy a nation, destroy its

culture. This is exactly what is happening today. Recently, a report was published that I must mention. The American intelligence agency CIA has established an organisation called Internets Network, which has trained around 9,000 so-called journalists in 30 countries over the past four years under the guise of ‘keeping democracy alive’. Out of these, 7,500 journalists are from India! They have also been generously funded. Doesn’t this raise suspicion in your mind? And doesn’t it make you wonder as to who is funding those attacking Indian culture through sex? Our government should also reflect on this! It is possible that some countries are frustrated because their citizens are coming to attend Maha Kumbh Mela and embracing Hindu culture. But our immediate concern is what are we doing? We are blindly following Western trends and burning in the fire of cultural destruction. The author is the chairman, Editorial Board of Lokmat Media and former member of Rajya Sabha.

Historical roots of contemporary conflicts in the Levant region



PROF. JAWAID IQBAL

The Levant refers to the eastern Mediterranean region consisting of modern-day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel/Palestine, and parts of Iraq and Turkey. In the contemporary world order, the Levant is in turmoil. The genocide in Gaza has led to the explosive entry of Palestine on the scene of global politics, highlighting the settler-colonial character of Zionism and questioning the moral legitimacy of Israel. The Lebanese Shia political party and paramilitary group carried out a 14-month long conflict with Israel to pressure it into ending the killings in Gaza. In Syria, Bashar al-Assad, the country’s president since 2000, was toppled by the Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) in December 2024. Given these rapid developments in the Levant, it is essential to look into its history.

OTTOMAN RULE

For over 400 years, from 1516 to 1918, the Levant was governed by the Ottoman empire. The Ottoman system was characterized by adaptability: 1) it gave a degree of political autonomy to local notables; and 2) due to Islamic principles of toleration and realistic assessments of feasibility, it allowed the non-Muslim subjects to preserve their religious customs, educational structures, and community leadership. The Ottoman system soon suffered a decline due to its inability to confront the West. Under Ottoman rule, surplus agricultural product was either shipped to the capital or appropriated by

the local notables. No organized attempt was made to use this output for productive investments. As a result, manufacturing continued to stagnate in the stage of small-scale artisanal and handicraft production, without industrialization. When European trade reached the eastern Mediterranean, the local, small-scale Ottoman industry, encountering increasing costs and rigid price regulation, found itself incapable of competing with the cheap manufactured goods of Europe. This economic unevenness made the Ottoman empire dependent on European countries, laying the ground for its eventual collapse.

FRANCO-BRITISH IMPERIALISM

In 1916, the Sykes-Picot agreement between Britain and France envisioned the post-Ottoman restructuration of the Middle East into British and French spheres of influence, based on the certainty that the Ottoman empire would be defeated in World War I. Two years later, this plan transformed into reality when the Ottoman Empire surrendered and signed the Armistice of Mudros, formally bringing the termination of Ottoman rule in the Levant. After the San Remo Conference (April 1920), the League of Nations gained legal control over former Ottoman territories. These territories were held to be unprepared for independent rule, so they were placed under the governance of Britain and France. Rather than being annexed directly, ex-Ottoman lands were categorized as “mandates,” which meant that the European powers would be functioning as temporary guardians rather than permanent rulers. The paternalistic and civilizing goals of European nations masked their imperialist objectives. Britain’s mandates included Palestine, Iraq, and Transjordan. Palestine was a key land bridge linking Egypt (Suez Canal) to British-controlled

Iraq and India. Iraq had large oil reserves, particularly in Mosul and Kirkuk, which were crucial to British energy requirements. Furthermore, British control over the Iraqi port of Basra provided it with access to the Persian Gulf, allowing it to manage the Gulf shipping routes. Finally, Transjordan created a buffer zone between Palestine, Iraq, and French-controlled Syria. France’s mandate of Syria and Lebanon included its support for Maronite Christians. For French politicians, an empire in the eastern Mediterranean was an integral objective of the Francophone civilizing mission. Based upon mythic narratives of Frankish Crusaders, Catholic missionaries, the belligerent colonial army, and business interests, France presented a strident defense for the creation of a French Mediterranean empire. Given the imperialist concerns of European countries, they created structures of powers that created and exacerbated religion and ethnic divisions within the Levant.

LEBANON

Before the establishment of the French Mandate, Mount Lebanon was an autonomous province under Ottoman rule with a largely Maronite Christian population. In 1920, French High Commissioner General Henri Gouraud expanded Mount Lebanon into Greater Lebanon, incorporating the Muslim-majority regions of Akkar (Sunni-majority, north), Beqaa Valley (Shia-majority, east), Jabal Amel (Shia-majority, south), and Tripoli and Sidon (Sunni-majority coastal cities). There were three major reasons for the expansion: 1) Mount Lebanon didn’t have substantial agricultural land; and 2) the French required a port city like Beirut. Given that France aimed at creating a Christian-dominated state, it unleashed conflicts between Maronites and Muslims. In order to manage religious diversity, the French insti-

tutionalized sectarian power sharing in the 1926 Lebanese Constitution by allocating political positions along religious lines: the President would be Maronite Christian, the Prime Minister would be Sunni Muslim, and the Speaker of Parliament would be Shia Muslim. By giving the powerful post of President to Maronites, France continued its agenda of Christian domination. Even though the Muslim population increased over time, the political system favored Christians. This power-sharing arrangement was reinforced by the National Pact of 1943 – the year Lebanon gained independence. The colonial legacy of religious division ultimately led to Lebanon’s 15-year long civil war (1975-1990).

SYRIA

The French Mandate in Syria (1920–1946) was driven by a divide-and-rule policy using sectarian, ethnic, and regional divisions. France tried to weaken Arab nationalism by fragmenting Syria into small states: the State of Damascus, the State of Aleppo, the Alawite State (Latakia), the Jabal al-Druze, and the Sanjak of Alexandretta. Sunni Arab leadership was enfeebled through the separation of Damascus and Aleppo – the two largest Sunni-majority cities. Furthermore, the French sharpened the communal boundaries of Alawites and Druze to reinforce sectarian divisions. They were recruited into the French military in large numbers, thus making the Sunni majority resentful. This division would later influence the structure of the Ba’athist regime under the Assad family, where the Alawite-dominated military would play a central role in governance.

The French mandate also manufactured ethnic divisions. France used the displaced communities of Kurds and Armenians to undermine Arab nationalist unity. The Sanjak of Alexandretta, a region with a mixed

population of Arabs, Turks, and Armenians, was given over to Turkey in 1939, creating the basis for future Arab-Turkish antipathies. There were also regional divides. A separation emerged between the urban Sunni elites in Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, and Hama, who led the anti-colonial resistance, and the rural minorities, who were regarded as French collaborators.

JORDAN

In 1921, the British government established Transjordan – originally part of the Palestine mandate – under the leadership of Abdullah I, who belonged to the Hashemite family. After gaining full independence in 1946, Jordan has acted as a regional actor loyal to the West. This is evident in its key role in the *Palestinian question*, supporting imperialist interests rather than Palestinian self-determination. In the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, King Abdullah’s *Arab Legion* (trained by the British) moved into Palestine, seizing and later annexing the *West Bank* in 1950. By integrating the West Bank into his monarchy, Abdullah weakened the territorial foundations for a future Palestinian state. After losing control of the West Bank to Israel in 1967, there was an influx of Palestinian guerrilla fighters into Jordan. The growth of Palestinian militancy in Jordan led to the Black September conflict in 1970: the Hashemite monarchy killed thousands of Palestinian fighters and civilians in order to maintain its power. This event showed how the colonial legacy of monarchical, centralized power functioned as a strong hindrance to the revolutionary aspirations of the Palestinian movement.

ISRAEL

The origins of Israel lie in the British mandate for Palestine, established in 1922. Britain’s handling of Palestine was driven by the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which had promised to cre-

ate a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. While the League of Nations’ Covenant under Article 22 recognized the need for the eventual independence of mandates like Iraq and Syria, it didn’t consider Palestinians as a people with national rights. Meanwhile, the mandate supported the Zionist movement. The Jewish Agency was recognized as the official body of the Jewish community, whereas no such body was created for Palestinians. British Mandate rule enabled Jewish immigration, land acquisition, and settlement in Palestine, particularly in strategic and fertile areas. As a result, the Jewish population grew from 6% of the population in 1917 to 30% by 1939. In essence, Britain built a parallel Zionist administration that regulated central structures of governance. These colonial efforts helped in the establishment of Israel in 1948 and the displacement of 750,000 Palestinians.

CONCLUSION

If there is anything that the history of the Levant demonstrates, it is that external interventionism can never guarantee stability. However, this is what we continue to see even after the cessation of the genocide in Gaza. President Donald Trump has said that the US will “take over” and “own” Gaza after expelling Palestinians from the territory. This, he adds, will eventually turn the enclave into “the Riviera of the Middle East”. From the history of the Mandates system that governed the Levant, it is clear that the colonial fantasy of paternalistic control can never benefit the colonized. Rather, it treats a certain group of people as the object of a strong benefactor’s efforts, thus curtailing their democratic ability to take decisions on their own. It remains to be seen how the battle for democratic power unfolds in the Levant. The author is Vice-Chancellor, Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University, Rajouri, Jammu

PERSPECTIVE SOCIAL MEDIA CONTROVERSY

CONTENT CREATION: LET THE VIEWER DECIDE

The recent controversy surrounding obscenity on social media is being fuelled by overreaction by both sides of the divide—the divide that comes between so-called modernity and conservatism. While one side is adding the cover of “freedom of speech” to basically obscene and outrageous content, the other side is resorting to extreme action as a counter. What was on display in the viral clip featuring some young and massively popular social media influencers was crass and vulgar. Given that the “jokes” made were based on some western comedy shows and were intended to shock, although apparently in a closed door programme, proves that the makers of such shows lack the ability and creativity to think independently, or even adapt such western shows according to Indian tastes and mores. At the best they can copy-paste content they have lifted from the West. They think it’s all very modern to follow the West blindly, forgetting their own cultural moorings. In reality, they are nothing but deracinated. At the same time, however much they want to belong, they will never be a part of the western “creative” milieu, simply because they are Indian.

As for the argument that it is about freedom of speech—in India, freedom of speech is not absolute and comes with “reasonable restrictions”. As Indians, content creators will have to follow Indian laws, so there is no point crying about how “illiberal” India is.

Crossing certain sacrosanct familial boundaries may be a practice in a minuscule section of the western “creative” environment, but in India, anything like this will be taken as a sign of a perverted mind. There is a reason why pornography, and that too in a sacrosanct space, is not normalised in civilized societies—for that matter, even in the West. It is because of this that there is sheer fury at these youngsters’ actions. What they said was not a slip of tongue, it was said deliberately with the intention to shock and offend. And they knew that they were crossing boundaries, else they wouldn’t have said such things behind closed doors, in front of a select audience. There is apparently much unhappiness in the influencer community over the incident, not because what they said was obscene, but because the video clip got leaked and went viral. Apparently, they are wondering if the leak is a conspiracy by OTT platforms because their shows are diverting the OTT viewer to their YouTube channels. Instead, shouldn’t have they wondered why they felt the need to cross the deep red line to appeal to a select audience? What is the difference between pornography websites and such influencer channels, if the content that such channels dish out cannot be made public except to a handful of people? If the argument is that in India consumption of pornography is high and thus to object to the influencers’ obscene content is hypocrisy, then the counter argument is, they might as well start labelling themselves as pornographic channels and not influencer channels.

As for the argument that it is about freedom of speech—in India, freedom of speech is not absolute and comes with “reasonable restrictions”. As Indians, content creators will have to follow Indian laws, so there is no point crying about how “illiberal” India is.

Now about the reaction to this controversy. No one should be sent to jail for being degenerate and foolish. Action should stop with a warning, and should not be taken to the level of hounding them to the extent where they start fearing for their lives. It must be recognised that social media has opened up a new career path of content creation for many people—young and old. Although this phenomenon may not last long as newer technologies and modes of communication catch audience fancy. But, for the time being, to spite these content creators their moment in the sun may come across as jealousy. Instead, content creation should be celebrated for it is a means for many people to earn a decent living. Fear should not come to dominate the sector, for that is one certain way to kill it. Exemplary punishment for suffering from verbal diarrhoea is not prison time. The punishment is unsubscribing from such channels, or simply switching channels. A loss in viewership is the only way of disciplining such content creators. It should be left to the viewer to decide the fate of such content creators. The audience is discerning enough to distinguish between good and obscene content. There is no need for the State to get involved in this and hound these content creators.

JOYEETA BASU

SACHIN BABY STANDS TALL WITH UNBEATEN 69

AGENCIES
AHMEDABAD

Veteran Sachin Baby steadied Kerala's innings with a resolute unbeaten half-century, guiding his team to 206/4 against a probing Gujarat attack on the opening day of their Ranji Trophy semi-final here on Monday. The 36-year-old southpaw occupied the crease for two full sessions, crafting an unbeaten 69 off 193 balls (8x4) that kept their maiden final hopes alive. He found an able ally in Mohammed Azharuddeen, who remained unbeaten on 30 off 66 balls (3x4) after surviving a last-ball LBW scare as DRS overturned the decision, denying Gujarat a breakthrough right before stumps. Trapped LBW by Chintan Gaja, the Kerala keeper-batter was given out by the on-field umpire, sparking celebrations in the Gujarat camp.

However, the batter immediately reviewed the decision, and ball-tracking confirmed it was sliding down the leg side as Kerala heaved a sigh of relief, ending the day without further damage.

Their unbroken fifth-wicket stand of 49 runs kept Kerala afloat against Gujarat's relentless bowling attack, which deployed seven bowlers, though only Arzan



UNBEATABLE PERFORMANCE

- **Sachin Baby's Resilience:** Unbeaten 69 off 193 balls (8x4), anchoring Kerala's innings for two sessions.
- **Mohammed Azharuddeen's Support:** Unbeaten 30 off 66 balls (3x4), surviving a last-ball LBW scare overturned by DRS.
- **Key Partnership:** 49-run unbroken fifth-wicket stand between Baby and Azharuddeen, stabilizing Kerala.
- **Slow Scoring Rate:** Kerala crawled to 200 in 86.3 overs, consuming 470+ dot balls.
- **Gujarat's Strategy:** Held back the second new ball until the 86th over, but no further breakthroughs.

Nagwaswalla (16-4-39-1), Priyajitsing Jadeja (12-0-33-1), and leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi (15-2-33-1) managed breakthroughs.

With Kerala looking to build on their total, the first session on day two will be crucial, and Baby's innings will hold the key.

On the other hand, the hosts, seeking their first final appearance since their

maiden Ranji Trophy triumph in 2016-17, will look to seize control early.

Opting to bat, Kerala started well, but none of the top-order batters could convert their starts into a big knocks.

While wickets fell regularly, Baby stood firm, bringing up his 28th first-class fifty.

The scoring rate, however, remained sluggish

throughout the day as Kerala crawled to 200 in 86.3 overs, consuming over 470 dot balls.

Gujarat toiled hard, and the crucial strikes and low-scoring run rate from Kerala kept them in the contest.

With four wickets down, an early breakthrough on day two could tilt the balance in favour of the home side. Kerala looked to be

settling in when left-arm pacer Nagwaswalla broke a promising fourth-wicket partnership, worth 71 runs, cleaning up Jalaj Saxena.

Attempting a late cut off a back-of-a-length delivery, Jalaj only managed to drag the ball onto his stumps. The wicket came just a delivery after he had survived an LBW review.

Baby was highly disciplined in his approach, displaying excellent judgment outside the off-stump and rarely flirting with deliveries in the fourth-stump channel.

The experienced left-hander took his time, grinding out a patient innings against a Gujarat attack that bowled with discipline.

Azharuddeen, Kerala's second-highest run-getter this season, took 11 deliveries to get off the mark but provided solid support to Baby.

Left-arm spinner Sid-dharth Desai exploited the rough patches outside off-stump, but Baby remained unperturbed, watching the ball closely and countering spin with a solid defence.

Despite the second new ball being available, Gujarat refrained from taking it, preferring to persist with Desai and Bishnoi in the closing stages of the day, with close-in fielders crowding the batters.

They finally took the sec-

ond new ball in the 86th over but did not taste any success.

Earlier, Kerala made up a solid start with openers Rohan Kunnummal and Akshay Chandran negotiating the new ball spells of Chintan Gaja and Nagwaswalla without any trouble.

The duo put up a 60-run stand, showing patience against the Gujarat bowlers while capitalising on loose deliveries.

However, Gujarat struck back before the lunch break when a mix-up led to Chandran's run out for 30 off 71 balls (5x4).

Within four overs, Gujarat struck again when Kunnummal was trapped leg-before by Bishnoi for 30 off 68 balls (5x4) after an unsuccessful DRS review. Kerala, from a steady 60/0, found themselves at 63/2.

The left-right combination had looked comfortable, but the two dismissals came against the run of play, leaving Kerala with two new batters at the crease.

Varun Nayanar's tentative stay ended at 10, edging Jadeja behind, reducing Kerala to 86/3.

From there, Baby and Jalaj steadied the innings with their cautious partnership, frustrating the Gujarat attack.

Gujarat lost a review when Bishnoi's appeal against Jalaj was turned down.



1,476 para-athletes to vie for honours at National Para Athletics C'ship

AGENCIES
CHENNAI

Nearly 1,500 para-athletes from across India will showcase their skills when the 23rd National Para Athletics Championship begins at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here on Tuesday. This historic event, marking Chennai's first-ever hosting of the championship, will feature a record 1,476 para-athletes competing in 155 events by 30 teams, making it one of the largest para-athletics gatherings in the country. Among the prominent athletes set to participate are Sumit Antil (Javelin), Manoj Sabapathy (Wheelchair Racing), Manoj Singaraj (Shot Put), Mariyappan Thangavelu (High Jump), Muthu Raja (Shot Put), Hokato Sema (Shot Put), Navdeep Singh (Javelin), and Yogesh Kathuniya (Discus), among others. "We are confident that this championship in

Chennai will set new benchmarks for para-athletic competitions in India," Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) president Devendra Jhajharia said in a release. "With an impressive 1,476 para-athletes competing in 155 events, this tournament reflects the rapid growth and increasing competitiveness of para sports in the country. With world-class facilities and a commitment to inclusivity, we are witnessing a new era for Indian para-athletics." The event is being supported by the Tamil Nadu government and organised under the guidance of deputy chief minister Udhayanidhi Stalin, who also serves as the state minister for sports. Tamil Nadu Para Sports Association president Chandrasekar Rajan said, "The unwavering support from the Tamil Nadu Government has been instrumental in making this event a resounding success.

France's Kyrian Jacquet secures men's singles title days after triumph in Chennai



AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Frenchman Kyrian Jacquet prolonged his superb Indian spring by adding the Delhi Open 2025 singles title to his trophy cabinet on Monday, mere days after he had claimed the Chennai Open 2025 crown.

Jacquet, unseeded, beat second seed Billy Harris 6-4, 6-2 at the DLTA Complex Centre Court on Sunday to lay claim to the championship, as per a press release from Delhi Lawn Tennis Association (DLTA).

Organised by the All India Tennis Association (AITA) and the Delhi Lawn Tennis Association, the Delhi Open

2025 was an ATP Challenger 75 tournament played on hard courts with USD 100,000 as prize money on offer. By winning the singles event, Jacquet raked in 75 crucial ATP points.

Building on the momentum of his triumph over top seed Vit Kopriva in the semi-final, Jacquet, World no. 204 at the time of writing, raced off the blocks in the final, breaking World No. 116 Harris at the first time of asking to take a 3-0 lead. The Briton, however, responded in kind, breaking his counterpart and holding his serve to restore parity at 3-3. Jacquet, though, broke again in the eighth game, before sealing the first set on his opponent's serve, 6-4.

WPL: RCB wins by 8 wickets

AGENCIES
VADODARA

Defending Women's Premier League champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru registered a second consecutive win in the third season of the tournament. After thumping Gujarat Giants in the opening contest, the Smriti Mandhana-led franchise went past Delhi Capitals by 8 wickets in WPL 2025.

Chasing 142 runs, Mandhana (81) and Danni Wyatt-Hodge (42) added 107 runs for the opening wicket. The remaining task was easily completed in the end.

Earlier, DC were bowled out for just 141 runs in 19.3 overs. Jemimah Rodrigues (34) and Sarah Bryce (23) were good with the bat. For RCB, Georgia Wareham and Renuka Singh claimed three wickets each.

Kim Garth and Ekta Bisht added two wickets each to their bowling figures. It was Delhi's second straight defeat.

An excellent bowling performance from RCB, led by Renuka Singh and Georgia Wareham's three-



wicket hauls bowled DC out for just 141 in 19.3 overs. Jemimah Rodrigues stood tall with a solid 34 (22) but couldn't convert it into a big knock, on a pitch that had something for every kind of bowler.

Teams: Meg Lanning (c), Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Annabel Sutherland, Jess Jonassen,

Marizanne Kapp, Sarah Bryce(wk), Shikha Pandey, Radha Yadav, Arundhati Reddy and Minnu Mani.

RCB : Smriti Mandhana (c), Danielle Wyatt-Hodge, Ellyse Perry, Raghvi Bist, Richa Ghosh (wk), Kanika Ahuja, Georgia Wareham, Kim Garth, Ekta Bisht, Joshitha VJ and Renuka Thakur Singh.

'Happy that cricket will be an Olympic sport': Nita Ambani

AGENCIES
BOSTON

Nita Ambani, an International Olympic Committee (IOC) member and the founder and chairperson of Reliance Foundation, expressed her feelings on the inclusion of Cricket in the upcoming 2028 Olympics, which are set to take place in Los Angeles, California, US.

In October last year, as an example of Indian cricket and its star batter Virat Kohli's global status as the face of the sport, a mention of the former Indian skipper was made during the International Olympic Committee (IOC) 141st session, during which the decision to include the sport in Olympics was taken.

"India is a sport-loving nation. For the Tokyo Olympics, the maximum viewership for the Olympic channel came from India, so imagine what would happen if we added cricket to it. So that's the time when my mind started ticking as to how do I convince the committee members to



have cricket as an Olympic sport. Now, they were still in the belief that cricket is a five-day long cricket match...

I informed them and this is going to be a win-win situation if you have cricket as an Olympic sport and you'll have the backing of probably two billion people. So I think that is the plug that I used and I'm so happy that now cricket will be an Olympic sport," Nita Ambani said during the keynote address at the Harvard India Conference on Indian Business, Policy & Culture.

Cricket will be a part of the Los Angeles Olympic Games in 2028 and will make its return after 128 years to the

multi-sport extravaganza, announced the International Olympic Committee (IOC) on Monday.

The 2028 event will also include sports like baseball/softball, lacrosse, squash and flag football. The proposal from the Organising Committee of the Olympic Games Los Angeles 2028 to include these games in the programme was accepted at the ongoing 141st IOC session being held in Mumbai.

Cricket made its sole appearance at the 1900 Paris Olympics, in which Great Britain defeated France in the final. However, it is also played in the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games.

FIH Pro League: Indian Team eyes winning momentum

AGENCIES
BHUBANESWAR

After a mixed start to their FIH Pro League 2024-25 campaign, the Indian Men's Hockey Team, led by Captain Harmanpreet Singh, is ready to take on Germany in its upcoming matches at the Kalinga Hockey Stadium here.

Having bounced back from a 3-1 loss to Spain in their opener with a commanding 2-0 win in the second game, India are eager to continue their winning momentum against the German side, as per Hockey India press release.

With three points from two games, India currently sit in eighth place in the standings and will be looking to climb higher.

One key area of focus for the team is improving their penalty corner conversion



rate. Despite winning seven penalty corners across their two games against Spain, India failed to convert any of these opportunities into goals. The hosts will aim to sharpen their execution in set-pieces as they prepare for the challenge ahead.

Dilpreet Singh, Mandeep Singh, and Sukhjeet Singh have each netted a goal for the Men in Blue so far in the tournament and will be looking to add to their tally against Germany.

Germany, who will be playing their first match of the India leg, are placed just above India in seventh place with four points from four games and they will be determined to turn their fortunes around. Although they have won only one match in the tournament so far, their attack has been spearheaded by Raphael Hartkopf, Gonzalo Peillat, and Thies Prinz, who have each scored two goals. Germany will aim to turn around their strug-

gling campaign and secure vital points in this closely contested fixture.

The two sides last met during a two-match Test series in New Delhi in October 2024, where Germany won the first game 2-0, but India bounced back in the second with a thrilling 5-3 victory. However, Germany went on to claim the series through a shootout win, adding extra intensity to this latest match-up in the FIH Pro League.

Speaking on the upcom-

ing matches, India captain Harmanpreet Singh stated as quoted by Hockey India press release, "We are looking forward to our games against Germany. They are a quality team, and we know we need to bring our best performance to the field."

"After the positive result against Spain, our confidence is high, but we know there's still work to be done. One of our main focuses is improving our penalty corner conversion, as it's crucial to make the most of those opportunities in tight matches. The team is motivated and ready to build on the momentum from our last game. We've learned from both the win and the loss, and we're determined to bring our best performance to the field. Playing at home is always special, and we want to deliver for our fans," he concluded.



Gold in Women's Doubles, Silver in Women's Team Event (X)

PICTURE PERFECT



Camila Cabello look for London’s Royal Festival Hall for BAFTA.
(INSTAGRAM)

Maha Cyber Cell summons Ranveer Allahbadia

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Maharashtra Cyber Cell has summoned YouTuber Ranveer Allahbadia to appear before it on February 24.

The Cyber Cell is investigating the case registered against Ranveer Allahbadia and others after he triggered an uproar with his offensive remarks on the show 'India's Got Talent.'

Comedian Samay Raina has also been asked to appear before the cyber cell tomorrow.

Multiple FIRs being registered against Allahbadia, Raina, and other participants of the show following the backlash after Allahbadia asked a contestant, "Would you rather watch your parents...or join in once and stop it forever?"

The National Commission for Women (NCW) has also investigated the matter and has issued summons to Allahbadia, Raina, and others.

However, many of those summoned failed to appear before the commission today, citing concerns about their personal safety, prior foreign travel commitments, and other logistical challenges.



The Commission said that Ranveer Allahbadia had informed it that he was receiving death threats and requested a new hearing date after three weeks. The Commission has accepted his request and rescheduled the hearing for March 6.

Apoorva Mukhija has communicated that she fears for her safety and can only attend the hearing virtually. Her lawyer, in an email said that Mukhija will attend in person once the situation stabilizes. The Commission has accepted her request and rescheduled the hearing for March 6.

The Commission said it has accepted Jaspreet Singh's request. Singh said he is on tour in Paris and will return

to India by March 10, 2025, at which point he will cooperate with the Commission's inquiry. The NCW has rescheduled the hearing for March 11.

Ashish Chanchlani did not attend the hearing in person; instead, his advocate appeared on his behalf and stated that Ashish was unwell. The Commission has accepted his request and rescheduled the hearing for March 6.

Tushar Poojari, the producer of "India's Got Talent," and Saurabh Bothra have failed to respond to the Commission's notice. NCW strongly condemned their lack of seriousness and issued a resumption for them for March 6, 2025.

BRAIN PICKING



I am a difficult person to cast.
— SIMI GAREWAL
(Indian Actress)

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Stand-up comedian Zakir Khan has come up with a new show titled 'Love Life Lafde'.

As per Zakir, the audience will get a chance to hear some "real conversations" on the show.

"The OG Sakht Launda is back, bigger, funnier,



Zakir Khan excited about his show 'Love Life Lafde'

Celebs like Neetu Kapoor, Pashmina Roshan, Jeetendra, Alka Yagnik, Jackie and Tiger Shroff, Vaani Kapoor, Siddharth Anand, Udit Narayan, David Dhawan and many others attended the event.

buster film, Rekha essayed the role of Hrithik's mother and wife of Rakesh Roshan.

Celebs like Neetu Kapoor, Pashmina Roshan, Jeetendra, Alka Yagnik, Jackie and Tiger Shroff, Vaani Kapoor, Siddharth Anand, Udit Na-

rayan, David Dhawan and many others attended the event.

After attending the bash, Siddharth took to Instagram and shared a picture with his 'War' team including Hrithik, Tiger and Vaani.

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VICKY KAUSHAL-STARRER 'CHHAAVA' EARNS OVER RS 150 CRORE

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Vicky Kaushal and Rashmika Mandanna-starrer historical drama "Chhaava" has become the highest grossing Hindi film this year by earning Rs 164.75 crore at the worldwide box office in its opening weekend.

The film has surpassed the collection of Akshay Kumar-starrer "Skyforce", which made over Rs 140 crore worldwide in the first three days of its release last month.

According to trade tracking website Sacnilk, the film's total global box office collection is Rs 164.75 crore. The movie's gross India collection stands at Rs 139.75 crore and its nett earnings are at Rs 116.50 crore. The



film made over Rs 25 crore overseas.

Directed by Laxman Utekar of "Mimi" fame, "Chhava" released on the big screen on February 14. It is produced by Dinesh Vijan of Maddock

Films.

The period drama is based on the life of Maratha warrior Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, essayed by Kaushal. Mandanna plays his wife, Yesubai.

"Chhaava" marked another collaboration for Kaushal and Utekar, who have previously worked on the romantic comedy "Zara Hatke Zara Bachke" (2023) opposite Sara Ali Khan.

BAFTA: 'All We Imagine As Light' loses to 'Emilia Perez'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The 78th British Academy Film Awards, also known as the BAFTA Awards was held on Sunday, February 16 at the Royal Albert Hall in London. BAFTA is one of the most prestigious award shows and it celebrates global cinema across various categories including directing and acting among others.

Despite controversy surrounding its lead star Karla Sofia Gascon's old tweets, which were viewed as Islamophobic and racist, "Emilia Perez" won the award at Sunday's ceremony in London with film's



second lead Zoe Saldana taking home the BAFTA in the Supporting Actress segment.

"Emilia Perez", a French film directed by Jacques



Audiard, follows four remarkable women in Mexico, each pursuing their own happiness. Cartel leader Emilia (Gascon) enlists Rita (Saldana), an

unappreciated lawyer, to help fake her death so that she can fake her death so that she can finally live authentically as her true self.

Kate Winslet to make directorial debut with 'Goodbye June'

AGENCIES
LOS ANGELES

Hollywood star Kate Winslet, best known for her performances in 'Titanic', 'Quills' and 'Hamlet', is now all set to don the hat of a director.

As per The Hollywood Reporter, Kate has come on board to direct feature film titled 'Goodbye June' for Netflix.

The Oscar winner will also produce and act in the movie, which will star Toni Collette, Johnny Flynn, Andrea Riseborough, Timothy Spall and Helen Mirren. Joe Anders, Winslet's son with ex-husband Sam Mendes, wrote the screenplay and Kate Solomon will produce



with Winslet.

Netflix describes Goodbye June as a "touching, yet humorous" drama, "which sees a fractured group of siblings pull together under sudden and trying circumstances."

The film will go on floors

soon in the U.K.

Solomon also produced Winslet's most recent feature, the Lee Miller biopic Lee about the model-turned-World War II photographer, which included Riseborough among its cast, as per The Hollywood Reporter.

Rekha's reunion with Hrithik, Rakesh reminds fans of 'Koi... Mil Gaya'

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Sunday night turned out to be special for Bollywood fans as they witnessed a gamut of stars under one roof.

On February 16, the makers of the documentary series, "The Roshans" hosted a success bash for the Netflix project in Mumbai. The event was attended not only by Hrithik Roshan and his family members but renowned dignitaries such as Rekha and Anupam Kher, too, marked their gracious



presence.

Several pictures from the success bash surfaced online. However, it was Rekha's presence that stole everyone's attention. She arrived at the event in full

stylish mode.

She even posed with Hrithik and Rakesh Roshan, and her reunion with the father-son duo reminded fans of 'Koi... Mil Gaya'. In the block-

Kriti Sanon starts shooting for 'Tere Ishk Mein'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

"Crew" star Kriti Sanon on Monday said she has begun filming for Anand L Rai's upcoming movie "Tere Ishk Mein", also featuring Dhanush.

Sanon will play the character of Mukti alongside Dhanush's Shankar in the film. It is produced by Rai's Colour Yellow Productions.

The actor shared the work update on her Instagram Stories.

"Day 1. Let's go! @aanaandlrai @dhanushkraj @



cypplofficial Such a good feeling being back on set... Doing what I love the most!" she captioned a picture of the film's clapboard.

"Tere Ishk Mein" marks a third collaboration between Dhanush and Rai after 2013's "Raanjhanaa" and "Atrangi Re" (2021). The upcoming movie is slated to be released in theatres on November 28.

Sanon was last seen in "Do Patti", which also marked her debut as a producer.

COUNCILLORS DEBATE BUDGET IN MUNICIPAL CORPORATION MEETING, NO OUTCOME

The Chandigarh Corporation House meeting saw a heated dispute between councillors and the Municipal Commissioner, with tensions rising over the focus on salaries.

MANJEET SAHDEV
CHANDIGARH

The Chandigarh Municipal Corporation's meeting, held on Monday to discuss the budget, ended in a verbal altercation, with no significant outcomes. While the budget for the year 2025-26 was on the agenda, the session saw councillors engaging in quarrels rather than making progress on the financial discussions. The lack of a productive outcome left the budget issue unresolved, and the primary focus during the meeting shifted to internal disputes among the councillors. As a result, the session failed to deliver any concrete results regarding the city's budget.

Simultaneously, contractors of the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation organized a protest within the corporation's office, highlighting their frustration over long-overdue payments for their work. Despite repeated requests to the corporation's officials, the contractors claimed that they had not been paid for the work completed for an extended period. Hari Shankar Mishra, the President of the Contractor Association, expressed concern that the corporation owed around Rs 35 crore to the contractors, which had

CHANDIGARH BUDGET MEETING DISRUPTED BY DISPUTES AND PROTESTS

- **Chandigarh Municipal Corporation meeting:** Budget discussion marred by councillor disputes.
- **Contractors protest:** Demanding payment of Rs 35 crore for unpaid work.
- **Budget proposal:** Rs 1864.92 crore allocated for 2025-26, but focus shifted to salaries.
- **Councillors' frustration:** Criticized lack of budget focus due to emphasis on salaries.
- **Saurabh Joshi's remarks:** Highlighted tax entitlements under various Punjab Acts for the corporation.



led to severe financial strain on the contractors' operations. Mishra further explained that the financial difficulties were worsening for the contractors, and the workers employed by the contractors had also not been paid. The contractors voiced their dissatisfaction with the lack of attention to this issue within the corporation.

In the budget discussion, the councillors pointed out the disproportionate focus on the salaries of officers and employees instead of address-

ing matters concerning the development of the city. This caused discontent among the councillors, who were expecting a more in-depth conversation on the city's growth and progress. They argued that if the budget discussion was limited to salaries, there would be no need for such a meeting. This disagreement led to a brief dispute between the councillors and the Municipal Commissioner, further hindering the meeting's productivity.

The 2025-26 budget propos-

al, which was discussed during the meeting, included a provision of Rs 1864.92 crore. Despite this, the debate over priorities and the contentious atmosphere in the meeting overshadowed the budget discussions. The councillors' frustrations reflected the ongoing dissatisfaction with the way municipal affairs were being managed, especially when critical issues such as development were being sidelined. Additionally, BJP councillor and lawyer Saurabh Joshi raised concerns about

the collection of taxes and the financial resources available to the Municipal Corporation. Citing section 90(6) of the Punjab Municipal Corporation Law (Extension to Chandigarh) Act, 1994, Joshi argued that the corporation should receive a share of various taxes collected within its jurisdiction, including those on properties transferred under the Indian Stamp Act, motor vehicle taxes, electricity duties, and entertainment taxes. According to Joshi, the corporation was entitled to a portion of the stamp duty on transferred properties, taxes on vehicles under the Punjab Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, and a share of the electricity tax as specified under the Punjab Electricity (Duty) Act. Furthermore, he emphasized that a portion of the taxes levied on entertainment, such as cinema show taxes, should go to the Municipal Corporation as per the Punjab Entertainments Duty Act and the Punjab Entertainments Tax (Cinematograph Show) Act.

Despite the focus on salaries and taxes, the overall session highlighted the growing discontent among councillors and contractors, illustrating the need for improved management of municipal affairs.

Cong delegation meets Tewari, gives demand letter for trauma centre in Manimajra

RAHUL SAHDEV
MANIMAJRA

A delegation led by District Congress President Surjit Dhillon met Chandigarh MP Manish Tewari and handed over a memorandum demanding the establishment of a state-of-the-art trauma center in Manimajra. The delegation included Block Congress President Sanjeev Gaba, Manpreet Sethi, Gagandeep Brar, Ramandeep Singh Sahni, Sahil Bhandari, Dr. Harbans Singh Grewal, Man Singh and Transport Association General Secretary Baldeep Singh Lucky.

The delegation apprised MP Tiwari that Manimajra, which is a rapidly developing area, is connected to the Chandigarh-Shimla highway and various medical emergencies including road accidents are frequently reported here. At present, seriously injured patients are sent to Sector-32 Hospital or PGI Chandigarh, which delays treatment and increases the risk to the lives of patients. The establishment of a trauma centre will benefit not only Manimajra but also the patients of Him-



achal Pradesh, as they will not have to go to PGI or Sector-32 Hospital and will be able to get timely treatment.

SUGGESTION TO BUILD TRAUMA CENTRE AT A SUITABLE PLACE

On this occasion, District Congress President Surjit Dhillon said that a suitable vacant land is available near the Municipal Corporation office, in front of Manimajra Hospital, which can be an ideal place for the Trauma Centre. He said that the establishment of this centre will not only provide quick and necessary medical facilities to the people of Manimajra but also to the people coming from the surrounding areas and Himachal Pradesh.

REQUEST TO MP TO RAISE THE DEMAND TO THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

Block Congress President Sanjeev Gaba said, "We request MP Manish Tiwari to place this demand before the central government and help in setting up a trauma center as soon as possible. This facility will play an important role in saving the lives of common people."

MP Manish Tiwari assured the delegation that they will take this demand seriously and will request the central government to take necessary action in this regard. The Congress leaders hope that the people of Manimajra as well as Himachal Pradesh will soon get the facility of a state-of-the-art trauma center.

National Lok Adalat to dispose of traffic challans from 2021-23

TDG NETWORK
PANCHKULA

Aparna Bhardwaj CJM-cum-Secretary, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Panchkula, informed that old traffic challans for the years 2021, 2022, and 2023, which have been returned by the Virtual Court, will be taken up for disposal during the upcoming National Lok Adalat on 8th March. The Lok Adalat will be held at the District Courts Complex, providing an opportunity for residents to settle their pending challans.

She further stated that applicants who wish to get their traffic challans disposed of must follow a proper procedure. First, they are required to visit the Challan Branch at Sector 12, where they will receive a stamped performa. This stamped performa is



cial Traffic Challan Branch. He emphasized that such printouts will not be accepted and requested that only stamped printouts issued from the Challaning Branch at Sector 12, be considered valid. Citizens must strictly follow this requirement to avoid any inconvenience while getting their challans resolved.

The Traffic In-charge further stated that a major challenge in disposing of old challans is that many offenders have changed their addresses and phone numbers over time. He said that due to these changes, it has become difficult to contact the applicants and inform them about their pending challans. In light of this issue, the public is urged to visit the Challan Branch, at the earliest to verify and process their challans for disposal.

During a meeting held on Monday, the Traffic Incharge informed Bhardwaj that many individuals take printouts of their challans from sources other than the offi-

VP Jagdeep Dhankhar: Developed India is a goal, not a dream

MANJEET SAHDEV
CHANDIGARH

Developed India has become a goal, not a dream. This was said by the country's Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar during a program in Mohali. He was present to attend this program on Monday. During this, he was given a grand welcome at Chandigarh Airport.

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar is on a visit to Punjab. On reaching Chandigarh airport, he was welcomed by Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatreya. On this occasion, Punjab Cabinet Minister Tarun-



preet Singh Sond, Haryana Minister Shyam Singh Rana, former MP and Additional Solicitor General Satyapal Jain and Chandigarh Mayor

Harpreet Kaur were also present.

He attended the National Agri Food and Biomanufacturing Institute (NABI)

in Mohali. On this occasion, he said that now developed India is not the dream of the country but its goal.

On this occasion, Vice President Dhankhar said that the soul of India is the village. The contribution of agriculture is unprecedented. The rural economy is the backbone of the country. He said that the dream of developed India emerges from the villages of the country. Developed India is not a dream today. Developed India is our goal. At the same time, he said that this Nabi has made an important contribution to the country. Apart from this, he has high-

lighted many schemes of the government.

At the Advanced Entrepreneurship Skill Development Program, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar said that nutritional value, is what I tell you. Right now, if you look around, you will see it in the villages. On this occasion, a tree was also planted in the memory of his late mother Kesari Devi ji at the campus in Mohali.

On reaching Chandigarh, the Vice President was welcomed by former MP and Additional Solicitor General Satyapal Jain. During this, the Vice President interacted with Satyapal Jain.

Detective Staff arrests youth with illegal firearm, one pistol seized

YASHIKA SAINI
PANCHKULA

The Detective Staff of Panchkula police arrested a youth in possession of an illegal pistol. The accused has been identified as Charanjit alias Prince alias Ghoda, a resident of Pinjore. All of this came to light when a case under Section 25(1-A) of the Arms Act has been registered at Pinjore police station.

The accused was presented before the court on February 16, where the court granted a three-day police remand.

According to information, during the late night hours of February 15, the Detective Staff was patrolling near Pinjore when

they received a tip-off that a man was standing near the veterinary hospital in Nanakpur village with an illegal weapon. Acting on this information, a team led by ASI Gopal reached the spot and surrounded the suspect, securing his arrest, when the accused failed to provide any valid license for the weapon.

Upon searching him, the police recovered an illegal pistol. The pistol's dimensions were measured as Bar-

rel length 8 cm, Body length: 14 cm, Grip length: 8.5 cm, Diagonal length (barrel to grip): 18 cm, Magazine dimensions: Small curve - 9.5 cm, Large curve - 10 cm, and Width - 2 cm

The accused was presented before the court on February 16, where the court granted a three-day police remand. During the remand, further investigation will be conducted to gather additional information.

DG NCC Lt Gen Gurbirpal Singh reviews activities in North India

RAHUL SAHDEV
CHANDIGARH

Director General National Cadet Corps (NCC) Lieutenant General Gurbirpal Singh visited Directorate Punjab, Haryana, Himachal & Chandigarh (PHHP&C) located at Kendriya Sadan, Sector 9 Chandigarh to review NCC activities in the region. On the occasion, Lieutenant General Gurbirpal Singh was briefed about various activities of NCC in the four states by Major General Gurdeep Singh Cheema, Additional Director General of the Director-



ate. DG NCC emphasized the importance of expanding NCC training to maximum students and increasing the reach of the organisation in remote areas.

While interacting with the cadets, staff and concerned

commendation certificate, Director General NCC plaque and medals to the meritorious cadets and staff of the Directorate.

Lt Gen Gurbirpal Singh stressed that there is no dearth of funds for cadet training and emphasised on judicious use of resources to build the image of NCC and for nation building. He appreciated the efforts of PHHP&C Directorate for improving the overall competency and encouraged them to keep working hard towards the vision of NCC and nation building.

‘Simplify life through spirituality’: Satguru Mata Sudiksha Ji Maharaj

MANJEET SAHDEV
CHANDIGARH

Sant Nirankari Mission organized a grand Sant Samagam in Udaipur, in which a large number of devotees from Rajasthan and Gujarat including Barmer district gathered. This divine Sant Samagam was organized under the holy patronage of the most revered Satguru Mata Sudiksha Ji Maharaj and the most respectable

Nirankari Rajpita Ramit Ji, bringing the message of spirituality, love and universal brotherhood.

In her inspirational discourses, Satguru Mata Sudiksha Ji Maharaj taught the congregation to adopt the path of self-realization. She said that when ego and discrimination are eradicated from life and the inner soul is illuminated by the light of God, then life becomes natural and simple. We can

achieve true happiness only by adopting the spirit of forgiveness, love and service.

Rajpita Ramit Ji, while sharing his views, called for spreading the message of Satguru to everyone. He said that Satguru teaches the lesson of love and dedication, and only when we break the walls of jealousy and hatred and adopt the feeling of love, can we experience true spirituality.

The sweet presentation



of Bhajans and poems in the Samagam drenched the devotees in the spiritual flow. For the success of this event, Langar, medical facility, parking and other arrangements were conducted smoothly, in which the local administration also extended full cooperation. During the Nirankari Samagam, the Nirankari Exhibition also remained the main attraction.

Before this divine event, a

three-day 'Nirankari Youth Symposium' was also organized, in which the youth were inspired to connect with spirituality and positive energy. In this special session, sports, cultural programs and brainstorming based on six elements gave a new direction to the youth.

On the closing day, Maharaj Kumar Laxyaraj Singh Mewar of Udaipur also welcomed Satguru Mata Sudik-

sha Ji Maharaj and received her blessings.

This gathering was not only a spiritual meeting but also a divine union imbued with the spirit of service, dedication and love, which filled every heart with joy and spiritual peace.

With the blessings of Satguru, the devotees took full advantage of this precious occasion and got inspired to make life simple and meaningful.

Kalka MLA Shakti Rani Sharma visits Kamdhenu Gaushala in Pinjore, inspects CBG plant

Kalka MLA Shakti Rani Sharma visited Kamdhenu Gaushala in Pinjore to inspect the installation of a Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) plant.

YASHIKA SAINI
PANCHKULA

Kalka MLA Shakti Rani Sharma visited Kamdhenu Gaushala Seva Sadan in Pinjore, on Monday, and inspected the ongoing installation of a Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) plant.

Upon her arrival at the gaushala, MLA Shakti Rani Sharma was welcomed by the officials of the organization. Speaking on the occasion, she praised the excellent facilities being provided for cattle at the gaushala and assured her full support for its development.

She emphasized that this gaushala would serve as a model for others. She also appreciated the production activities at the gaushala, where cow dung is being utilized efficiently without any wastage. The MLA commended the efforts of the gaushala and encouraged other similar institutions to undertake such projects. She also expressed her gratitude to Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini for providing financial

MLA Shakti Rani Sharma inspects CBG plant at Kamdhenu Gaushala



- Kalka MLA Shakti Rani Sharma visited Kamdhenu Gaushala Seva Sadan in Pinjore on Monday.
- She inspected the installation of the Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) plant at the gaushala.
- MLA praised the cattle facilities and efficient use of cow dung at the gaushala.
- She acknowledged Haryana CM's support and announced upcoming developments like a cremation machine and cow shed.
- The CBG plant is being set up in collaboration with "Jeena Seekho" and will soon be inaugurated.

assistance to the gaushala.

Recently, MLA Shakti Rani Sharma, along with officials from Kamdhenu Gaushala, met the Chief

Minister regarding the inauguration of the CBG plant. Following the CM's directives, she inspected the plant today and reviewed

the products being manufactured under the project.

Providing more details, Kamdhenu Gaushala Seva Sadan President Navraj

Rai Dheer stated that CM Nayab Singh Saini had accepted their request and would soon inaugurate the CBG plant. Additionally, he would lay the foundation stone for a cremation machine for deceased cattle and a shed for 300 cows. The CBG plant is being set up in collaboration between Kamdhenu Gaushala Seva Sadan and the organization "Jeena Seekho." On this occasion, the gaushala officials expressed their gratitude to MLA Shakti Rani Sharma.

Also present at the event was Ranjeet Jalaun, Deputy Director of the Animal Husbandry Department, who also appreciated the gaushala's efforts.

Other dignitaries present included Gaushala President Navraj Rai Dheer, Alok Sharma, Bharat Bhushan Bansal, Rajendra Anand, Rohit Singla, Ashwani Mittal, Ashok Arora, Naresh Singla, Vikas Goyal, PK Goyal, Ravi Kumar from Jeena Seekho, and senior officials from the collaborating company.

SDM Derabassi lauds token system for registrations at Zirakpur Sub Tehsil

MAJOR ALI
ZIRAKPUR

More than 100 registrations take place daily in Sub Tehsil Zirakpur. Due to which people had to wait till evening. But now seeing the problems of the people, a token system has been started by the Deputy Tehsildar of Sub Tehsil, Ramandeep Singh. Due to which people are getting a lot of benefit and people are also breathing a sigh of relief. Let us tell you that due to high property business in the city, the number of registrations is also quite high and people used to wait till seven or eight o'clock to get the registration done. There was also a problem in it that some people with recommendations used to come later and get the registration done first and then leave. At the same time, families with children and the elderly used to face a



SDM Derabassi's tour to Sub Tehsil Zirakpur

lot of problems. To overcome this, a new initiative has been started by starting the token system. People who come to get the registration done are given tokens accordingly, so people take the token and sit comfortably in the park and when their number comes, they get their work done and go away. This process has been going on in Sub Tehsil Zirakpur for the last one week. Due to which people have benefited a lot. Earlier, many times people used to fight to get the registry done first. But since last one week,

people are very happy with the token system and are also thanking the staff of Sub Tehsil Zirakpur. After hearing about this work, SDM Dera Amit Gupta also reached the tehsil on Monday to visit the sub tehsil and inspected the work going on in the sub tehsil for about one and a half hours and talked to the people about this and also took suggestions from the people to make it better. During this, SDM Dera Bassi also praised the token system running in the sub tehsil and appealed to other tehsils to adopt it.

Arijit Singh concert in Panchkula sparks chaos, lawsuit filed against organizers

YASHIKA SAINI
PANCHKULA

The much-anticipated Arijit Singh concert at Shalimar Grounds, Sector-5, turned into a logistical nightmare for many residents, raising concerns about mismanagement and public inconvenience. While thousands were mesmerized by the Bollywood singer's performance, several attendees and locals criticized the event's poor planning, lack of coordination, and noise disturbances.

It was learnt that many residents were unaware of the concert until a day before, only realizing its impact when they encountered unexpected police nakas and roadblocks. The concert, which ran from 7 PM to 11 PM, caused significant noise pollution, particularly affecting senior citizens living near the venue.

One of the major grievances was the absence of proper

parking arrangements. With over 15,000 attendees, roads were clogged with illegally parked vehicles. Meena, a resident of Sector-9, said "I was out walking my dog and saw youngsters parking on footpaths and showroom spaces. With roadblocks near Sector-8, people left their cars on main roads, worsening traffic."

While many attendees enjoyed the concert, some felt it fell short of expectations. Anmol, a resident of Sector-10, remarked, "We love Arijit, but we have attended better concerts. This one did not live up to the hype."

Following the event's chaotic execution, a local resident, filed a civil lawsuit against the concert organizers, Tarish Entertainment Pvt. Ltd., along with district authorities and local police, alleging negligence in managing public safety and city infrastructure.

MLA Randhawa lays foundation for development works in Derabassi villages

MAJOR ALI
DERABASSI

On Monday, MLA Kuljit Singh Randhawa took an important step towards the development of various villages of Block Derabassi. He laid the foundation stone of the works to be started in the villages under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). Under this, sewage disposal drinking water pipeline in village Sundara at a cost of 15 lakhs, road construction in Haripur Hindua at a cost of Rs 34 lakh 34 thousand, playground in village Bhagsi at a cost of 13 lakh 35 thousand, construction of cremation ground road in village Barana at a cost of 9 lakh 84 thousand, road construction in village Khelhan and village at a cost of 9 lakh 58 thousand and construction of community center in Rajapur at a cost of 15 lakhs are included. The purpose of these works costing about Rs 1 crore is to improve the living standards of the villagers by providing infrastructure and employment. MNREGA is a major program of the Government of India which guarantees 100



MLA Randhawa inaugurating the work started in the villages of Derabassi block

days of wage employment to rural families. Its aim is to create sustainable livelihood opportunities and strengthen the rural economy. Under this program, various works like construction of roads, water conservation and irrigation projects are carried out in rural areas.

The commencement of these works in the villages of Derabassi block will not only provide employment to the villagers but will also improve their standard of living. MLA Kuljit Singh Randhawa, while addressing the villagers, emphasized the importance of MNREGA in the development of rural areas.

He said, "MGNREGA works will not only provide employment to the villagers but will also contribute to the overall development of the villages. It is our responsibility to ensure that

these works are completed on time and with the highest quality standards." He also appealed to the villagers to actively participate in the works and make the most of this opportunity. The foundation stone laying ceremony was attended by Sarpanch Sundaran Paramjit Kaur, Sarpanch Smt. Mamta Haripur Hindu, Sarpanch Satwinder Singh Badana, Sarpanch Sanjeev Kumar Khelan, Sarpanch Smt. Jyoti Sharma, government officials, village leaders and members of the local community.

The event was celebrated with hope and enthusiasm for a better future for the villagers. The efforts of MLA Kuljit Singh Randhawa for the betterment of these villages are commendable and will definitely bring positive changes in the lives of the villagers.

Fire near Krishna temple destroys house and shops in Main Market

MAJOR ALI
DERABASSI

In a fire that broke out in a house and shops near the Krishna temple in the main market of Derabassi in the morning, the goods kept in four rooms and two shops were completely burnt to ashes. The flames of the fire also damaged three shops on the side and in front. The fire could be controlled after about two and a half hours of effort by four fire brigade vehicles and one QRV. The cause of the fire is said to be a short circuit in the electric wires.

According to the information, the incident took place at around 6:00 am in Rakesh Achint's house which has a total of 6 rooms and a lobby along with two shops and an ancient temple of Radha Krishna. On receiving the information, the landlord Rakesh Achint informed the fire brigade at around 7 am. The big fire brigade could reach only till Lucky



Jeans shop. Due to the narrow streets around, efforts to control the fire continued by taking pipes from there. Later, a small vehicle was arranged from Zirakpur. Water cannons and foam were also used from both sides. Rakesh Achint's wife Shashi runs a shop called RS Gift of jewelry and cosmetic items. The family goes to their new house at night. The fittings of the empty shop including the gift shop and the wooden counter

were destroyed. There are two stores behind both the shops in which a lot of goods were lying, which also got destroyed. The tenant family came out in time with their small child. Rakesh Achint said that there was a short circuit somewhere in the store itself due to which the fire spread. He said that the loss is more than 12 lakhs. The flames that came out towards the market damaged the shops in front and side.

State Department seals illegal shops operating in theatre

MANJEET SAHDEV
CHANDIGARH

The Chandigarh State Department has taken swift action against illegal shops operating inside Neelam Cinema, sealing them after receiving numerous complaints. These shops had been running for years, flouting the regulations that only permit a canteen to operate within the theater. The illegal businesses, operating a stone's throw away from the DC office in the heart of the city, were charging exorbitant rent, with reports claiming lakhs of rupees being collected.

The administration's re-



sponse came after the issue was exposed by "Chandigarh Dinbhar," prompting immediate action. The SDO of the Building Branch, Rakesh, confirmed that notices have been issued to Neelam Theatre, and the matter is now under investigation by the Centre SDM. This marks a significant crackdown on violations that had been ongoing

for an extended period.

The shops inside Neelam Theatre were operating commercially, which is in direct violation of the theater's permitted use. Despite the law stipulating that only a canteen is allowed, these shops had been running businesses illegally. This situation persisted unchecked, raising questions about why the administration failed to act sooner. Investigations are now underway, and it is expected that those responsible will be revealed in due course.

The sealing of these illegal shops marks a significant move by the administration to enforce rules and curb such

violations. However, the key question remains: how did such illegal activities continue for so long, and who was behind them? The administration is under scrutiny, and further investigations are expected to uncover more details, potentially implicating key figures in the illegal rental operations.

This decisive action underscores the importance of maintaining order and following legal procedures, particularly in the heart of Chandigarh. It also serves as a reminder of the need for greater vigilance in identifying and addressing illegal activities.

Lecture on 'Economics of Trade Agreements' organised at SD College

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

A special lecture on the topic "Economics of Trade Agreements" was organized by the Post Graduate Economics and Entrepreneurship Department of Goswami Ganesh Dutt Sanatan Dharma College, Sector-32. Dr. Rahul Arora, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics and Finance, BITS, Pilani, participated as the keynote speaker. College Principal Dr. Ajay Sharma, Registrar and Head of Department Dr.

Vivek Sharma, Dean Arts Ashutosh Sharma welcomed the keynote speaker by giving him a plant.

Principal Dr. Ajay Sharma welcomed Dr. Rahul Arora and emphasized how trade agreements shape the world by affecting economic growth, market access and regulatory frameworks, as well as pose challenges for sustainability and equity. He also highlighted the contradictions between global needs and aspirations. Dr. Arora provided valuable insights on the economic implications of trade agree-

ments, their benefits and costs to member countries, and strategies to maximize welfare through trade integration policies. During his lecture, Dr. Rahul Arora discussed the economics of international trade agreements, and emphasized how nations can leverage trade policies for economic growth.

He highlighted the conditions necessary for enhancing welfare under trade integration policies and explained the impact of market access, tariff reductions and investment flows on partner econo-

mies. Apart from theoretical insights, Dr Arora introduced the students to various research areas in Quantitative Analysis of International Trade. He provided practical training using online simulation tools, enabling students to apply trade theories and analyse real-world trade scenarios practically. Speaking about the event, Dr Vivek Sharma said that Prof. Rahul Arora's lecture provided a comprehensive understanding of trade agreements and their role in shaping global economies.

Timely identification is essential to defeat cancer: Dr. Rajan Sahu

TDG NETWORK
PANCHKULA

Paras Health Panchkula organised a special cancer awareness and screening camp under its cancer awareness campaign Umeed Ke Sitare. More than 200 people attended the camp where they were provided with free consultation, mammography, discounted PSA test and other

essential health checkups. The initiative was taken to promote early detection and prevention of cancer, which will enable timely treatment of patients. Commissioner of Police, Rakesh Kumar Arya (IPS) also attended the event and stressed on the need for health awareness.

In the camp, Dr. Rajan Sahu (Associate Director, Surgical Oncology) and Dr.

Chitresh Agarwal (Senior Consultant, Medical Oncology) discussed measures for early detection and prevention of cancer. Cancer cases are increasing continuously in India. Breast cancer and cervical cancer are spreading rapidly among women, while cases of oral and lung cancer are also increasing in men and women due to smoking and tobacco consumption.



It is unfortunate that due to social fear and lack of information, patients reach the doctor late, which makes treatment difficult. This danger can be prevented only through timely examination and awareness. Dr. Rajan Sahu said that self-examination, regular mammography and timely treatment are necessary for early detection of breast cancer. Women should be-

come aware and give priority to cancer screening. Dr. Chitresh Agarwal said that oral and lung cancer is increasing due to tobacco and smoking. Timely examination can make cancer treatment simple. The most inspiring glimpse of this event was the stories of patients who have won the battle against cancer, who shared their journey of struggle and hope.

A DIP INTO ANTIQUITY



ANJALI KALIA

Thick walls, nearly 1.5 feet wide, bear the weight of time. The scent of old paint, incense, and the fervent chants of the chaupai from the Ram-charitmanas drift toward my ears, warming my soul like the sun's rays on a cold winter morning. Their lyrical symmetry invokes a profound sense of bhakti—devotion and reverence.

As I ascend the steep steps of Varanasi's ghats, the sheer antiquity of this land seeps into my consciousness. These ramparts hold centuries of history—the Ram Ram Ram inscribed in unwavering devotion, vermillion-smeared alcoves and doors, and the vast expanse of Maa Ganga stretching beyond the windows, transport me to a simpler, purer time.

I envision Tulsidas ji, seated in deep dhyān, composing his timeless ver-

sion of the Ramayan, his unwavering devotion to Hanuman ji coming alive before my eyes. What must his dincharya—his daily routine—have been like? Waking to the chants of seers praying at the ghats, bathing in the holy waters, offering oblations to Surya Dev, and then settling down to write after a simple meal. It must have all happened here.

A small Hanuman ji temple, where Tulsidas ji's wooden khadau and a piece of his boat are preserved, stands as a testament to his faith. On another floor, his gaddi—a humble seat in a quiet corner—faces a shrine adorned with the idols of Shri Ram, Sita Mata, and Lakshman ji. The setting is perfect for both dhyān and creativity.

Standing in these intimate spaces, I traverse five centuries in mere moments. Tulsidas ji feels alive; his presence is tangible giving me a message that life is ephemeral and fleeting—our only chance to leave a mark that will outlive us.

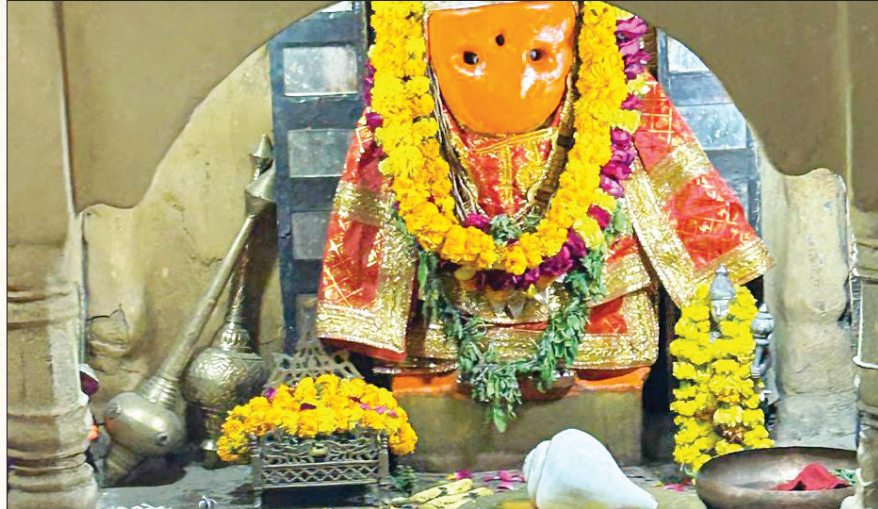
Outside, on the ghats, life unfolds. Tourists float past in boats, gawking at the sacred and the mundane. But amidst this transient spectacle, Maa Ganga remains—eternal, unyielding.

She is satya, the truth. She is Sanatan Dharma itself—an unbroken way of life, rooted in the precise laws of nature and the profound connection between humanity and the divine. A deep sense of gratitude swells within me—pride and humility intertwining as I reflect on the privilege of being born in this great land -- Bharat.

Earlier in the day, we took the customary boat ride, where we witnessed an amusing sight—a group of visitors from Siberia relishing namkeen—savoury Indian snacks—offered by eager tourists. Only, these 'visitors' were migratory seagulls! With each handful of spicy sevaiyya tossed into the water, they swooped down eagerly. Why only McDonald's or Domino's? Even the seagulls adapt to Indian flavours in India!

Our next stop was the Kumbh city at Prayagraj—a vast expanse of tents and well-lit streets. Though this was my second visit, the experience felt entirely new. This time, we were 'glamping'—staying in a luxurious Maharaja tent on the banks of the Sangam, the sacred confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and the invisible Saraswati.

The customary snan, bath was the highlight of



the journey. Our boatman, young yet wise, greeted us with enthusiasm, agreeing to row us to the confluence. He seamlessly wove in the famous Shri Ram-Kewat Samvaad, recalling the boatman who ferried Shri Ram across the river and sought a divine promise in return—to be guided across the river of existence. In that moment, our boatman became part of the unbroken cultural lineage of Bharat—his words carrying echoes of ancient wisdom.

As we drifted toward the Sangam, my sister hesitantly asked if the 'water' was clean. Offended, he corrected her—"Not water, amrit!" He scooped up a handful and splashed it over himself, his reverence

palpable. This is the greatness of our culture—where divinity infuses every element of existence.

The contrast between Maa Ganga and Maa Yamuna was striking, their meeting point clearly visible. They merged eagerly, becoming one—a life-giving force, unquestionable in its divinity.

With a deep sense of surrender, I took the sacred three dips. The air resounded with chants of Har Har Gange. Something within me shifted—an inexplicable lightness, a transformation of consciousness. These are not mere rituals; they are conduits to profound spirituality.

As my mentor, Meena Om ji, often says—nothing is without purpose. The body

is purified by Ganga, the mind by Yamuna, and the soul by Saraswati. This sacred confluence represents creation, preservation, and dissolution—Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh; and the three gunas of rajas, tamas, and sattva. Only when we transcend these aspects do we experience true divinity.

Thus, the Triveni Sangam is more than a confluence of rivers—it is the confluence of life's essence, guiding us toward moksha, ultimate liberation.

Anjali Kalia is a design professional with 30 years of experience and a trustee of Pranam Foundation, a movement based on practical spirituality and sanatan, eternal principles of truth love karm - action and light.

Depression & your birthdate: Numerology's path to healing & mental peace



JYOTSNA G BANSAL

Life moves fast, and depression often sneaks in without warning. The pressure to succeed, emotional setbacks, constant comparisons, money problems, unstable relationships, unfulfilled dreams can lead to stress, anxiety and a lingering sense of emptiness.

Depression affects individuals differently. It may appear as persistent fatigue, mood swings, frustration or a loss of interest in things we once enjoyed. Sometimes, it feels like overthinking, self-doubt, exhaustion, feeling unappreciated, overwhelmed or disconnected from our true selves. Even simple tasks start feeling hard. Some people struggle with ego battles, emotional instability, while others face aggressive mood swings. We often ignore these signs, thinking it will pass, but over time, it drains energy

and joy.

The key is to recognize the cause—whether emotional, mental or life-related. What we often don't realize is that our birthdate holds clues to how we experience and react to depression. Each number (1-9) carries unique personality trait, emotional pattern which influences how we handle stress, depression.

Self-awareness is the first step to breaking-free from depression and living a balanced, happy life. Recognizing our number-based tendencies helps us understand and find the right path to healing.

With small lifestyle changes, self-awareness and holistic remedies, we can break free from depression. Let's understand the relation of our birthdate & related depression types.

BIRTH NUMBER-1 (BORN ON 1, 10, 19, 28) EGO-BASED DEPRESSION

They feel depressed when their leadership or authority is challenged.

Symptoms: frustration, irritability, arrogance, insomnia, headaches due to overthinking, self-doubt, withdrawal due to loss of power.

Holistic Measures:

- Practice humility and acceptance; let go of the need for control.
- Set realistic goals, break them into smaller achievements.
- Surya-Namaskar daily to balance ego and vitality.
- Sunlight Therapy – Spend time in morning sunlight to enhance mood.

BIRTH NUMBER-2 (BORN ON 2, 11, 20, 29) EMOTIONAL DEPRESSION

Highly sensitive, they experience depression due to emotional setbacks or betrayals.

Symptoms: excessive crying, mood swings, overthinking, struggle with self-worth, insomnia, digestive issues, social withdrawal.

Holistic Measures:

- Express emotions through journaling, talking to a trusted friend.
- Avoid overindulging in nostalgia; practice mindfulness to stay present.
- Need to overcome self-doubt and mood swings to avoid excessive energy drain.
- Moon-Gazing for emotional balance.
- Bathing in saltwater or visiting water bodies for calmness.

BIRTH NUMBER-3 (BORN ON 3, 12, 21, 30) EXISTENTIAL DEPRESSION

They feel depressed when their knowledge, wisdom or guidance is ignored.

Symptoms: overanalysis, lack of purpose, weight fluctuations, liver-related issues due to stress, self-doubt, loss of enthusiasm.

Holistic Measures:

- Engage in learning new skills or expanding knowledge to regain motivation.
- Mantra Chanting (Om Guruvē Namah) to strengthen wisdom and clarity.
- Sandalwood and Yellow Color Therapy for mental stability.
- Teaching to channel wisdom constructively. Must curb arrogance.

BIRTH NUMBER-4 (BORN ON 4, 13, 22, 31) ANXIETY-DRIVEN DEPRESSION

They may feel depressed, isolated or misunderstood due to their unconventional thoughts, from unexpected changes or failures despite hard work. Symptoms: paranoia, nervous system disorders, migraines, digestive problems, restlessness, obsessive thinking.

Holistic Measures:

- Focus on structured planning and setting small, achievable goals.
- Need to manage unpredictability, reduce overthinking by logic-based decision-making.
- Grounding Techniques—walking barefoot on grass.
- Breathwork (Pranayama)

BIRTH NUMBER-5 (BORN ON 5, 14, 23) BURNOUT DEPRESSION

Depression stems from mental exhaustion due to overstimulation, constant change.

Symptoms: lack of focus, indecisiveness, overwhelmed, prone to nervous breakdowns, skin issues, digestive irregularities, lose motivation suddenly, sudden withdrawal.

Holistic Measures:

- Reduce multitasking, focus on one thing at a time.
- Need mindfulness and structured routines with breaks to maintain mental balance
- Set designated "technology-free" hours to avoid mental exhaustion.
- Mudra Therapy to enhance mental clarity.

BIRTH NUMBER-6

(BORN ON 6, 15, 24) RELATIONSHIP-BASED DEPRESSION

Heartbreak, failed relationships or a lack of appreciation can be the reasons for Depression. Symptoms: self-pity, emotional eating, hormonal imbalances, diabetes, skin disorders, overindulgence.

Holistic Measures:

- Practice self-love, creative expression. Avoid seeking external validation, overindulgence.
- Focus on creativity, artistic expression to release emotional energy like Dance-Music.
- Heart Chakra Healing through rose quartz, green foods.

BIRTH NUMBER-7 (BORN ON 7, 16, 25) SPIRITUAL DEPRESSION

They may feel lost in life's purpose, experiencing a strong sense of loneliness, disconnection from reality.

Symptoms: extreme introversion, sleep disorders, hallucinations, autoimmune issues, irritability, detachment, lack of motivation.

Holistic Measures:

- Engage in real-world activities to avoid excessive detachment and isolation.

- Balance intuition with logical thinking to prevent delusions.
- Meditation and deep visualization.

BIRTH NUMBER-8 (BORN ON 8, 17, 26) CHRONIC DEPRESSION

Due to prolonged struggles, failures and burdens of responsibility, they feel stuck in life, often experiencing guilt, shame, a fear of loss.

Symptoms: hopelessness, arthritis, joint pains, slow recovery from illnesses, fatigue, a sense of isolation.

Holistic Measures:

- Develop patience, faith and long-term vision instead of expecting quick results.
- Let go of past regrets, focus on present efforts.
- Saturn Remedies (lighting mustard oil lamp on Saturdays).
- Disciplined Yoga Practice

BIRTH NUMBER-9 (BORN ON 9, 18, 27) AGGRESSIVE DEPRESSION

Depression manifests as anger, frustration and violent outbursts.

Symptoms: impulsive reactions, feeling

trapped, experiencing restlessness, a need to escape, blood pressure issues, inflammatory diseases, accidents, reckless behavior, difficulty controlling emotions.

Holistic Measures:

- Channel energy into constructive physical activities. Martial arts, jogging or high-energy sports
- Learn anger-management techniques, patience-building practices.
- Cooling Diet – Coconut water, cooling herbs, sattvic foods.
- Avoid excess red Color to balance aggression.

Disclaimer: This information is for general wellness purposes & information only. Always consider personalized medical advice for health-related decisions. Please consult a medical professional before starting any health regimen. Information & the views expressed in this article reflect the author's personal understanding, learning and interpretation.

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THE THIEF

MYSTIC MUSING

RAJESSH M. IYER



Bankei Yotaku's monastery would usually be quiet. However, that day, there were hushed talks all around, breaking the silence. Young monks formed groups to discuss animatedly and in expectation of how their master would respond to the latest development. The previous night, one of the new entrants into the monastery had been caught stealing. Bankei heard the accusation and only said 'Okay' before asking the disciples to start meditating. It was odd! How could the master ignore a crime being committed in his monastery? Since no one came forward to question the master, the matter was soon forgotten. But that wasn't the end.

Next month, there was another burglary and this time too it was the

same thief. Bankei heard the entire sequence of events that transpired and how the thief was caught red-handed. However, much to everyone's shock, he nodded his head thoughtfully and said, 'Okay' before sitting down for meditation. It was too much for the disciples. They were upset more by the master's inaction than by the thief's action. Confronting Bankei, they demanded to know why he didn't take action, which he must, since he was aware of the culprit.

Bankei was thoughtful for a moment, before he spoke, 'You're right. I must take action. Okay, all of you may

leave the monastery immediately,' and pointing towards the thief, he added, 'while you remain.' Everyone was flummoxed. It was insane! It made no sense. The other disciples demanded to know what the master was up to. Bankei explained, 'Since you're aware of what's right and wrong, there's no point of being in the monastery. This poor man is yet to understand this concept. It's imperative that he stays behind, so I can teach him.'

Bankei's decision points of compassion towards those who err. Likewise, it also speaks of how life has different plans for those who are filled with hu-

bris that they already know, show no compassion and judge without analysing the pros and cons.

When life eventually teaches them a lesson, it invariably turns out to be severe. So to let life guide us seamlessly, we must keep the doors of our hearts and minds open. And for that, all kinds of pretence must be dropped, accept that we don't know yet, absorb all the facts and carefully analyse them with a compassionate heart. We must come to a conclusion only after knowing the how, when, where and why of any matter. Then life enters in all its splendour.

Life teaches lessons in a hard way to those who are filled with hubris that they already know, show no compassion and judge without analysing the pros and cons. So to let life guide us seamlessly, we must keep the doors of our hearts and mind open.

BEYOND THE USUAL FLU: WHY PREVENTION MATTERS

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The pandemic etched images of chapped hands and isolated homes into our collective memory. But as the world adapts, new challenges arise. While the flu often feels like a common ailment, the emergence of viral strains that mimic its symptoms has increased post-pandemic, bringing fresh concerns. Studies from the National Institute of Health reveal that the long-term psychological and social impacts of the pandemic continue to cast a shadow, leaving behind lingering fear and unease. Prevention remains our strongest ally. Early recognition of symptoms, maintaining hygiene, and vaccination can significantly reduce risks. In a world where the

ordinary flu could mask extraordinary threats, staying prepared is key to safeguarding health. Recognizing Flu Symptoms: What You Should Know Flu symptoms can vary, but early recognition is key to managing the condition effectively and preventing further spread. Here's what to look for:

- Symptoms in Young Children - Look for fever, runny nose, and cough. Severe symptoms like wheezing or difficulty breathing may require medical attention.
- Impact on Healthy Adults - Expect mild cold-like symptoms—sore throat, fatigue, and nasal congestion. While most recover quickly, older adults and those with underlying conditions may face more severe symptoms.



KEEP SAFE AND HEALTHY DURING FLU SEASON

Flu season brings an increased risk of infections as viruses spread through respiratory droplets or contaminated surfaces. Close contact with infected individuals further heightens this risk. Taking proactive measures can significantly reduce transmission and keep you healthy. Good hygiene and a strong immune system are your best defenses. A healthy body is better equipped to fight infections. Follow these essential steps to stay protected:

- Maintain proper hand hygiene. Regularly wash your hands with soap or handwash to minimize the spread of germs. Using a handwash like Savlon Deep Clean Handwash, formu-

lated to effectively eliminate 99.9% of germs* and is also made of 90% natural origin content*. The handwash is enriched with orange essence and has an easy wash off formula to remove tough dirt & grime.

- Avoid close contact with sick individuals and maintain social distancing.
- Strengthen your immune system with a balanced diet and regular exercise.
- Prioritize prevention to minimize the impact of flu season on your health and well-being.

This season, regular handwashing can be a helpful step in maintaining overall hygiene and is the first step to prevent flus and infections.

(*Basis lab study on sample microbes. Washes away germs. #Basis applicable standards.)

NOURISHING MUSCULOSKELETAL HEALTH: THE POWER OF FOODS AND NUTRACEUTICALS

TDG NETWORK

Maintaining musculoskeletal health becomes essential as we age to preserve mobility, balance, and overall quality of life. The aging process can lead to a decline in bone density and muscle strength, making it essential to focus on nutrition. Research has shown that specific foods and nutraceuticals play a significant role in supporting bone and muscle health, particularly for older adults, helping them stay active and reduce the risk of falls and fractures. Several micronutrients are essential for maintaining bone density, muscle strength, and physical function:

- **Calcium:** Adequate calcium intake helps prevent osteoporosis, a condition characterized by weak and brittle bones. Dairy products, leafy greens, and fortified foods are sources of calcium.
- **Vitamin D:** Essential for calcium absorption, vitamin D supports bone density and reduces fracture risk. It can be obtained from fatty fish, egg yolks, and fortified foods. Supplementation may be necessary for those at risk of deficiency.
- **Magnesium:** Magnesium contributes to bone structure and muscle function. It helps regulate calcium levels and aids muscle repair. Sources include nuts, seeds, whole grains, and leafy vegetables.
- **Omega-3 Fatty Acids:** These anti-inflammatory fats, found in fish, flaxseeds, and walnuts, are beneficial for joint health, especially for osteoarthritis. Omega-3s can reduce inflammation and support overall musculoskeletal function.

Nutraceuticals, concen-



The aging process can lead to a decline in bone density and muscle strength, making it essential to focus on nutrition.

trated bioactive compounds derived from food, provide higher doses of essential nutrients.

- **Vitamin K2:** Supplementation has been shown to enhance bone health, particularly in postmenopausal women, by improving bone mineral density.
- **Collagen Peptides:** These supplements may help improve joint health and reduce the symptoms of osteoarthritis.
- **Curcumin:** Known for its anti-inflammatory properties, curcumin from turmeric can help reduce joint pain and inflammation.
- **Glucosamine and Chondroitin:** These compounds are often used in combination to support cartilage

health and alleviate osteoarthritis symptoms. Functional foods provide additional health benefits beyond basic nutrition. For musculoskeletal health, consider adding this to your diet:

- **Bone Broth:** Rich in collagen, gelatin, and amino acids, bone broth supports joint and bone health.
- **Leafy Greens:** High in calcium and magnesium, greens like kale and spinach help support bone health.
- **Fortified Foods:** Many foods are now fortified with calcium, vitamin D, and omega-3s, providing an easy way to meet daily requirements.

Incorporating specific foods and nutraceuticals into your diet is essential for maintaining musculoskeletal health, especially as we age. A balanced intake of nutrients like calcium, vitamin D, magnesium, omega-3s, and vitamin K2 can support bone and muscle function, improving overall well-being. Before adding new supplements to your regimen, always consult with a healthcare professional to ensure safety and efficacy.



Childhood cancer: A growing concern - What you need to know



DR INTEZAR MEHDI

Childhood cancer is a topic that many of us may shy away from, but it's an issue that continues to grow and affect families worldwide. While cancer is often associated with older adults, children are not immune to this life-altering disease. Early detection and understanding the signs can make a difference in outcomes. As we approach International Childhood Cancer Day on February 15, it serves as a reminder to raise awareness, support research, and stand in solidarity with families impacted by childhood cancer. Let's take a closer look at the key facts about childhood cancer, its common types, and how you can help raise awareness.

WHAT IS CHILDHOOD CANCER? Childhood cancer refers to cancers that occur in children under the age of 18. It is different from cancers typically seen in adults, and it requires specialized treatment due to the child's developing body. While childhood cancer remains rare compared to adult cancers, the numbers are growing steadily.

COMMON TYPES OF CHILDHOOD CANCERS There are several types of childhood cancers, but the most common include:

1. **Leukemia:** Leukemia, a cancer of the blood and bone marrow, is the most prevalent form of childhood cancer. It accounts for about 30% of all childhood cancer diagnoses. The two main types are acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) and acute myeloid leukemia (AML).
2. **Brain and Spinal Cord Tumors:** These tumors are the second most common type of childhood cancer. They affect the brain and spinal cord and can cause symptoms like headaches, nausea, vomiting, seizures, visual problems and changes in coordination.
3. **Lymphomas:** Lymphomas affect the lymphatic system and can be classified as either Hodgkin lymphoma or non-Hodgkin lymphoma.
4. **Neuroblastoma:** This cancer develops in nerve tissue and often affects children under the age of 5. It can occur in the adrenal glands, neck, chest, abdomen, or pelvis.
5. **Wilms Tumor:** A type of kid-



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ney cancer that primarily affects children under the age of 5, Wilms tumor is treatable with a good prognosis if caught early.

6. **Bone Tumors:** Bone tumors, such as osteosarcoma and Ewing's sarcoma, primarily affect children and adolescents. These tumors typically cause pain, swelling, and sometimes fractures in the affected bone, often in the arms, legs, or pelvis.

SYMPTOMS TO WATCH OUT FOR Early detection is key to improving survival rates in childhood cancer. While many symptoms can be associated with other illnesses, it's important to be aware of the signs and seek medical advice if you notice anything unusual. Some common warning signs include:

- Unexplained weight loss or loss of appetite
- Persistent pain, especially bone or joint pain
- Fatigue and weakness
- Headaches, often accompanied by vomiting
- Swelling or lumps in the abdomen, neck, or elsewhere
- Frequent infections or fevers
- Changes in behavior, balance, or coordination

CAN CHILDHOOD CANCER BE PREVENTED? While the exact causes of childhood cancer are not always clear,



there are some steps that can potentially reduce the risk. Unfortunately, many childhood cancers cannot be prevented because they are often caused by genetic mutations or unknown environmental factors. However, there are ways to reduce certain risks. For example, avoiding exposure to harmful chemicals, radiation, and second-hand smoke during pregnancy can help reduce the risk of some cancers in children. Ensuring a healthy pregnancy with proper prenatal care and nutrition can also be important. Additionally, encouraging healthy habits in children, such as a balanced diet, regular exercise, and avoiding known carcinogens, may have long-term health benefits. Early screening and regular check-ups are essential for detecting any potential issues as early as possible.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY DIAGNOSIS While childhood cancer can be frightening, advancements in treatment have significantly im-

proved the survival rate for many childhood cancers. According to the American Cancer Society, the overall survival rate for childhood cancer has increased to over 80%. Early diagnosis and treatment are critical for improving outcomes, so parents and caregivers must stay informed and proactive. Childhood cancer is undoubtedly a serious issue, but it's one that we can address by staying informed and supporting ongoing research and awareness efforts. Early diagnosis, cutting-edge treatments, and a network of dedicated individuals working together can help improve the lives of children diagnosed with cancer. Remember, knowledge is power, and by understanding the signs and advocating for childhood cancer, we can help make a difference in the lives of countless families.

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