



The Researchers'

NEWS BOX

4 Arrested For Damaging Hindu Temple, Houses In Bangladesh

Dhaka. Law enforcement agencies on Saturday arrested four people for vandalising and damaging a Hindu temple and houses and shops of the community in Sunamganj district in north Bangladesh. Police also filed a case against 12 named persons and 150-170 unidentified people.

Alim Hossain, 19, Sultan Ahmed Raju, 20, Imran Hossain, 31, and Shajahan Hossain, 20, were arrested for vandalism in the Doarabazar area of Sunamganj district earlier this month, a press release from the Chief Adviser's press wing here.

"On December 3, a Facebook post by Akash Das, a resident of the Sunamganj district, sparked tensions in the district. Even though he deleted the post, screenshots spread widely, leading to violence in the area," state-run news agency Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) said quoting the press release.

The Dhaka Tribune newspaper said although the post was deleted, its screenshots were circulated, sparking tension among locals. Police detained Das on the same day, but a group of people attempted to snatch him from police custody. "For safety reasons, Das was transferred to the Sadar Police Station instead of being kept in Doarabazar," it said.

The newspaper further added that later, on the same day, enraged locals attacked and vandalised the Loknath Temple and also homes and shops belonging to the Hindu community. The situation was brought under control with the intervention of the Superintendent of Police (SP), the District Commissioner (DC), and personnel from the army and police, it added. Police said they are conducting an in-depth investigation to identify those involved in the incident. On Saturday, the press release also said that the police identified the accused involved in the incident and filed a case against 12 named persons and 150-170 unidentified people, the BSS added. The relations between India and Bangladesh came under strain after the interim government headed by Muhammad Yunus came to power after deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina fled the country on August 5 following a student-led protest.

The relations deteriorated further in recent weeks over continued attacks on Hindus and especially after the recent arrest of Hindu monk Chinmoy Krishna Das, a former member of ISKCON Bangladesh and now, a spokesperson for the Bangladesh Sammilita Sanatani Jagran Jote organisation.

Russia Pulling Back But Not Out Of Syria After Assad's Fall: Report

World. Russia is pulling back its military from the front lines in northern Syria and from posts in the Alawite Mountains but is not leaving its two main bases in the country after the fall of President Bashar al-Assad, four Syrian officials told Reuters.

The ousting of Assad, who along with his late father, former President Hafez al-Assad, had forged a close alliance with Moscow, has thrown the future of Russia's bases - the Hmeimim airbase in Latakia and the Tartous naval facility - into question. Satellite footage from Friday shows what appeared to be at least two Antonov AN-124s, among the world's largest cargo planes, at the Hmeimim base with their nose cones open, apparently preparing to load up.

At least one cargo plane flew out on Saturday for Libya, a Syrian security official stationed outside the facility said. Syrian military and security sources in contact with the Russians told Reuters that Moscow was pulling back its forces from the front lines and withdrawing some heavy equipment and senior Syrian officers. But the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the situation, said Russia was not pulling out of its two main bases and currently had no intention of doing so. Some equipment is being shipped back to Moscow as are very senior officers from Assad's military but the aim at this stage is to regroup and redeploy as dictated by developments on the ground, a senior Syrian army officer in touch with the Russian military told Reuters.

Storms coat Iowa, Nebraska in ice, spark rare Tornado alert for San Francisco

World. A severe ice storm swept across Iowa and eastern Nebraska this weekend, creating hazardous travel conditions and causing chaos across the region. The storm forced the temporary closure of Interstate 80 highway after cars and trucks started to slide off the icy roads. The icy conditions, which began Friday evening, have claimed at least one life in eastern Nebraska. A 57-year-old woman lost control of her pickup truck on Highway 30 near Arlington, colliding with an oncoming truck. The other driver suffered minor injuries, according to the Washington County Sheriff's office. "Luckily, some warmer air is moving in behind this to make it temporary," said Dave Cousins, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Davenport, Iowa. Temperatures rose on Saturday afternoon, melting the ice in many areas.

Meanwhile, California faced a rare tornado warning in San Francisco and nearby San Mateo County. The warning, issued early Saturday morning, was lifted within 20 minutes. Later that day, a tornado struck Scotts Valley, about 70 miles south of San Francisco, overturning cars, toppling trees, and damaging power lines and buildings. The city last experienced a tornado in 2005, though Meteorologist Roger Gass noted the warning system may have missed it back then.

"Based on video, photos, firsthand accounts, and radar signatures, a tornado occurred (at) 1.40 pm," confirmed the National Weather Service. Images showed vehicles overturned and significant damage to the area. Several people were injured and hospitalised, including a battalion chief with the California department of forestry and fire protection.

Malaiyaha Tamils of Sri Lanka: Shackled to a legacy of tea, toil for 200 years

NUWARA ELIYA. Sixty-three-year-old Natesan Jayaraman, in his 44 years of working in a tea plantation, has learnt that avoiding unnecessary conversations is a useful strategy that kept him away from trouble with his kanganis (supervisors) and dorais (a colonial term still used by many to refer to estate managers). It is therefore after a lot of hesitation that he started talking when TNIE met him on the way from Hatton to Nuwara Eliya in the Central Province of Sri Lanka. Jayaraman, a Malaiyaha Tamil whose ancestors were brought from India to work in tea estates, started working in a plantation when he was 18 for a daily wage of LKR 5. The daily wage for an estate worker was recently increased from LKR 1,000 to LKR 1,350 (close to Rs 400 in INR). Despite doing the same amount of work, Natesan still earns only LKR 1,000 since he has technically crossed the retirement age of 60. Even that income is on the condition that applies to all workers that they pluck at least 20 kilos of tea leaves a day, failing which the daily wage gets cut proportionately. "I have to pluck 24 kilos in

fact since the remaining four kilos are counted as commission," he said. Jayaraman, his wife, who is also a plantation worker, and two children still live in a Layam, as the "line houses" constructed since the British period for housing the workers within the estates are locally called. He and his wife are still the breadwinners since his son and daughter, who could not progress much in education with their limited opportunities, are yet to obtain regular employment. "My wife is turning 60 soon. I am worried that her daily salary will also be cut from 1,350 to 1,000," he said. The story of Jayaraman is representative of the plight of the Malaiyaha Tamils (Hill country, up-country or Indian-origin Tamils) in Sri Lanka, whose ancestors were taken as labourers from Tamil Nadu by the British 200 years ago to create tea estates in the country. The tea industry has since grown by leaps and bounds, making the country the third largest exporter of tea and thereby being a key engine of its economy. However, the life of Malaiyaha Tamils, the main foot soldiers of this industry, who are



the fourth largest ethnic group in Sri Lanka with more than a million in population, has remained largely unchanged.

Deprived of citizenship in 1948, the community had to struggle for more than half a century to secure the right, during which around half a million people were sent back to India as per the Sirimavo-Shastri Pact of 1964. Today, the community lags behind others in all socio-economic indicators. For instance, stunting among

children is 31.7% in the community compared to the national average of 17.3%. More than 50% of the over 2.2 lakh families in the estates lacked water and sanitation facilities while around 80% needed better housing, as per a report of the Ministry of Hill Country New Villages, Infrastructure and Community Development (MHCNV). Nuwara Eliya (23.9) and Badulla (28), where the majority of the Malaiyaha Tamils live, are the districts with the highest percentage of poor holds while the national average is 11.7 as per the Economic Statistics of Sri Lanka 2024 brought out by the Department of Census. Thirty-year-old Jeevan Thondaman, a fourth-generation politician from the influential Thondaman family, which has led the largest trade union cum political party - Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) - representing the community, for more than seven decades since the time of his great grandfather Savumiamoorthy Thondaman, said it wouldn't be inappropriate to say that the community is seen as the "children of a lesser god".

South Korean leaders seek calm after Yoon's impeachment

SEOUL. South Korea's opposition leader on Sunday urged the Constitutional Court to rule swiftly on a bid to remove President Yoon Suk Yeol from office, a day after parliament voted to impeach him over a short-lived attempt to impose martial law.

Yoon's powers will be suspended until the court rules on the case, either removing Yoon from office or restoring his powers. The court has up to 180 days to decide, and if he's dismissed, a national election to choose his successor must be held within 60 days. Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, the country's No. 2 official, took over presidential powers later Saturday. Han was appointed by Yoon, whose government has struggled to pass legislation in the opposition-controlled parliament.

Lee Jae-myung, the leader of the opposition Democratic Party, told reporters Sunday that a swift ruling is the only way to minimize national chaos. Lee also proposed the creation of a national council where the government and the National Assembly would work together to stabilize state affairs. He said

bipartisan cooperation is essential to navigating the political paralysis that has halted high-level diplomacy and spooked financial markets since Yoon's martial law decree.



Lee also said that the Democratic Party would not seek to impeach Han, despite some calls to do so over his alleged inaction to prevent Yoon's martial law enforcement. Lee said there was no need to introduce further political uncertainty. The Democratic Party will actively cooperate with all parties to stabilize state affairs and restore international trust," Lee said. "The National Assembly and government will work together to quickly resolve the crisis that has swept

across the Republic of Korea."

Yoon's Dec. 3 imposition of martial law, the first of its kind in more than four decades, lasted only six hours, but has caused massive political tumult, halted diplomatic activities and rattled financial markets. Yoon was forced to lift his decree after parliament unanimously voted to overturn it.

Yoon sent hundreds of troops and police officers to the parliament in an effort to stop the vote, but they withdrew after the parliament rejected Yoon's decree. No major violence occurred.

Opposition parties have accused Yoon of rebellion, and say that a president in South Korea is allowed to declare martial law only during wartime or similar emergencies and would have no right to suspend parliament's operations even in those cases.

The conservative Yoon rejects the charges and says he aimed to issue a warning to the Democratic Party, which he has called an "anti-state force" as it's used its control of parliament to impeach many top officials and hold up the government's budget bill for next year.

One week into a new Syria, rebels aim for normalcy; Syrians vow not to be silent again

DAMASCUS. At Damascus' international airport, the new head of security — one of the rebels who marched across Syria to the capital — arrived with his team. The few maintenance workers who showed up for work huddled around Maj Hamza al-Ahmed, eager to learn what will happen next. They quickly unloaded all the complaints they had been too afraid to express during the rule of President Bashar Assad, which now, inconceivably, is over. They told the bearded fighter they were denied promotions and perks in favor of pro-Assad favorites, and that bosses threatened them with prison for working too slowly. They warned of hardcore Assad supporters among airport staff, ready to return whenever the facility reopens. As Al-Ahmed tried to reassure them, Osama Najm, an engineer, announced: "This is the first time we talk." This was the first week of Syria's transformation after Assad's unexpected fall. Rebels, suddenly in charge, met a population bursting with

emotions: excitement at new freedoms; grief over years of repression; and hopes, expectations and worries about the future. Some were overwhelmed to the point of tears. The transition has been surprisingly smooth. Reports of



reprisals, revenge killings and sectarian violence have been minimal. Looting and destruction have been quickly contained, insurgent fighters disciplined. On Saturday, people went about their lives as usual in the capital, Damascus. Only a single van of fighters was seen. There are a million ways it could go wrong. The country is broken and isolated after five decades of Assad family rule. Families have been torn

apart by war, former prisoners are traumatized by the brutalities they suffered, tens of thousands of detainees remain missing. The economy is wrecked, poverty is widespread, inflation and unemployment are high. Corruption seeps through daily life.

But in this moment of flux, many are ready to feel out the way ahead. At the airport, al-Ahmed told the staffers: "The new path will have challenges, but that is why we have said Syria is for all and we all have to cooperate."

The rebels have so far said all the right things, Najm said. "But we will not be silent about anything wrong again."

Idlib comes to Damascus. At a torched police station, pictures of Assad were torn down and files destroyed after insurgents entered the city Dec. 8. All Assad-era police and security personnel have vanished. On Saturday, the building was staffed by 10 men serving in the police force of the rebels' de facto "salvation government," which for years governed the rebel enclave of Idlib in Syria's northwest.

Ousted PM Sheikh Hasina involved in enforced disappearance: Bangladesh commission

DHAKA. An inquiry commission set up by the interim government in Bangladesh has said that it found evidence implicating deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and top-ranking military and police officials from her regime in alleged incidents of enforced disappearance.

The five-member Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances submitted an interim report titled "Unfolding The Truth" to Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus on Saturday. The commission estimated that there would be more than 3,500 enforced disappearances.

"The commission has found evidence of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's involvement as the instructor in the incidents of enforced disappearance," the press wing of the office of Chief Adviser said in a statement on Saturday night. It said the deposed premier's defence adviser Major General (ret'd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique, former director general of the National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre and sacked Major General Ziaul

Ahsanand senior police officers Monirul Islam and Mohammad Harun-Or-Rashid and several other senior officials were found to be involved in those incidents.

The ex-military and police officers are on the run, mostly believed to be abroad since the ouster of Hasina's Awami League regime on August 5 following a student-led uprising. According to the statement, retired Supreme Court judge Mainul Islam Chowdhury, the chairman of the commission, told Yunus that during investigations they found a "systematic design" that allowed incidents of enforced disappearances to go undetected.

"Individuals carrying out enforced disappearance or extrajudicial killing (even) lacked knowledge about victims," Chowdhury said. The report said the police's elite anti-crime Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), which draws men from the Army, Navy, Air Force, regular police and other law enforcement agencies had collaborated with each other to pick up, torture and keep victims in detention and



deliberately segmented the operations. The commission simultaneously proposed the abolition of the RAB alongside scrapping or thoroughly amending the Anti-Terrorism Act, 2009.

Rights activist and commission member Sajjad Hossain said they recorded 1,676 complaints of enforced disappearances and, so far, have examined 758 of them. Of these, 200 people or 27 per cent of the victims never returned while those who returned were mostly shown on records as arrested. Besides the chairman, the commission comprises Justice Farid

Ahmed Shibli, rights activist Nur Khan, private BRAC University teacher Nabila Idris and rights activist Sajjad Hossain.

At a press conference earlier, the commission announced that they had found eight secret detention centres in Dhaka and its outskirts. The panel chairman on Saturday informed Yunus that they would deliver another interim report in March and would require at least another year to complete the scrutiny of all allegations they had received. "You are doing a really very important job. We are ready to give you all kinds of support that you need," Yunus was quoted as saying. TV channels and social media carried interviews with several victims of the alleged enforced disappearance, including former military officers and opposition activists who were active in opposing Hasina's regime. While receiving the report yesterday, Yunus said he would visit some of the joint interrogation cells and secret detention centres as he wanted first-hand knowledge about the sufferings of the victims.

Taj Mahal builders lost hands, Ram Mandir workers honoured: Yogi Adityanath

► **Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that those who now lay claim to ownership of India's heritage were not even born when our culture began to exist.**



Modi was giving respect to the workers who constructed the Ram Mandir. That is one side where the PM was raining flowers on them, but on the other hand, the situation before was such that the workers who constructed the Taj Mahal had their hands chopped off," he said at an event in Mumbai on Saturday. The UP Chief Minister also mentioned that workers in the fine cloth industry in history also had their hands chopped off, destroying a whole tradition and legacy. "Today, India respects its labour force, gives them all kinds of protections. On the other hand, there were rulers, who chopped off the hands of labourers and destroyed the legacy of fine cloth, destroyed the tradition completely," he said at the World Hindu Economic Forum (WHEF). It is alleged that Shah Jahan, the 17th century

Mughal emperor who commissioned the Taj Mahal, ordered the hands of the workers to be chopped off after the construction. However, there are no historical records to prove the claim. Commenting further about India's history and heritage, Adityanath remarked that foreigners' bloodlines in India cannot tolerate the country's progress or Indians gaining respect globally. He also said that those who now claim India's heritage were not even born when the country's culture came into existence. Adityanath further described Uttar Pradesh as a blend of heritage and development. "Our heritage dates back thousands of years. Those who advocate terrorism and now lay claim to our heritage should know that our culture has existed since before they were even born," he asserted. The Chief Minister also emphasised India's scientific advancements, contrasting them with Pakistan's struggles. "It took 100 years for an encephalitis vaccine to come to India. Modi ji delivered the Covid-19 vaccine in just nine months. Today, Pakistan is begging, while we are providing free rations to 80 crore citizens without any discrimination based on caste or religion". He also praised PM Modi for bringing India out of the "identity crisis" and "rescuing the country from demonic rigidities".

AAP announces final Delhi poll candidate list: Kejriwal, Atishi to contest current seats in response to BJP's dare

NEW DELHI. The AAP on Sunday released its final list of 38 candidates for the Delhi Assembly polls due in February, with party supremo Arvind Kejriwal to contest from the New Delhi constituency and Chief Minister Atishi fielded again from Kalkaji. In its bid for a third consecutive term in power in the national capital, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has nominated its senior leaders from their own constituencies. Ministers Saurabh Bharadwaj, Gopal Rai, Imran Hussain, Raghuvinder Shokeen and Mukesh Kumar Ahlawat will contest the polls from Greater Kailash, Babarpur, Ballimaran, Nangloi Jat and Sultanpur Majra respectively. In the 2020 election, the AAP had secured 62 of the 70 seats in Delhi, solidifying its dominance in the capital's politics.

He suggested that with Sisodia's move, it was clear the AAP leaders were afraid, adding that Kejriwal and Atishi would likely follow suit.

AAP has now announced its candidates for all 70 Delhi Assembly seats. Following the release of the final list, Mr Kejriwal stated that the party would contest the



The upcoming polls are expected to be a litmus test for the party's governance model and its appeal to the electorate. By fielding Kejriwal, Atishi, and other top ministers from their current constituencies, AAP has responded to the BJP's challenge after the ruling party released its second list of candidates. Following former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia's decision to move from his current seat in Patparganj to Jangpura, Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva had claimed that many AAP MLAs were reluctant to contest due to fears of defeat.

polls with full confidence and preparation. "The BJP is invisible. They have no Chief Ministerial candidate, no team, no plan, and no vision for Delhi. Their only slogan is 'remove Kejriwal'. If you ask them what they've done for the past five years, they'll simply say, 'we abused Kejriwal,'" said the former Chief Minister, who resigned from the post and vowed to return only after the verdict in the "people's court."

DK Shivakumar slams PM's Lok Sabha speech: Congress gave him all the rights

► **Prime Minister Narendra Modi criticised the Congress on Saturday (December 13), accusing the grand old party of disrespecting not only the Indian Constitution but also its own internal democratic processes.**

New Delhi. Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar responded sharply to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent Lok Sabha speech, where the PM accused Congress of repeatedly undermining the Constitution. Prime Minister Narendra Modi criticised the Congress on Saturday (December 13), accusing the grand old party of disrespecting not only the Indian Constitution but also its own internal democratic processes. Participating in the special discussion on the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution, PM Modi alleged that the Congress sidelined democratic sentiment within the party to favour Jawaharlal Nehru as



Prime Minister and Congress President, even though its state units had shown support for Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. He also alleged that the Congress, having "tasted blood", repeatedly wounded the Constitution while his government's policies and decisions since he took office in 2014 have been aimed at

boosting India's strength and unity. Speaking to reporters, DK Shivakumar said, "The Prime Minister should know that Congress has given him all rights — with the Constitution, the national flag, the national anthem, and independence. It is because of Congress that democracy was established, and now he is the Prime Minister of this country." Prime Minister Modi, in his speech in Lok Sabha, outlined 11 resolutions aimed at strengthening India's future. He asserted that since taking office in 2014, his government's decisions have focused on boosting the country's unity and strength. In response to the Prime Minister's 11 resolutions, Shivakumar said, "Let us see. Let us hope for the best for this country".

Mahayuti cabinet's swearing in at 4 pm, Shinde Sena to get additional portfolio

Mumbai. Following a resounding victory in the Maharashtra Assembly elections, the swearing-in ceremony of the Mahayuti cabinet is scheduled for 4 pm today in Nagpur. Several Shiv Sena and NCP MLAs are set to be inducted into the council of ministers, reflecting the alliance's push to finalize its governance team.

The BJP, which holds a significant share of cabinet berths, is expected to bring in new faces during the expansion. However, sources indicate that some of its 20 allotted seats will remain vacant for now, leaving room for future adjustments. From the Shiv Sena, 13 MLAs are expected to take oath. Among the ministers to be retained are Uday Samant, Shambhuraje Desai, Gulabrao Patil, Dada Bhuse, and Sanjay Rathod.

In addition, several new faces from the Deputy Chief Minister Eknath

Shinde-led Shiv Sena are likely to join the cabinet. Sanjay Shirsat, Bharat Gogawale, Prakash Abitkar, Yogesh Kadam, Ashish Jaiswal, and Pratap Sarnaik are expected to be sworn-in. However, some notable Shiv Sena leaders, including Deepak Kesarkar, Tanaji Sawant, and Abdul Sattar, will not be returning to the cabinet this time. The NCP, another key player in the Mahayuti alliance, is also set to have its members inducted. Aditi Tatkare, Babasaheb Patil, Dattatraya Bharane, Hasan Mushrif, and Narhari Zirwal are among those expected to take oath as ministers. From the BJP, several prominent MLAs are likely to join the cabinet, signalling the party's intent to strengthen its foothold in the alliance. Those who reportedly received calls for induction include Nitesh Rane, Shivendra Raje, Girish Mahajan, Meghna Bordikar, Pankaja Munde, Jaykumar Rawal, and Mangal Prabhat Lodha.

While the saffron party has been allocated 20 cabinet berths in the Mahayuti government, it appears that some of these will remain unfilled for now as the BJP considers inducting fresh faces into its ranks in the future. The BJP is likely to hand over the housing ministry to the Shiv Sena in the Maharashtra cabinet expansion while retaining the home ministry, news agency PTI said, citing sources. The sources also indicated that both Shiv Sena and NCP are expected to keep the portfolios they held in the previous Mahayuti government, with the Shiv Sena gaining one additional ministry.



"Source Of Inspiration Abroad": Amit Shah's Swipe At Rahul Gandhi

New Delhi. Attacking Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah has said that the Congress leader's "source of inspiration" for raising issues is abroad and he comes up with a new charge every time a Parliament session is on. The minister's remarks were seen as a reference to the United States' indictment on Adani Energy. The Adani Group has emphasised that the conglomerate's Chairman Gautam Adani, his nephew Sagar Adani, and senior executive Vneet Jaain are clear of bribery charges. Gautam Adani has also said that the group has not faced a challenge like this for the first time and stressed that "every attack makes us stronger". Congress has sought to raise the indictment issue strongly in Parliament, contributing to a logjam, but allies like the Trinamool Congress and Samajwadi Party have said that there are other pressing matters and they would like the House to function to be able to raise them. Rahul Gandhi had also earlier held a mock



'interview' within the Parliament complex with some Congress members who were wearing masks of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Gautam Adani. "I don't know why Rahul Gandhi always gets his inspiration from abroad. This country has a Comptroller and Auditor General, a Vigilance Commissioner, High Courts, Supreme Court, but

the allegation does not come from them. Every time a Parliament session is on, there is an allegation from outside and he talks about them, wears jerseys. His source of inspiration is abroad, which does not surprise me. I know why his source of inspiration is abroad," Mr Shah said at the Agenda Aaj Tak event on Saturday. The minister's comments come in the wake of a volley against the Congress by the BJP, which has accused Rahul Gandhi of being a "traitor" and part of a dangerous triangle - including "some agencies of America" and billionaire George Soros - that is "trying to destabilise India". The attack followed a report by French outlet Mediapart that claimed "hidden links between a giant of investigative journalism - a reference to OCCRP (the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, an Amsterdam-based news network) - and the US government". Mediapart said the OCCRP is financially dependent on the United States and is also funded by George Soros' Open Foundation and countries like France and Sweden.

Congress must justify leadership role in INDIA bloc, says ally Omar Abdullah

► **Omar Abdullah, acknowledging the Congress' prominent role as a pan-India party and the largest opposition in Parliament, stressed that leadership must be "earned" and cannot be assumed or taken for granted.**

Srinagar. Acknowledging growing discontent among INDIA bloc partners with the Congress, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has asked the party to justify its leadership role in the alliance instead of taking it for granted. Abdullah, while recognising the Congress' significant position as a pan-India party and the largest opposition in Parliament, emphasised that leadership "has to be earned" and cannot be taken for granted. He also suggested that the party should raise the issue of restoration of statehood in Jammu and Kashmir. "By virtue of being the single largest party in Parliament, and also having the leader of opposition in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, the fact that they have a pan-India footprint, which no other party can lay claim to, they are natural sort of leaders of an

opposition movement," Abdullah told PTI in his first interview after becoming the chief minister in October.

Yet there is a sense of disquiet among some of the allies because they feel the Congress is "not doing enough to justify it or to earn it or to keep it. That's something the Congress might wish to consider." Still, Abdullah praised former Congress president Sonia Gandhi, describing her as a leader of unparalleled stature within the opposition alliance. "When the INDIA bloc comes together, she plays an important leadership role," he added. Abdullah chose not to give a direct answer to a question about statements made by leaders like Sharad Pawar or Lalu Yadav favouring West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee as a better leader but highlighted the INDIA bloc's lack of consistent



engagement, warning that the coalition risks becoming a mere election-time convenience. Abdullah stressed the need for sustained interactions beyond the electoral cycle, noting that the alliance's current approach appears sporadic and ineffective. "Our existence can't just be about six months before Parliament elections. Our existence has to be something more than that. The last time we met was when the Lok Sabha results had

only just come out. There has been no formal or informal sort of work that has been done for the INDIA bloc," he said. Abdullah, who is the vice president of the National Conference, also stressed the importance of establishing a structured communication framework. "You need to have a programme of regular interactions," he explained, adding "not that you just come alive once Lok Sabha elections are announced and suddenly start talking and trying to work things out". Abdullah's comments suggest underlying tensions within the opposition alliance, indicating that infrequent meetings could potentially magnify minor disagreements.

"If we had a more regular process of interaction, perhaps these smaller irritants wouldn't assume larger proportions," he added. Abdullah has

also not been very happy with the electoral alliance his National Conference party formed with the Congress before the Jammu-Kashmir assembly elections, where it failed to pull its weight during campaigning. The NC won 41 seats while Congress got six. Observers noted that Congress leaders did little work during the campaigning, and left all the heavy lifting to the NC.

INDIA bloc was formed as a combined opposition to stop the ruling BJP juggernaut but has failed to make much dent. Despite its good showing in the parliamentary elections, the Congress and its allies have failed miserably in two recent assembly elections - Haryana and Maharashtra. Abdullah's comments are further proof of the discontent within the INDIA bloc and the challenges it faces in countering the BJP in future political engagements.

Why it's politically incorrect to be privileged

EVER since the Israeli invasion of Palestine entered its new chapter last year, I have been in touch with a friend living in West Bank, who runs a famous school there. We have known each other from our university days at Cambridge, where we did our PhDs together. While departing, I was gifted a lovely ceramic cup by her, emblazoned with elegantly swirling floral motifs rendered in earthy hues. The object has sat on my desk for the past five years, holding my stationery and, thereby, by imagination together, often reminding me of the school that my sole Palestinian acquaintance runs. Every time I have written or recorded a message of concern and prayer for her and her family, I have felt the language falling short of its purpose, even though it remains the fundamental means to communicate one's feelings. In our latest conversation, my friend assured me that she and her family were safe and away from the conflict zone. But she added a caveat: that the ongoing genocide and its escalating horrors have robbed her of any feeling of enjoyment of even the most basic privileges. Thus, having water, electricity, shelter and everything else has injected a permanent sense of 'guilt' in her, making her question whatever she possesses. Anyone with even an iota of sensitivity can relate with such a predicament, albeit from one's own context. We have, most unfortunately, reached a point in our evolution as a species where there is hardly anything that cannot potentially fall under the ambit of 'privilege'. Such are the increasing inequalities and inequities that now, even to breathe the clean air or have a window with the view of a healthy landscape comes with a premium.

Consequently, over the last few years, the word 'privilege' itself has garnered an astonishingly bad reputation. Unless fully and repeatedly acknowledged, it has also ineluctably got associated with being 'politically incorrect'.

Tellingly, in my experience, an honest acknowledgement of one's wherewithal also doesn't necessarily guarantee the absence of negative criticism — such is the immorality automatically expressed by the term 'privilege'.

A fair amount of this criticism is rightly levelled at those in power, from authorities to institutions, who deny ordinary people the dignity to live. These establishments are more than often hands-in-glove with discriminatory practices and atrocities of all kinds. Hence, the burgeoning critique of their offensive, politically incorrect actions is not only required but also the need of the hour. The protests in support of the Palestinians the world over are an effort in this direction, as are the boycotts by literary communities of Israeli cultural institutions complicit with the genocide. Increasingly, there are also calls cast in black-and-white: you are either with the Palestinians or not, and any kind of affinity with the Israelis fundamentally marks a betrayal of the larger cause, a debasing of political correctness.

While, in principle, there can be no doubt regarding the above, in reality, the idea of associations and the experience of relationality is frequently more complex, and ridden with contradictions. It is ironic, especially as an Indian citizen, that one of the most widely reported developments that directly pierces through this black-and-white reading comes from the marginalised sections of society.

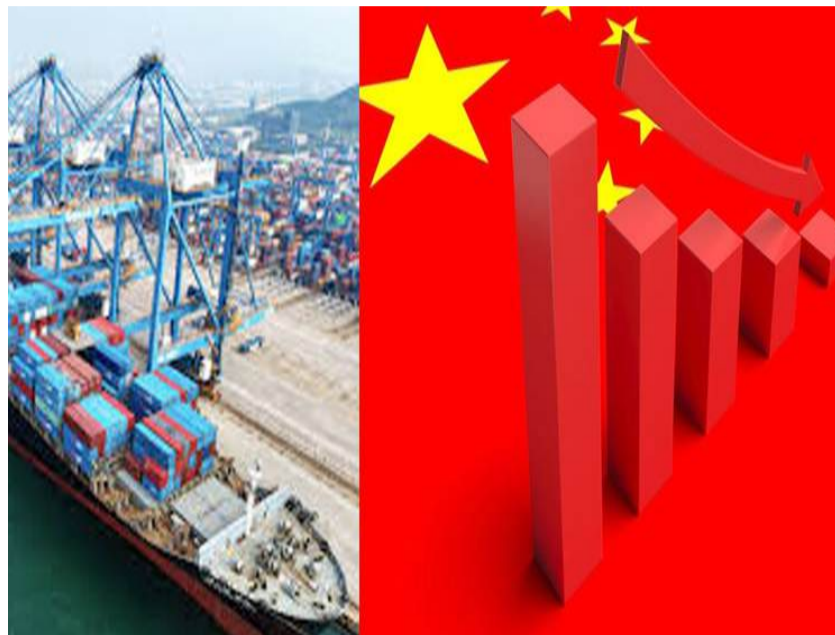
Since the end of the last year, thousands of Indian workers have been applying for jobs in Israel amidst persistent joblessness and the lack of opportunities back home. These openings have become possible because Israel suspended the work permits of scores of Palestinians after the beginning of the Gaza offensive. From carpenters to floor-tile fitters and plasterers to ironworkers.

The weakening Chinese economy needs a stimulus

China's third major challenge in 2025 is Donald Trump, who has vowed to impose 60 per cent tariffs on all imports.

CHINA'S GDP growth slowed during the first three quarters of 2024, from 5.3 per cent to 4.7 per cent to 4.6 per cent, raising fears that the country would not achieve its annual growth target of around 5 per cent. But the latest data suggests that China's economy is finally turning the corner. Economic activity in China has been relatively weak since the Covid-19 crisis. This was not unexpected, at least not at first: three years of pandemic lockdowns strained household, corporate, and local-government balance sheets. Declining business confidence — partly a response to a regulatory crackdown on finance, the property sector, and the platform economy — did not help matters.

In early 2021, when the US emerged from the worst of its pandemic lockdowns, American households quickly began spending the money they had accumulated. Chinese households, by contrast, continued to accumulate savings even after the lockdowns were over: between January 2020 and August 2024, household bank deposits in China swelled by \$9 trillion, with the wealthy accounting for a significant share. China's government introduced some supportive policies over this period, but in contrast to past disruptions, it refrained from implementing aggressive stimulus policies, owing to concerns about possible side effects. The massive stimulus package the government introduced after the 2008 global financial crisis spurred growth. However, it also fuelled a real-estate bubble, drove up local-government debt, and reduced investment efficiency. The government's calculations changed at the end of the third quarter of 2024, when it became clear that China's economy would need more help to lift its growth trajectory. In late September, People's Bank of China Governor Pan Gongsheng unveiled three measures: a reduction in banks' reserve ratio, a policy-rate cut, and the creation of monetary-policy instruments to support the stock market. Moreover, on October 12, Lan Fo'an, China's Finance Minister, announced that new fiscal measures would focus on addressing



local-governments' debt problems, stabilising the real-estate market, and supporting employment. He followed this announcement in early November with a \$1.38 trillion debt-swap plan for local governments. Both Pan and Lan have suggested that more stimulus measures are in the pipeline, with Lan noting that China's central government still has plenty of room to increase its debt and deficits. But recent data on high-frequency economic indicators, which tend to be the quickest to respond to macroeconomic-policy changes, suggests that the government's actions began taking effect almost immediately. In October, total "social finance" (total financing to the real economy) was up by 7.8 per

cent year on year, and outstanding bank loans had increased by 7.7 per cent. Retail sales had risen by 4.8 per cent year on year, and by 1.6 percentage points from the previous month. The manufacturing purchasing managers' index reached 50.1, after three months of sub-50 readings, and increased again, to 50.3, in November.

In more good news, the surveyed urban unemployment rate dropped by 0.1 percentage points in October, to 5 per cent. Even the property market improved marginally, though land sales and real-estate investment remained weak. If these positive trends continue, GDP growth will probably return to around 5 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2024. The outlook for 2025, however, is less clear. If China is to achieve 5 per cent GDP growth next year, assuming this is the government's target, policymakers will have to overcome three key challenges, starting with stabilising the property sector, which contributes about 20 per cent of GDP growth and accounts for 70 per cent of household wealth. The second challenge is local governments' balance sheets. A shortage of funds has lately been driving local authorities to cut spending, such as by reducing officials' salaries, and grasp for revenues, such as by chasing corporate back taxes and even detaining private entrepreneurs from other regions.

None of this is good for growth. The fundamental problem is that spending responsibilities now exceed fiscal revenues, which are no longer being bolstered by land sales and local-government investment vehicles. The central government must urgently transfer a significant amount of general-purpose revenue to local authorities. More fundamentally, China needs to reconfigure the balance of fiscal responsibilities across levels of government. The third major challenge that China will confront in 2025 is US President-elect Donald Trump, who has vowed to impose 60 per cent tariffs on all imports from China during his first year in office. Given that China's exports to the US account for 3 per cent of its GDP, such tariffs, and even much lower ones, would have a material impact on growth in 2025. The investment bank UBS, for instance, predicted that China's GDP growth would slowdown to 4 per cent in 2025. There has been much debate in China over whether the economy needs structural reforms or more macroeconomic stimulus. The truth is that it needs both. A decisive stimulus package, with a robust fiscal-policy component, must come first; this will make the biggest immediate difference. But once the package is in place, the government should turn its attention to structural reforms, with a focus on boosting confidence among consumers, investors, and entrepreneurs. Over the past year, China's government has published several policy documents aimed at restoring confidence. But with market participants not fully convinced, it must go further, implementing — boldly and visibly — some of the measures it has announced, such as stronger protections for private enterprises. Reining in local officials' scrutiny of old tax records in search of missing payments would also go a long way toward strengthening business confidence.

PF a swipe away

ATM withdrawals to cut bureaucratic delays

THE Labour Ministry's initiative to enable Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) subscribers to withdraw funds directly from ATMs by 2025 is a landmark step toward simplifying social security. This reform exemplifies the integration of advanced technology with public service to enhance efficiency and accessibility. Currently, EPFO withdrawals are marred by procedural delays, taking up to 10 days for funds to reflect in bank accounts. The proposed PF withdrawal cards aim to eliminate such red tape, providing real-time access to funds. However, prudence prevails with the capping of withdrawals at 50 per cent of the total balance, ensuring financial discipline and safeguarding long-term savings. The broader agenda under EPFO 3.0, which includes increasing contribution limits and converting provident fund savings into pensions, indicates the government's commitment to modernising the country's social security systems. This aligns well with India's



growing emphasis on digitisation and ease of living for its workforce, which has swelled by 70 million EPFO members since 2017.

In a related welcome step, the ministry is finalising a scheme for gig and platform workers, who often remain excluded from traditional employer-employee arrangements. The inclusion of this rapidly growing workforce in social security nets, with benefits like health coverage and financial aid, is a vital stride in formalising labour markets and addressing future workforce challenges.

These measures signal a shift toward a technology-driven welfare framework. By reducing human intervention and operational inefficiencies, the government underscores its commitment to improving citizen-centric services. While challenges like implementation hurdles and awareness gaps must be addressed, the potential benefits far outweigh them. Ultimately, this is not merely a technological upgrade but a profound leap toward equity and convenience in labour welfare, fostering trust in public institutions and bolstering the workforce's resilience.

Musings on a book and a movie

TRYSTS AND TURNS: Both 'Autocrats' and 'Amaran' offer insights into authoritarian leadership, fear and unity

MY dear wife, who left this world when she was 84, used to bemoan the rigours of old age. My reaction to her lament was always the same — "What is the alternative?" I would ask. Death answered the query, while the one she left behind occupies himself by reading and watching movies on television. A book I read and a movie I saw last week absorbed my time and my attention. I write on my reflections on that book and the film. The ouster of the Syrian Strongman, Bashar al-Assad, by rebels in his own country prompted me to write this article. My neighbour Mona Roy had sent me a book titled "Autocrats — Charisma, Power and their Lives" written by her family friend Rajiv Dogra, a distinguished Indian Foreign Service officer, now retired. Dogra is a scholar and a writer. Two of his previous (he has written seven) books "Where Borders Bleed" and "Durand's Curse" are a must read. When reading his latest book "Autocrats", I got the uneasy feeling that he had Narendra Modi in sight. But Rajiv is a trained diplomat, unlike me, a policeman who served for four full years as Ambassador without any grounding in diplomacy.

Incidentally, Rajiv Dogra was Ambassador to Romania, simultaneously accredited to Albania and Moldova, as I also was a few years earlier. The intelligentsia in Romania recognised him as a scholar. He was honoured with an honorary doctorate by the University of Oradea and made an honorary professor in the University of Targoviste. Rajiv's assertion that the "word authoritarian does not convey the immense harm that an all-pervasive atmosphere of fear does to a society" attracted my attention. Since such an element of fear does prevail today in the minds of the minority population of our beloved country, I read his book with more care than normal. The book had a profound effect on me and I would recommend that it be read by all compatriots who think and question. The modern authoritarian's cult of

personality, for instance, can be compared to that of the ancient Roman emperors, like Nero and Caligula, who were deified by their compatriots. In the 20th century, Benito Mussolini of Italy had his image imprinted on every bar of soap so that none would or could forget him even in the bath. I did not find any reference to Modi in the book. Was that diplomacy at work? Or, did the author want his readers to draw their own conclusions? He does mention Indira Gandhi, "who did not flinch at anything to maintain herself in power even if her actions proved a danger to democracy."

Dogra lists some characteristics of an autocrat which "should be taken as a sign of worry":

1. Belief that he or she is special and unique.
2. Lack of empathy for others.
3. Need for excessive admiration.
4. Obsessive sense of self-importance.

Rajiv mentions many world leaders through the ages with autocratic tendencies. Some could even be described as tyrants or dictators, but all were autocrats. Hitler, of course, leads the pack, as does Mussolini. On the other end of the scale is Lee Kwan Yew of Singapore, whose balancing act in a camouflaged dictatorship, earned him more plaudits than curses. Yet, he detained for two years many political opponents and allowed only one party, one newspaper, one trade union and one language. Rajiv concludes that "the quest for a benevolent, all-performing dictator has more often than not led to a bitter dead end." That there are many similarities that can be listed in the actions taken by strongmen in the course of history is an accepted conclusion that readers will draw on reading "Autocrats". The author has meticulously studied their doings and their differing personalities and family backgrounds. The facts will fascinate students of history

and politics, alike. Even cursory readers like me will benefit from the knowledge that the book so lucidly disseminates. Applying this knowledge to present-day India and specifically Narendra Modi, I would not place him in the slots allotted to tyrants and dictators. He is



authoritarian alright. So was Indira Gandhi. Does India need an authoritarian leader to steer our democracy? My view is it does. What I worry about is the spread of fear and divisiveness in a multi-religious, multi-cultural society that has been spawned by the present regime. Will that lead the country to prosperity and greatness? I harbour serious doubts on this score. Of course, time alone will tell. But can the country afford the price it is bound to pay at the end? Can the caste divisions, embedded in the culture of the majority, be surmounted so that the 80 per cent-strong majority becomes one, as intended?

While mulling over the answers to my own questions, I found that my eyesight would not allow me to read for more than three hours at a time. My need to keep my mind occupied led me to the television. The fine print of the written word is substituted by pictorial representations of life on television.

I found a movie titled "Amaran" made in Tamil Nadu by leading movers of the state's film industry. I saw the film dubbed in English. I could relate to the script and the story because it was based on the courage and devotion to duty of an army officer, Major Mukund Vardharajan of the Rajput Regiment, seconded for duty to the 44 Rashtriya Rifles, which operates mainly in Jammu & Kashmir to keep terrorists in check. My friend Rahul Bose, the actor, had a big part to play in the movie, but the principal character was a Hindu Tamilian officer married to a Malayali Christian girl, whom he had met while they were students in Vellore Christian College. Their travails in getting their respective parents to consent to an inter-faith union was compounded by the fact that the mothers of both the boy and the girl were not happy with the protagonist's choice of a career in the army.

The rapport of the officer with his own men was built on his determination to lead them personally in battle, unlike the Duke of Plaza Torro, "who led his regiment from behind whenever there was any fighting."

I loved the film and the message of patriotism, true qualities of leadership as well as the inter-religious amity it exuded. Readers should see it. And I wish that my country's acknowledged leader, PM Modi, sees it and recommends it to his faithful followers.



...तो गंभीर रूप ले सकता है अनीमिया



अंजीर खाएं - अनीमिया के लिए अंजीर काफी फायदेमंद माना जाता है। अंजीर में विटमिन बी 12, कैल्शियम, आयरन, फॉस्फोरस, पोटेशियम जैसे जरूरी तत्व पाए जाते हैं जो खून की कमी को दूर करते हैं। यह ब्लड प्रेशर को नियंत्रित रखने में भी मददगार है।

टमाटर का सूप पिएं - टमाटर में विटमिन सी भरपूर मात्रा में पाया जाता है। इसके अलावा इसमें बीटा कैरोटिन और विटमिन ई भी पाया जाता है जो आयरन की कमी को दूर करता है। टमाटर को सलाद के अलावा इसका सूप भी पी सकते हैं।

अंडा खाएं - अंडे में प्रोटीन भरपूर मात्रा में होता है, यह एक अच्छा ऐंटीऑक्सिडेंट भी है जो शरीर को बीमारियों से बचाकर आयरन की कमी दूर करने में मदद करता है। एक बड़े अंडे में 1 ग्राम आयरन होता है जो खून की कमी दूर करता है। अंडे को ब्रेकफ़स्ट में शामिल कर खून की कमी दूर करें।

आयरन से भरपूर अनाज - अनाज ऐसा फल है जिसमें विटमिन सी और आयरन भरपूर मात्रा में पाया जाता है। अनाज का सेवन करने से शरीर में रक्त का संचार बढ़ता है और यह अनीमिया से लड़ने में भी मदद करता है। इसके अलावा अनाज कमजोरी और थकान को भी दूर करता है।

फल और सब्जियां ज्यादा खाएं - अनीमिया से ग्रस्त लोगों को यह सलाह दी जाती है कि वे फल और हरी सब्जियां ज्यादा खाएं। फल जैसे खजूर, तरबूज, सेब, अंगूर, आदि खाने से शरीर में खून तेजी से बढ़ता है और अनीमिया की शिकायत दूर होती है।

अनीमिया के बारे में खास बातें

अनीमिया मुख्य रूप से तीन तरह का होता है, लेकिन सबसे आम आयरन की कमी से होने वाला अनीमिया है। आंकड़ों के मुताबिक, करीब 90 फीसदी लोगों में यही अनीमिया होता है।

कुछ लोग आइस क्यूब बहुत खाते हैं। अगर ऐसा है तो फिर यह अनीमिया का लक्षण हो सकता है। एक रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक, अनीमिया की एक खास क्वॉलिटी भी होती है। अनीमिया मुख्य रूप से आयरन की कमी से होता है और जब शरीर में आयरन कम हो जाता है तो इफेक्शन पैदा होने का खतरा नहीं होता। ऐसा इसलिए क्योंकि ज्यादातर बैक्टीरिया अपनी पावर बढ़ाने के लिए आयरन पर निर्भर होते हैं।

विश्व स्वास्थ्य संगठन के अनुसार, गर्भवती महिलाओं में अनीमिया होने का अत्यधिक खतरा रहता है। दुनियाभर में 40 फीसदी गर्भवती महिलाओं को अनीमिया होता है। वैसे तो गर्भवती महिलाओं में 20 से 30 फीसदी अधिक ब्लड सप्लाई होता है ताकि गर्भ में पल रहे बच्चे को ज्यादा मात्रा में ऑक्सीजन मिले। लेकिन ऐसा हमेशा संभव नहीं हो पाता कि गर्भवती महिलाओं के शरीर में इतनी अत्यधिक मात्रा में ब्लड प्रड्यूस हो।

अनीमिया एक ऐसी स्थिति होती है जिसमें शरीर के अंदर खून की कमी हो जाती है। अगर समय रहते इसका निदान न किया जाए तो यह गंभीर रूप ले सकता है। इसलिए जरूरी है कि आपको अनीमिया, उसके लक्षण व कारणों के बारे में पूरी जानकारी हो। साथ ही यह भी पता हो कि ऐसी कौन-सी चीजें हैं, जिन्हें खाने से अनीमिया को ठीक किया जा सकता है।

गंभीर रूप की ओर इशारा करते हैं। अगर अनीमिया लगातार बना रहे तो डिप्रेशन का रूप ले सकता है।

अनीमिया के प्रकार और कारण

अनीमिया 3 तरह का होता है- माइल्ड, मॉडरेट और सीवियर। अगर बॉडी में हीमोग्लोबिन 10 से 11 के आसपास हो तो इसे माइल्ड अनीमिया कहते हैं। वहीं अगर हीमोग्लोबिन 8 से 9 होता है तो इसे मॉडरेट अनीमिया कहते हैं। जबकि सीवियर अनीमिया में हीमोग्लोबिन 8 से कम होता है। यह एक गंभीर स्थिति होती है,



अनीमिया के लक्षण

सबसे पहले तो यह जानने की जरूरत है कि किन लोगों को अनीमिया आसानी से अपनी गिरफ्त में ले सकता है। ऐसे लोग जो लंबे समय से किसी बीमारी या इन्फेक्शन का शिकार हैं उन्हें अनीमिया आसानी से हो सकता है। अनीमिया के कुछ प्रकार अनुवांशिक होते हैं, लेकिन यह खराब डायट और जीवनशैली की वजह से भी हो सकता है। बात करें इसके लक्षणों की, तो थकान, कमजोरी, त्वचा का पीला होना, दिल की धड़कन का असामान्य होना, सांस लेने में तकलीफ, चक्कर आना, सीने में दर्द, हाथों और पैरों का ठंडा होना, सिरदर्द आदि अनीमिया की तरफ इशारा करते हैं। इसके अलावा स्टूल के कलर में बदलाव, कम ब्लड प्रेशर, रिकन का ठंडा पड़ना, स्क्लिन का साइज बढ़ना भी अनीमिया के लक्षण हैं।

ये लक्षण भी हैं खतरनाक

सिर, छाती या पैरों में दर्द होना, जीभ में जलन होना, मुंह और गला सूखना, मुंह के कोनों पर छाले हो जाना, बालों का कमजोर होकर टूटना, निगलने में तकलीफ होना, रिकन, नाखून और मसूड़ों का पीला पड़ जाना आदि कुछ ऐसे लक्षण हैं जो अनीमिया के एक

जिसमें मरीज की हालत के अनुसार खून चढ़ाने की भी नौबत आ जाती है। अनीमिया कई वजहों से हो सकता है। जैसे कि हेमरेज होने या फिर लगातार खून बहने की वजह से भी शरीर में खून की कमी हो जाती है। इसके अलावा फॉलिक एसिड, आयरन, प्रोटीन, विटमिन सी और बी 12 की कमी हो जाए तो अनीमिया हो सकता है। डॉक्टरों के अनुसार, अगर फैमिली हिस्ट्री में ल्यूकेमिया या थेलीसीमिया की बीमारी रही है तो फिर उस स्थिति में अनीमिया होने के चांस 50 फीसदी तक बढ़ जाते हैं।

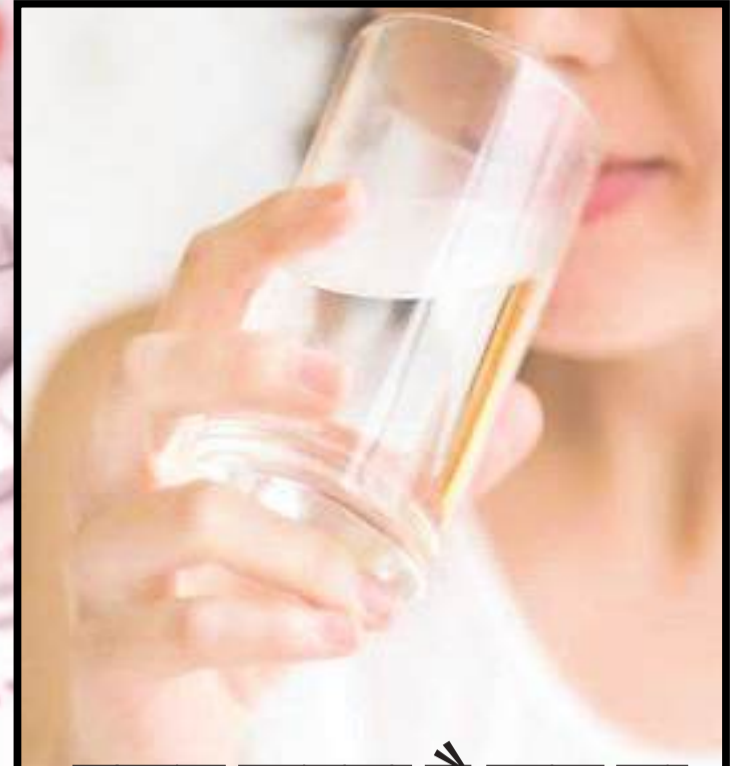
आयरन की कमी से होता है अनीमिया

अनीमिया रक्त संबंधित बीमारी है जो महिलाओं में ज्यादा पायी जाती है। शरीर में आयरन की कमी के कारण यह समस्या होती है। विटमिन बी 12, फॉलिक एसिड, कैल्शियम युक्त आहार आदि इससे बचाव करते हैं। इन चीजों से इस बीमारी के प्रभाव को कम किया जा सकता है।

रोज खाएं चुकंदर - चुकंदर में आयरन की भरपूर मात्रा होती है, इसे खाने से शरीर में खून की कमी नहीं होती। इसको रोज अपने खाने में सलाद या सब्जी बनाकर प्रयोग करने से शरीर में खून बनता है। चुकंदर की जड़ों को भी प्रयोग कर सकते हैं, इसमें विटमिन ए और सी होता है।

बारिश का मौसम वैसे तो इजॉय करने वाला मौसम होता है लेकिन अकसर यह बीमारियों वाला मौसम साबित हो जाता है। बरसात होने के बाद तपती गर्मी से राहत तो मिलती है लेकिन उमस के कारण इस मौसम में बैक्टीरिया तेजी से बढ़ते हैं। इस कारण इस मौसम में कई बीमारियां फैलती हैं।

बरसात के मौसम में पानी से फैलने वाली बीमारियों का प्रकोप बढ़ जाता है। ऐसे में ठीक होने के लिए लोग ऐंटीबायोटिक्स का सहारा लेते हैं। अकसर लोग बिना डॉक्टर की सलाह के ही ऐंटीबायोटिक्स ले लेते हैं। अगर आप भी बीमार पड़ने पर बिना डॉक्टर से पूछे ऐंटीबायोटिक्स दवाइयां खाते हैं तो सावधान हो जाइए। आपको इसका खामियाजा भुगतना पड़ सकता है। बेवजह ऐंटीबायोटिक्स का इस्तेमाल आपको अन्य बीमारियों के प्रति असुरक्षित बना सकता है क्योंकि



वजन करना है कम या बीपी रखना है नॉर्मल तो रोज सुबह पिएं गर्म पानी

शरीर के लिए पानी कितना अहम है इसके बारे में तो सभी जानते हैं, लेकिन क्या आप जानते हैं कि अगर रोज सुबह खाली पेट आप गर्म पानी पिएं तो हेल्थ को कई फायदे होते हैं।

पाचन रहे दुरुस्त

गर्म पानी पाचन में मदद करता है। ऐसा खाना जिसे पेट आसानी से पचा नहीं पा रहा हो उसे ब्रेक करने और पचाने में गर्म पानी काफी मदद करता है, इससे पेट साफ रहता है और पाचन संबंधी कोई और समस्या परेशान नहीं करती।

वेट लॉस

पाचन दुरुस्त रहे तो वेट लॉस में भी मदद मिलती है। साथ ही में गर्म पानी फैट लॉस में भी मदद करता है।

पेट दर्द व मरोड़ में राहत

पेट दर्द होने पर या मरोड़ चलने पर भी

गर्म पानी काफी राहत देता है। हालांकि इसका ध्यान रहे कि पानी को धीरे-धीरे पिएं, एकदम से गर्म पानी पीना नुकसान कर सकता है। वहीं रोज सुबह गर्म पानी पिएं तो ये परेशानियां होंगी ही नहीं।

ब्लड सर्कुलेशन सुधारता है

सुबह गर्म पानी पीने से ब्लड फ्लो और सर्कुलेशन को सुधारने में भी मदद मिलती है, यह बीपी को नॉर्मल रखने में भी मदद करता है।

गला रहेगा साफ

अक्सर सुबह उठने पर लोग कफ की शिकायत करते हैं, ऐसे में गर्म पानी पीने पर उन्हें राहत महसूस होगी। गर्म पानी कफ की समस्या को दूर कर गले को साफ रखता है।

बॉडी होगी टॉक्सिन फ्री

शरीर के टॉक्सिन को बॉडी से बाहर निकालने में भी गर्म पानी काफी मदद करता है। यह न सिर्फ हेल्थ पर पॉजिटिव असर डालता है बल्कि रिकन पर भी ग्लो लाता है।



बेवजह न करें ऐंटीबायोटिक्स का इस्तेमाल

इससे कई अच्छे बैक्टीरिया मर जाते हैं। ज्यादा इस्तेमाल से शरीर में ऐंटीबायोटिक्स के लिए प्रतिरोधक क्षमता भी बढ़ जाती है। ऐसे में हो सकता है कि जरूरत पड़ने पर शरीर को इसका फायदा न पहुंचे। बेवजह ऐंटीबायोटिक्स खाने से बेहतर होगा कि आप बारिश के मौसम में होने वाली बीमारियों के प्रति जागरूक रहें और उनसे बचने की कोशिश करें।

NEWS BOX

AUS vs IND: Travis Head continues to punish India, scores 9th hundred in Brisbane

New Delhi. Travis Head continued to punish the Indian team as he scored his 9th Test hundred during the match at the Gabba in Brisbane on Sunday, December 15. Head carried his form from his knock during the Adelaide Test, where he scored 140 off 141 balls to set up the win for his side. Head had come on to bat with Australia in a spot of bother at 75 for 3 after Marnus Labuschagne fell to Nitish Kumar Reddy in the 34th over. The Aussie batter would start off his innings with a fantastic shot to get a boundary off Reddy and followed it up with another one against Jasprit Bumrah. Head would ensure that he got Australia to a safe spot at lunch and would launch his counterattack after the break. The southpaw once again got a boundary off Bumrah before turning his attention towards Ravindra Jadeja. Head



would hammer Jadeja for 2 consecutive boundaries in the 55th over and started to be in the groove and looking set for another big knock. Head got to his fifty in just 71 balls and started to free himself even more and started to toy with the Indian bowling. Head, after putting his feud behind with Siraj, started to dominate the Indian pacer, much to the delight of the Brisbane crowd. A couple of boundaries saw Head enter the 90's. Bumrah came back into the attack but Head continued to go on his merry way and scored his hundred in 115 balls. Head scored 13 boundaries in his knock on Sunday. Head's incredible run against India continues. With his hundred against India, Head continued his fine form against Rohit Sharma and his men in the longest format of the game. This was Head's 3rd Test hundred against India and his knock on Sunday also saw him go past 1000 runs against the side with an average of more than 51. In his last 7 innings against India, Head has scored more than 600 runs.

AUS vs IND: Gritty Steve Smith bounces back, ends 25-innings wait for Test hundred

New Delhi. Star Australia batter Steve Smith bounced back to form during Day 2 of the third Test against Australia at the Gabba, Brisbane. Smith played a magnificent innings of 101 (188) with the help of 12 fours as he brought an end to his long drought of a Test century. It was the first hundred for the Australia star after 25 innings with his last one coming at Lord's during the Ashes 2023. Smith didn't have a memorable start to his innings as he played and missed deliveries outside the off stump and was beaten on several occasions. The former Australia skipper also had his pads targeted by the Indian bowlers and survived a couple of close lbw calls. However, the right-handed batter managed to stay at the crease and weathered the storm. He battled through menacing spells against Jasprit Bumrah and Akash Deep who challenged both of his inside and outside edges. Despite facing some challenging spells, Smith continued to motor along and gradually moved towards



his half-century. Smith shifted gears in the third session. He brought up his 42nd fifty off 128 balls and got involved in a massive stand with Travis Head for the fourth wicket. After reaching his half-century, Smith quickly shifted his gears and began dealing in boundaries. He went in to tea on 65 and came out in an all-out attacking approach after the break. Smith cut Nitish Reddy for a boundary on just his third ball after tea and made his intentions clear. Having got into his groove, the right-handed batter gave glimpses of his vintage self as boundaries began flowing from his willow. He added 31 runs off just 14 balls in the third session to move into the 80s. He finally reached his landmark in the 82nd over with a single against Akash Deep towards fine leg and celebrated his landmark. Smith was finally dismissed on 101 as Rohit Sharma took a brilliant catch in the slips.

Real Madrid held to high-scoring draw at Rayo Vallecano in La Liga

Madrid was without striker Kylian Mbappé, who is nursing a left-thigh injury.

BARCELONA. Real Madrid was held at Rayo Vallecano to 3-3 in a thrilling derby on Saturday, missing a chance to overtake Barcelona at the top of La Liga. Rayo set a fast pace and stunned the powerhouse with two headed goals from Unai López and Abdul Mumin to lead 2-0 by the 36th minute. Federico Valverde struck with a powerful shot from well outside the area to pull one back for Madrid then Jude Bellingham headed the visitors level from a pass by Rodrygo just before halftime. Madrid looked on course to completing a comeback win when Rodrygo put them in front for the first time with a deflected shot in the 56th. But Rayo midfielder leader Isi Palazón stretched out a boot to steer Florian Lejeune's shot past Thibaut Courtois in the 64th. Madrid was without striker Kylian Mbappé, who is nursing a left-thigh injury.



Vinicius Júnior went on as a second-half substitute. Goalie Augusto Batalla saved the Brazilian's best effort in the final period. Madrid remained second, one point behind Barcelona. Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti admitted his team dropped its guard in defense when his players left López and Mumin unchecked to turn in crosses. But he said he was "satisfied" with his team's reaction, especially given the injuries to

defensive starters Dani Carvajal, Eder Militao, and Ferland Mendy. He also looked to last season, when his team drew twice with Rayo. "Last year we didn't win here, we drew, and we won the league anyway," Ancelotti said. "We are playing well and on the right path. So, we had a draw. We need to look toward the next games." Madrid, as the Champions League titleholder, next travels to Qatar to play the Intercontinental Cup final against Mexican club Pachuca. "We have a great chance to win a title on Wednesday, which would put the cherry on top of a great year," Ancelotti said. Bellingham took his league scoring run to six games in a row. Vinicius will miss the next game at home against Sevilla after picking up his fifth yellow card, this time for protesting. Rayo was in 13th place. The modest club has also held Atletico Madrid to 1-1 and forced Barcelona to rally for a 2-1 thanks to a late goal. "Before the game we talked about all our recent games with Real Madrid when we had been close to winning, so we knew that if they weren't on their game then we could get a good result," Rayo coach Iñigo Pérez said.

Should have attacked Travis Head with Jasprit Bumrah early: Harbhajan Singh

The Mohammed Siraj vs Travis Head battle continued as the Australian batter picked his catch on Day 3 of the 2nd Test in Adelaide. Moreover, Siraj had to battle with boos for the 2nd straight day by the hostile Adelaide crowd.

New Delhi. Harbhajan Singh feels that India missed a trick by not having Jasprit Bumrah attack Travis Head early on and allowing him to score a hundred during the Gabba Test on Sunday, December 15. Head continued to torment India with the bat as he scored his 9th Test hundred on Day 2 at the Gabba. This was Head's second consecutive century in the series after his Adelaide heroics and many slammed Rohit Sharma's captaincy for not being able to contain the southpaw. Harbhajan, while

talking to the broadcasters, said that India's tactics could have been better when he came on to bat as the visitors didn't attack him much. The former spinner feels that Head should have been made to face Bumrah for



at least 2 or 3 overs. "I think India could have done better when he walked in. They didn't attack too much. Should have brought in Jasprit Bumrah straight away. He faced Nitish and Jadeja. You had to go back to your main bowler. Bumrah should have bowled early on. Who

knows what would have happened. At least 2 or 3 overs," said Harbhajan. India allowed Head to be comfortable. Matthew Hayden also commented on the tactics by India and felt that they allowed Head to get comfortable early on and allowed him to get to 20 runs very quickly. Hayden pointed out how Virat Kohli was able to do the same during the Perth Test, where he ended up scoring his 30th Test hundred. "I just felt that they missed a trick early up with Travis Head. Similarly actually to the way that Australia did to Virat Kohli when he was able to quite easily get into that 20 zone where great players become really comfortable. I felt like they could have and did have an opportunity to really go harder at Travis Head," said Hayden. Head would continue his fine form against India in the longest format of the game as he would go past the 1000-run landmark against them during his knock on Sunday. Head scored his hundred in just 115 balls.

Rohit Sharma's captaincy 'clueless': Fans, pundits slam poor Brisbane Test show

New Delhi. India captain Rohit Sharma was once again criticised by fans on social media for his captaincy during Day 2 of the third Test against Australia at the Gabba, Brisbane. Notably, India began the day on a good note by taking three wickets early in the first session but were once again put under pressure by Travis Head. The Australian batter walked to crease with his team on 75/3 and continued from where he left off in the previous Test in Adelaide. Having been on the receiving end of many brilliant knocks from Head in the past one year, it was believed that India would come up with a plan to finally stop his massacre. However, much to everyone's surprise, India didn't seem proactive in their tactics to dismiss the southpaw. With many experts suggesting a short-ball barrage against the Australia star, India didn't go ahead with the plan and just employed a spread-out field against him. As a result, Head managed to find easy gaps in the field and kept the scoreboard moving. The Indian bowlers weren't able to put pressure on the in-form batter, who was ably supported by Steve Smith at the other end. Smith and

AUS vs IND: Why are Stormtroopers in attendance at the Gabba Test

Brisbane. The third Test between India and Australia at the Gabba in Brisbane has been nothing short of electrifying, but it's not just the on-field drama that has grabbed attention. A group of fans dressed as Stormtroopers from the iconic Star Wars franchise—dubbed the "GabbaTroopers"—stole the spotlight, adding a unique flair to the action-packed game. Stormtroopers, the fictional soldiers serving the Galactic Empire in Star Wars, have been a recurring theme at the Gabba, with the GabbaTroopers paying homage to the franchise in a quirky yet entertaining way. Celebrating their seventh anniversary, the group added an extra layer of excitement to the Test match. The stadium joined in the fun, playing iconic Star Wars soundtracks for the occasion, delighting fans both on and off the field. The Gabba Troopers have a storied tradition of attending matches at the Gabba, including memorable moments like the 2017 Ashes Test between England and Australia, where an impressive 80 members of the group



showed up in full Stormtrooper uniform. Their latest appearance at the India-Australia Test underscores their commitment to making cricket matches even more entertaining for fans. While Day 1 of the Brisbane Test was washed out due to relentless rain, Day 2 made up for the lost action with high drama. India's Jasprit Bumrah started strongly, dismissing both Australian openers in Usman Khawaja and Nathan Mcsweny in quick succession. The

intensity continued with a playful yet heated exchange between India's Mohammed Siraj and Australia's Marnus Labuschagne, highlighted by the pacer humorously swapping the stumps' bails, much to the crowd's amusement. Labuschagne was dismissed after a couple of balls later by Nitish Kumar Reddy off a stunning catch from a fiery Virat Kohli. Australia stabilized with a crucial fourth-wicket partnership between Steve Smith and Travis Head, the hero of the Adelaide Test. With the Border-Gavaskar Trophy on the line and a potential spot in the World Test Championship final at stake, the match is set to intensify. Through it all, the GabbaTroopers have been a joyful presence, bringing the spirit of Star Wars to cricket and witnessing every dramatic twist of this thrilling Test. Their infectious energy has added an extra dimension to an already riveting contest.



Head's partnership once again brought Rohit Sharma's captaincy under the scanner as fans criticised his defensive approach. Former India head coach and cricketer Ravi Shastri also criticised Rohit Sharma's ultra-defensive fields against Travis Head on air calling it one of the 'worst set ups'. Shastri felt that with several wide open spaces, the bowlers weren't able to build pressure with singles being offered easily. David Warner also agreed with Shastri, mentioning that India should've attacked Head more. Shastri also criticised Rohit for playing the waiting game and trying to contain someone of Head's calibre. Sanjay Bangar and Sunil Gavaskar also didn't seem too pleased with Rohit's strategies, as it seemed that he allowed Australian batters to take control of the game and couldn't do much to turn things in his favour. Head went on to register his second successive century and continued to pile on the misery on India as they went into tea on 234/3.

Lewis Hamilton bids emotional goodbye to Mercedes headquarters in Brackley

Lewis Hamilton bid an emotional farewell to Mercedes, thanking the Brackley and Brixworth teams for their support, as he prepared for his highly anticipated move to Ferrari. The farewell marked the end of a legendary era at Mercedes.

New Delhi. Seven-time Formula One World Champion Lewis Hamilton bid an emotional farewell to the Mercedes racing headquarters in Brackley and the engine builders in Brixworth, UK, as he prepares to embark on a new chapter with Ferrari. During his visit, Hamilton delivered a heartfelt speech, expressing gratitude for the team that powered his success and promising to return for future visits. Having concluded his

Mercedes journey with a fourth-place finish at the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, Hamilton's farewell has captured the attention of Formula 1 fans worldwide. At Brixworth, where the engines that drove him to all 105 of his F1 wins with McLaren and Mercedes were built, Hamilton had one final debrief with the team. He reminisced about the unforgettable memories they created together over the years, including his record-equalling seven world titles. "I'm leaving; you guys are going to go and have so much more success moving forward because this is an incredible group of people; there's so much talent, there's so much passion here," Hamilton said. "Anyone would be lucky to be working with you. I hope that when I do eventually stop racing, I can come back and visit you all, and I know we can always look back at these fond memories, and you know what a journey. There's no driver in the world



that has had this experience with the team. It makes it that much harder to let go, but I'm taking with me the greatest memories," he added. The farewell at Brixworth was marked by a heartwarming moment as Hamilton departed the facility in an AMG SL 63 Roadster. Team members and fans lined the streets, cheering and waving goodbye to their legendary driver, giving him a send-off befitting his iconic status. Hamilton, who turns 40 in January, is now gearing up for a

new chapter of his career with Ferrari, where he will partner Charles Leclerc. This move has been one of the most highly anticipated shifts in Formula 1 history. Fans are eager to see how Hamilton adapts to the Ferrari setup and whether he can add to his illustrious career achievements. "I'm going to always be looking on the screens and seeing where you guys are. I'm always going to be wishing you all the absolute best. I believe in you, and I will continue to believe in you, and when you do have that success, I will be so proud of you," he added. The first glimpse of Hamilton in Ferrari red will come during pre-season testing in Bahrain from February 26-28, 2025. The excitement will then culminate in the season opener in Australia, scheduled for March 14-16. While Hamilton's departure marks the end of an era for Mercedes, his legacy with the team remains unparalleled.



Fashion Lovers

Natasa Stankovic

Is Stepping Up As A Style Icon

Shraddha Kapoor, known for her humble attitude and strong acting skills is currently attending the ongoing Red Sea International Film Festival 2024 in Saudi Arabia. Amidst this, she engaged in a candid conversation where she revealed some exciting details about her upcoming projects. In an interview with Pinkvilla, Shraddha Kapoor opened up about her upcoming projects. The actress was asked if she would be a part of Varun Dhawan's Bhediya 2. For context, in a pre-credit scene of her last film, Stree 2, Bhaskar (played by Dhawan) asks another character in the movie, Jana (played by Abhishek Banerjee) to set him up with Stree (played by Shraddha). Although Jana declines, Bhaskar continues to plead with him. This made the audience curious whether Shraddha would be part of Bhediya 2.



Shraddha said, "Only time will tell if any more cameos of mine come up in any of the other Maddock films. I don't know yet." The actress also mentioned that she will soon announce her upcoming projects. She said, "Very soon, I will share the films that I will be doing, which I will be shooting for next year."

In the same conversation, Shraddha was also asked about her opinion of Kiran Rao's directorial Laapataa Ladies being India's entry for the Oscars 2025. Talking about the same, the actress, heaped praises on the film and admitted that she loved it. She said, "It's so amazing to see that good films are getting their due and appreciation." The social drama also stars Nitanshi Goel, Pratibha Ranta, Ravi Kishan, and Sparsh Shrivastav, among others, in key roles.

She further expressed, "I feel any film that gets its due and recognition is a great feeling, and it only sets a standard. It only inspires more people to be true to the craft," adding, "People will know that acha thik hai, my focus should be on doing good work or making good films, and that's it. If I do that, people will be watching." Meanwhile, Shraddha's last film Stree 2 became the highest-grossing film of all time after collecting nearly Rs 580 crore at the box office.

Aishwarya Rai Bachchan's Sister-In-Law Shares Another Cryptic Note: 'I Respect My Value'



Amid the ongoing speculations around the rift between Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and Abhishek Bachchan, the actress' sister-in-law Shrima Rai continues to dominate headlines. Reason? Reddit users pointed out that Shrima, married to Aishwarya's brother, Aditya Rai, never posts about the actress or her niece, Aaradhya Bachchan on social media, hinting at their strained relationship. Days after setting the record straight about the speculations, Shrima has now added a new post on her Instagram stories. The post featured a cryptic note about respect, love and goodness of life.

The note read, "I respect my value and honor my worth. I will never settle for anything less than I deserve. I am deserving of love, respect and all the goodness life has to offer."

A subsequent paragraph read, "I am always in a state of growth. All of the things that I am currently experiencing are taking me to the next level of my life. By respecting myself, I naturally attract experiences and relationships that reflect my true value and uplift my spirit. Nothing is impossible when I am rooted in love."

Earlier this month, Shrima Rai, a popular beauty influencer, also broke her silence on the controversy surrounding her relationship with Aishwarya Rai Bachchan. Responding to a user who mentioned that she was unaware of her connection with the actress, Shrima shared that she doesn't post about the actress or her niece Aaradhya for a reason, writing "I want people to see me for me."

Before this, Shrima Rai hogged the limelight for sharing the picture of the flowers sent by Abhishek Bachchan's sister Shweta Bachchan and her husband Nikhil Nanda. As Shrima thanked the couple for their beautiful gesture through a post on Instagram, viewers online started criticising her for sharing the photo amid Aishwarya and Abhishek's divorce rumours. Later, she dropped an elaborate note on the photo-sharing application to slam the trolls. Clarifying, she shared that the flowers were sent for her birthday on November 21 and added that she never tried to "open any business with anyone's name".

Gauri Khan Redefines Evening Wear In Black Slit Dress And Denim Jacket

Gauri Khan was captured attending former Miss India and beauty brand owner Queenie Singh's birthday party in Mumbai.



Renowned interior designer and Shah Rukh Khan's wife Gauri Khan never misses out on an opportunity to impress fans with her fine sartorial choices. Whether it is an award ceremony or a casual outing in the city, the businesswoman's sense of style is always spot on. Gauri was recently captured attending former Miss India and beauty brand owner Queenie Singh's birthday party in Mumbai. As always, the star wife set fashion goals with her chic ensemble.

Several pictures and videos of Gauri Khan surfaced on social media. In a video, she could be seen posing for the shutterbugs outside a restaurant in Mumbai. The clip featured Gauri looking effortlessly glamorous in a stylish long black slit dress. The evening number displayed an attractive blue and silver buckle holding the dress together. For an additional appeal, she paired the dress with a blue denim jacket.

On the glam front, Gauri went with minimal accessories letting her outfit shine. She chose silver danglers that complemented her dress. Her makeup reflected a subtle glow, perfect for the evening. It included contoured cheeks, smokey eyes and pink lipstick to seal the look.

Soon after the video appeared on social media, fans took to the comments section to praise her look. A user noted, 'Gorgeous' while another mentioned that she looked 'Very Cute'. Many other fans dropped heart and fire emojis.

Apart from being a significant partner at Red Chillies Entertainment, the production house of Shah Rukh Khan, Gauri Khan is the owner of her interior design firm Gauri Khan Designs (GKD). Her usual clients include high-profile personalities such as Mukesh Ambani, Karan Johar, and Roberto Cavalli, among others.

Sanjay Dutt And Maanayata Dutt

Are The Coolest Couple And We Have Solid Proof



Sanjay Dutt and Maanayata Dutt are among the most popular Bollywood couples. The duo has been married for 16 years and are proud parents to twin kids, a son named Shakraan Dutt and a daughter Iqra Dutt whom they welcomed in October 2010. The couple often share insights from their personal and professional lives on social media and their recent video is a true testament to their loving and unbreakable bond.

The Khalanayak actor along with his wife shared a joint post on Instagram which depicted Sanjay having a conversation with Maanayata over a call. As the actor picks up the phone, Maanayata could be seen asking him, "Kab aa rahein hain aap (when are you coming back?)," to which the Munna Bhai MBBS actor replied, "Jaldi bas kaam khatam ho jaaye (Soon after completing the work)." She continued "Wrap ho gaya?," Sanjay responds, "Bas wrap hi to kar raha hun (Just wrapping up)."

As the clip moves forward, the 46-year-old is seen asking about the type of role will be performing on screen. To which he responds, "Zabardast. Is saal mere 7 se 8 behtareen roles aane wale hain (Amazing, I have 7 to 8 excellent roles coming this year.)" "Uff! Kitna kaam krenge aap (Oh God! How much work will you do)," says Maanayata, to which the actor replies, "Dubai aake bataata hun (Will tell you after I come to Dubai)."

Meanwhile, on the work front, Sanjay Dutt was last seen in the Telugu action drama film Double iSmart in a negative role. Helmed by Puri Jagannadh, the film also featured Ram Pothineni, Kavya Thapar and Sayaji Shinde in lead roles.

He will be next seen in a Punjabi film titled Sheran Di Kaum Punjabi which also stars Punjabi actor and singer Gippy Grewal in the lead role. Apart from that, he also has a Pan-India release KD: The Devil, a comedy entertainer Housefull 5, an untitled project with Ranveer Singh and Akshaye Khanna, and the action thriller Baaghi 4 in his kitty.



The couple, married for 16 years, are proud parents to twins, a son named Shakraan and daughter a Iqra.