



The Researchers'

NEWS BOX

Seven Indians injured in German Christmas market attack

World. Seven Indians have been injured in the deadly car-ramping attack in the eastern German city of Magdeburg and the Indian embassy in Berlin is providing them all possible assistance, official sources said on Saturday night. A 50-year-old man drove his car into crowds at a Christmas market on Friday evening in Saxony-Anhalt state's Magdeburg, leaving at least five people, including a nine-year-old, dead and nearly 200 injured, according to German authorities. Three out of seven injured Indians have been discharged from hospital, the sources cited above said. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), condemning the "horrific and senseless" attack, said the Indian mission in Germany is in contact with Indians injured.

It, however, did not specify the number of injured Indians. The Indian embassy in Berlin said it is maintaining close contact with Indians who have been injured. In a statement, the MEA condemned the attack and said the Indian mission is rendering all possible assistance to the Indians injured in the incident. "We condemn the horrific and senseless attack at a Christmas market in Magdeburg, Germany," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said. "Several precious lives have been lost and many have been injured. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims." "Our Mission is in contact with Indians who are injured, as well as their families, and rendering all possible assistance," the MEA said.

Two US pilots shot down over Red Sea in 'friendly fire' incident: military

WASHINGTON. Two US Navy pilots were shot down over the Red Sea early Sunday in "an apparent case of friendly fire," the American military said.

Both pilots were recovered alive but "initial assessments indicate that one of the crew members sustained minor injuries," the United States Central Command said late Saturday local Florida time -- where CENTCOM is headquartered. "This incident was not the result of hostile fire, and a full investigation is underway," CENTCOM said the guided missile cruiser USS Gettysburg "mistakenly fired on and hit the F/A-18" fighter aircraft, which was flown by the Navy pilots off another ship, the USS Harry S. Truman. The potentially disastrous mistake underscores the dangers of a mission the



United States has been involved in for more than a year as Yemen's Houthi rebels have repeatedly targeted merchant vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden that they say are Israeli-linked. On Saturday the United States said it struck targets in Yemen's rebel-held capital, hours after a Houthi rebel missile wounded people in Israel's commercial hub Tel Aviv. American forces also shot down multiple Houthi drones and an anti-ship cruise missile over the Red Sea, it said.

At Least 10 Killed In Church Stampede In Nigeria's Capital

Abuja. At least 10 people, including four children, were killed in a stampede during a relief item distribution at a local church in the Maitama district of Abuja, the Nigerian capital.

Josephine Adeh, spokesperson for the police in the Federal Capital Territory, said in a statement that eight others sustained varying degrees of injuries when the distribution of relief items, including food and clothing ahead of Christmas celebrations, turned chaotic Saturday at the Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Maitama. "Four of the injured had been treated and discharged, while the remaining victims are currently receiving medical care," Adeh said, noting the police



successfully evacuated "a crowd, numbering over a thousand." Padre Mike Nsikak Umoh, spokesperson for the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, earlier told reporters that the event attracted more than 3,000 people from nearby villages and low-income suburbs. Following the "tragic incident," the "palliative distribution" was suspended, he said. According to witnesses, many attendees arrived as early as 4 a.m. local time, despite the event being scheduled to start between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. Saturday, Xinhua news agency reported. In a separate statement, Nigerian President Bola Tinubu confirmed another stampede Saturday morning in Okija, a town in the southeastern state of Anambra, where a philanthropic initiative to distribute rice to locals also turned fatal. "The two tragedies claimed many lives and left many others injured," Tinubu said, canceling his official duties for the day in honor of the victims. Highlighting an earlier stampede in the southwestern city of Ibadan on Wednesday, which claimed at least 35 lives and left six critically injured, the Nigerian leader called on states and local authorities to implement strict crowd control measures nationwide.

Bangladesh commission finds India's 'involvement in enforced disappearances'

DHAKA. An inquiry commission formed by Bangladesh's interim government has said that it has found India's 'involvement' in incidents of 'enforced disappearances' during deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina's regime, the state-run news agency BSS reported on Saturday.

The Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS), quoting the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearance, said that the Indian involvement in Bangladesh's system of enforced disappearances is a matter of public record. The news report said that according to the five-member commission headed by retired Supreme Court judge Mainul Islam Chowdhury, there was a 'persistent suggestion in law enforcement circles' that some prisoners might still be languishing in Indian jails.

"We recommend the Ministries of Foreign and Home to extend their best efforts to identify any Bangladeshi citizens who may still remain incarcerated in India. It is beyond the jurisdiction of the commission to follow this trail outside Bangladesh," the commission said. The commission said it found intelligence information about the

practice of captive exchanges between India and Bangladesh and the possible subsequent fate of detainees. The commission cited two highly publicised cases that provide valuable insights into how such operations were carried out.

"One was the case of Shukhranjan Bali, who was abducted from the Bangladesh Supreme Court premises and resurfaced subsequently in an Indian jail, and the other was of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leader Salahuddin Ahmed," the commission said. The commission said BNP leader Ahmed's case exemplifies certain practices of the Bangladesh-India rendition system. It said that while hiding at a house in Dhaka's Uttara area in 2015, he recounted being imprisoned in a barren cell, where a hole in the ground served as a toilet. "The blanket provided to him bore the letters 'TFI', indicative of 'Task Force for Interrogation,'" it added. During that period, the commission said the only operational TFI centre that they knew of was managed by Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) Intelligence Wing working under the aegis of RAB Headquarters.



The commission said that since then, they visited this location and confirmed that RAB Intelligence Wing still controls access to it. "However, the interior of the facility was thoroughly decimated some time ago," the news report said quoting the commission. Last week, the five-member commission submitted an interim report titled "Unfolding The Truth" to Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus. The commission estimated that there would be more than 3,500 enforced disappearances. 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. Hasina, 77, fled to India on August 5 after unprecedented anti-government protests. The student-led Monsoon Revolution under the banner of 'Students Against Discrimination' succeeded in toppling Hasina's 16-year regime, propelled by fervent demands for change and accountability. The chief adviser's press wing had claimed the commission also found the involvement of the deposed prime minister's now absconding defence adviser, retired major general Tarique Ahmed Siddique, a now sacked major general and two senior police officers and several other senior officials in the cases of enforced disappearance. The news report said that the police's elite anti-crime Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), which draws men from army, navy, air force and regular police and other law enforcement agencies had collaborated with each other to pick up, torture and keep victims in detention. The commission simultaneously proposed the abolition of the RAB alongside scrapping or thoroughly amending the Anti-Terrorism Act, 2009. Commission member and rights activist Sajjad.

Russia's Tatarstan Declares Emergency After Ukrainian Drone Attacks

Moscow. Russia's Tatarstan Republic declared a state of emergency for government bodies and emergency response units to manage the aftermath of Ukrainian drone attacks. "The head of Tatarstan has signed an order imposing a special emergency mode for government agencies and the Ministry of Emergency Situations. This status is necessary to swiftly handle the consequences of the attacks in accordance with the law," the press service of Tatarstan President Rustam Minnikhanov said on Saturday. "The order applies exclusively to those involved in the response efforts and does not affect the general population." On Saturday, eight drone strikes were reported in Tatarstan's capital city of Kazan, six of which targeted residential buildings. Preliminary reports indicated there were no injuries,

Xinhua news agency reported. Tatarstan's governor, Rustam Minnikhanov, confirmed six drones



struck residential buildings, one hit an industrial site, and another was shot down over a river. The attacks, which Ukraine didn't acknowledge in keeping with its security policy, come after a Ukrainian

attack on Friday on a town in Russia's Kursk border region using US-supplied missiles killed six people, including a child.

Moscow sent 113 drones into Ukraine overnight into Saturday, Ukrainian officials said. According to Ukraine's Air Force, 57 drones were shot down during the attacks. A further 56 drones were "lost," likely having been electronically jammed.

Following the attack, operations at Izhivsk Airport near Kazan were temporarily restricted. The restrictions were lifted by 15:00 local time (1100 GMT) on Saturday, Russia's TASS news agency quoted Alexander Sinelnikov, general director of Izhivsk-based aviation company Izhavia, as saying.

France Jails 8 Accused Who Beheaded Teacher For Showing Prophet's Caricature

Paris. A French court sentenced eight people to prison terms ranging from one to 16 years for their roles in a hate campaign that culminated in the murder of a teacher who had shown caricatures of the Prophet Mohammad in class, local media reported.

Days after Samuel Paty, 47, showed his pupils the caricatures in October 2020, an 18-year-old Chechen assailant stabbed and beheaded him outside his school in Conflans-Sainte-Honorine, near Paris. The assailant was shot dead by police moments after.

Among those convicted on Friday was the father of a student whose false account of Paty's use of the caricatures triggered a wave of social media posts targeting the middle-school teacher. The court sentenced Brahim Chnina to 13 years in prison for criminal terrorist association, according to broadcaster Franceinfo. Chnina had published videos



falsely accusing the teacher of disciplining his daughter for complaining about the class, naming Paty and identifying his school. Abdelhakim Sefrioui, the founder of a hardline Islamist organization, received a 15-year sentence. Both Sefrioui and Chnina were found guilty of inciting hatred against Paty.

Many Muslims consider any depiction of the Prophet Mohammad to be blasphemous. Sefrioui's lawyer said his client would appeal the decision, according to French media. Two associates of Paty's killer, Abdullakh Anzorov, were also convicted. Naim Boudaoud and Azim Epsirkhanov were sentenced to 16 years in prison for complicity in a terrorist killing. Both had denied wrongdoing, according to Franceinfo. Last year, a court found Chnina's daughter and five other adolescents guilty of participating in a premeditated conspiracy and helping prepare an ambush. Chnina's daughter, who was not in Paty's class when the caricatures were shown, was convicted of making false accusations and slanderous comments. French media reported that the 13-year-old made the allegations after her parents questioned why she had been suspended from school for two days.

Pakistan Jails 25 Imran Khan Supporters Over Violent Protests

Islamabad, Pakistan. Pakistan military courts have convicted and sentenced 25 people for involvement in pro-Imran Khan unrest last year, the armed forces said Saturday, with the majority handed decade-long prison terms. Ex-prime minister Khan was arrested in May last year after being ousted from office and mounting an unprecedented campaign of defiance against the nation's powerful military leaders. His detention over graft allegations sparked nationwide unrest, some targeting armed forces installations, and prompting rare prosecutions of civilians in military courts. Amnesty International called the move "an intimidation tactic, designed to crack down on dissent" and said it was "contrary to international law".

Military courts are largely opaque, but after months of confidentiality the military public relations wing named 25 people who have been prosecuted. All of the convicted are men and 14 have been sentenced to a decade of "rigorous imprisonment", the military said with the remaining 11 set to serve lesser prison terms. "All sentences announced by the military courts are disproportionate and excessive," said a spokesman for Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party. "These sentences are rejected."

The verdicts were announced just three weeks after the capital Islamabad was gripped by fresh unrest, as tens of thousands of Khan supporters flooded in to demand his release.

The government said at least five security personnel were killed whilst PTI allege at least 10 of their own were shot dead by security forces before crowds retreated.

'Political terrorism'
A military statement did not make clear what crime each person had been convicted of or when, listing only the location of their offence. The shortest sentence meted out was two years.

During the May 2023 unrest Pakistan "witnessed tragic incidents of politically provoked violence and arson at multiple places," the military statement said. "These blatant acts of violence not only shocked the nation but also underscored necessity of checking this unacceptable attempt of political terrorism." The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan said "no civilian should be tried in a military court under any circumstances". "This contravenes the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution of Pakistan as well as the international human rights obligations to which Pakistan is a state party," the organisation said in a statement on

social media platform X. Former cricket star Khan served as prime minister from 2018 to 2022, when he was ousted by parliament in a no-confidence vote. He blamed the then-head of the powerful military establishment for his downfall. Pakistan's generals are considered the country's political kingmakers and have directly ruled the nation for decades at a time. Khan's May 2023 detention lasted a matter of days but he was re-arrested three months later and has remained imprisoned since, facing a parade of court cases he claims are politically motivated.

Meanwhile, PTI was targeted by a sweeping crackdown following the unrest, with thousands of grassroots supporters and senior officials arrested.

The 72-year-old was barred from running in February elections, which were marred by rigging allegations.

PTI defied the crackdown to win more seats than any other party, but a coalition of parties considered more pliable to military influence formed a government and shut them out of power. A United Nations panel of experts found in September that Khan's detention "had no legal basis and appears to have been intended to disqualify him from running for political office".

Bangladesh Receives 1.16 Bn USD World Bank Financing For Inclusive, Climate-Resilient Development

The World Bank approved 1.16 billion USD to help Bangladesh improve health services, water and sanitation services and achieve greener and climate-resilient development.

Dhaka. The World Bank approved three operations totaling 1.16 billion USD to help Bangladesh improve health services, water and sanitation services and achieve greener and climate-resilient development. "These new financing will bring to the people of Bangladesh essential services such as health and water and sanitation while laying the foundation for clean, climate resilient and sustainable development," Abdoulaye Seck, World Bank country director for Bangladesh and Bhutan, said in a statement received here Friday, as Bangladesh is among the most vulnerable countries to climate change and faces the greatest pollution challenges. According to the Washington-based lender, the 500-



million-dollar Second Bangladesh Green and Climate Resilient Development Credit will support reforms to help the country's transition to green and climate-resilient development, Xinhua news agency reported. The 379-million-dollar Health,

Nutrition, and Population Sector Development Program-For-Results will help improve access to quality health and nutrition services and build resilient health systems in Sylhet and Chattogram divisions. The 280-million-dollar

Chattogram Water Supply Improvement Project will provide safe water through new and rehabilitated piped water connections to over 1 million people in Chattogram. It will build about 200,000 new household water connections and provide improved sanitation services to about 100,000 people in low-income communities. This project is part of a World Bank South Asia regional initiative or program of programs to provide Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) services to about 100 million people across the region by 2035. The project will also help the Chattogram Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (CWASA) improve operational efficiency and financial sustainability and address issues related to water loss such as high levels of leakage, metering inaccuracies, and illegal connections. It will help reduce water losses by installing new water meters and operationalising 46 Smart District Metered Areas (DMAs) for reliable water supply, leakage detection, and real-time tracking of water consumption.

Indian PM Narendra Modi conferred Kuwait's highest Honour, The Order of Mubarak Al-Kabeer

Kuwait: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred with Kuwait's highest national award, the Order of Mubarak Al-Kabeer, in recognition of his significant role in strengthening the bilateral ties between Kuwait and India.

The prestigious honour was bestowed by Kuwait's Amir, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, during a ceremony on Sunday.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) issued a statement confirming the award, noting that His Highness Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah presented the decoration to PM Modi, with the participation of Kuwait's Prime Minister, Sheikh Ahmed Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Prime Minister Modi, in



his remarks, dedicated the honour to the enduring friendship between India and Kuwait, to the Indian community residing in Kuwait, and to the 1.4 billion people of India.

The Order of Mubarak Al-Kabeer, established in 1974, is Kuwait's highest national distinction, and has been awarded to select world leaders who have contributed significantly to the nation's interests.

Earlier, upon his arrival

at the Bayan Palace, Modi was given a ceremonial Guard of Honour. The Indian PM was warmly received by Kuwait's Prime Minister, Sheikh Ahmed Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

The visit also included extensive talks between Modi and Kuwait's Amir, Crown Prince, and Prime Minister, aimed at further strengthening ties between the two nations.

Prime Minister Modi's

two-day visit to Kuwait began on Saturday, following an invitation from His Highness Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. As part of his trip, Modi attended the opening ceremony of the 26th Arabian Gulf Cup, held in Kuwait, where he was honoured as the 'Guest of Honour'. The prestigious event also served as a platform for informal discussions between the Indian leader and Kuwait's leadership.

The Arabian Gulf Cup, a prominent sporting event in the region, features teams from eight countries, including members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Iraq, and Yemen. Kuwait has won the tournament more times than any other nation among the participants.

Swasthmev Launches India's First Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Centre in Gaya



by Rahul Kumar

Gaya: Swasthmev inaugurated India's first Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Centre, Rahat Kendra, in Ranapur, Chakand, Gaya, on Sunday. The center aims to provide critical first aid during the "golden hour" following accidents, particularly on National Highways, improving survival rates. The inauguration was attended by Makhdumpur MLA Satish Kumar Das, Syed Mehndi Imam, Zakir Imam, and other key figures. MLA Das highlighted the center's focus on trauma care, life support, diagnostics, and

pharmacy services, all managed by trained paramedics and physicians. Swasthmev's goal is to make emergency aid as accessible as ordering food or booking a taxi. The center will use telemedicine for e-consultation and patient monitoring, ensuring quick hospital admission and real-time health tracking. This initiative aims to expand across the country, especially in high-traffic areas, reducing deaths caused by delayed treatment. The project was made possible by Swasthmev's victory in the MSME Hackathon and subsequent incubation at IIM Bodh Gaya.

Govt. Launches 'Udaan Yatri Cafe' Initiative to Offer Affordable Food at Airports



New Delhi: In a significant move to provide relief to air travelers, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has launched the "Udaan Yatri Cafe" initiative, aimed at offering affordable food and essential items at airports. The initiative is designed to ensure that passengers have access to basic necessities such as food and water at reasonable rates. The first "Udaan Yatri Cafe" has been inaugurated at Kolkata's Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport as part of a pilot project. If successful, the initiative will be expanded to other airports across India, managed by the Airports Authority of India (AAI).

At the newly launched cafe, air passengers can access essential items like water bottles, tea, coffee, and snacks at affordable prices, providing much-needed relief to those traveling through the airport. The government hopes that this initiative will enhance the overall travel experience by offering a cost-effective solution for essential services.

BIT Sindri Students Distribute Blankets to Needy



Sindri: Students from BIT Sindri, through their NGO Light Sindri, organized a blanket distribution drive on Sunday at the Sai Temple in Saharpura, aimed at providing relief to underprivileged families braving the severe cold.

A total of 50 blankets and sweets were distributed to those in need. Speaking at the event, Center Coordinators Gautam Buddha and Dona Bhattacharya reaffirmed Light Sindri's commitment to social welfare and vowed to continue supporting the less fortunate with such initiatives.

This initiative highlights Light Sindri's ongoing efforts to bring warmth and hope to vulnerable communities during the harsh winter months.

IIT-ISM Celebrates National Mathematics Day with Expert Lectures



Dhanbad: IIT-ISM Dhanbad is hosting a two-day celebration to mark National Mathematics Day, honoring the 137th birth anniversary of the legendary mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan. Organized by the Department of Mathematics & Computing, the event, taking place on December 22 and 23, features a series of insightful lectures by distinguished scholars from across India.

The event kicked off on Sunday, December 22, with two engaging talks. Professor Gadadhar Misra from IIT Gandhinagar and ISI Bangalore delivered a lecture on "Euler's Product Formula and the Ramanujan Sum", while Professor Jaydeb Sarkar from ISI Bangalore presented a thought-provoking session titled "How Google Googles?"

Looking ahead, the second day of the event promises more expert talks. Two online lectures will be delivered by prominent mathematicians: Professor Anoop Singh from IIT (BHU) will discuss "On the Moduli Space of Lie Algebroid Connections over a Compact Riemann Surface", and Professor Amartya Kumar Dutta from ISI Kolkata will present on "Emergence of Algebra in Ancient India."

The event is designed to celebrate the mathematical legacy of Srinivasa Ramanujan, while inspiring attendees with stimulating discussions on various mathematical topics. It also underscores IIT (ISM) Dhanbad's commitment to advancing excellence in mathematical education and research.

"Honoring the Past, Shaping the Future: DPS Bokaro Celebrates 1991 Alumni Meet"



Bokaro: DPS Bokaro held a heartwarming Alumni Meet, 'Smritidhara', on Sunday for its first batch of 1991. The event, attended by alumni from across the country, featured emotional reunions, nostalgic moments, and lively performances.

Former teachers, including Arunjee, Dr. S. S. Mahapatra, and Sheela Roy, were present to relive memories with their former students.

The day began with a traditional welcome, followed by a lamp-lighting ceremony, school songs, and a lively orchestra. Sports activities also evoked fond memories of school days. Principal Dr. A. S. Gangwar highlighted the school's progress and encouraged alumni to guide current students toward success.

Alumni shared stories, captured photos, and committed to mentoring students on entrepreneurship and career development.

The event concluded with the release of a special edition 'Memorabilia-Smritidhara' and memento presentations to teachers and alumni, marking a successful and nostalgic celebration.

PM Modi to Distribute 71,000 Appointment Letters to New Recruits Today

New Delhi: New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually distribute more than 71,000 appointment letters to newly appointed recruits tomorrow, December 23, in a significant step towards bolstering employment opportunities across the country.

The event will be conducted through video conferencing, with the Prime Minister also addressing the gathering on this occasion.

The recruitment drive, part of the Rozgar Mela, will take place at 45 locations nationwide.

This initiative aims to provide meaningful employment opportunities in line with the Prime Minister's commitment to prioritize job creation. The event underscores the government's efforts to involve the youth in nation-building and self-empowerment.

The newly selected recruits will join various Ministries and Departments of the Central Government, including the Ministry of Home Affairs, Department of Posts, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and the Department of Financial Services, among others.

India & Kuwait Strengthen Ties with Key Bilateral Agreements in Defence and Other Sectors

Kuwait: During a meeting on Sunday, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Kuwait's Amir, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, discussed expanding bilateral cooperation in several key sectors, including pharmaceuticals, IT, FinTech, infrastructure, and security. The leaders signed several agreements aimed at strengthening ties between the two nations.

Prime Minister Modi shared his thoughts on social media, stating that India and Kuwait have elevated their bilateral partnership to a strategic level, expressing confidence that the relationship will continue to flourish in the future.

The discussions between the two leaders highlighted the long-standing, friendly ties between India and Kuwait. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing and expanding



cooperation across various domains. In this context, they agreed to upgrade the bilateral relationship to a "Strategic Partnership." Prime Minister Modi also expressed gratitude to His Highness the Amir for ensuring the welfare of the over one million-strong Indian community in Ku-

wait. In response, the Amir praised the significant contributions of the Indian community to Kuwait's development. Modi further appreciated Kuwait's ongoing initiatives to fulfill its Vision 2035 and congratulated the Amir on the successful hosting of the recent GCC

Summit. Additionally, he thanked His Highness for inviting him as the 'Guest of Honour' at the opening ceremony of the 26th Arabian Gulf Cup. The Amir reciprocated the sentiments, commending India's valuable role as a key partner in Kuwait and the wider Gulf region.

Shri Ramakrishna Vivekananda Sangh Celebrates Maa Sharda's Birth Anniversary with Devotion

by Arun Pathak

Bokaro: Shri Ramakrishna Vivekananda Sangh, located in Sector One B of Bokaro, observed the birth anniversary of Mother Sharda with great devotion and enthusiasm on Sunday. The event included a special puja followed by a havan and pushpanjali ceremony. Hundreds of devotees gathered to participate in the celebrations, and fruit prasad, kheer, and khichdi were distributed to all attendees. The event was attended by



prominent members of the Sangh, including Secretary Pranav Mitra, Swati Mitra, BK Chakraborty, Ajit Kundu, Sameer Paitandi, Amar-

nath Jha, Prashant Kumar Jha, Arun Pathak, Mahesh Kumar Lal, Sanjay, Rakesh, Shiva, Kaveri Guha, Pankaj Das, Mili Das, Pooja Jha,

BD Das, and Rohit Kumar. Speaking on the occasion, Secretary Pranav Mitra and active member Prashant Jha highlighted that the Shri Ramakrishna Vivekananda Sangh celebrates the birth anniversaries of Mother Sharda, Swami Vivekananda's guru Ramakrishna Paramhansa, and Swami Vivekananda every year with great fervor. Additionally, the Sangh organizes monthly Ekadashi Puja, attracting a large number of devotees.



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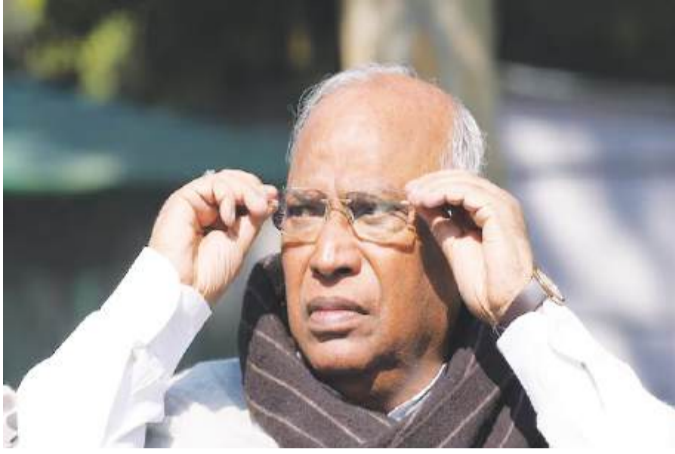
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Systematic conspiracy: Mallikarjun Kharge slams Centre's election rule change

New Delhi. Congress Chief Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday sharply criticised the central government for amending election rules to restrict access to poll documents, calling it a deliberate conspiracy to undermine the integrity of the Election Commission.



Kharge accused the Centre of eroding the Election Commission's independence, calling it an attack on the Constitution and democracy. "Modi Govt's audacious amendment in the Conduct of Election Rules is another assault in its systematic conspiracy to destroy the institutional integrity of the Election Commission of India," the Congress chief tweeted. On Friday, based on the recommendation of the Election Commission, the Union law ministry amended the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, to prevent public inspection of certain electronic documents such as CCTV camera and webcasting footage as well as video recordings of candidates. The centre argued that the move aims to prevent their misuse. Slamming this move, Kharge said, "Earlier, they had removed the Chief Justice of India from the Selection panel which

Constitution and Democracy and we will take every step to safeguard them," Kharge said. Rule 93 mandates that all "papers" related to elections be open for public inspection. However, the amendment adds "as specified in these rules," narrowing access.

While documents like nomination forms, election agent appointments, results, and account statements are included under the Conduct of Election Rules, electronic records such as CCTV footage, webcasting, and candidate videos during the Model Code of Conduct period remain excluded.

Congress was quick to counter the changes. Party general secretary Jairam Ramesh on Saturday said they would legally challenge the amendment.

Lok Sabha MP and Congress general secretary KC Venugopal said the poll panel had chosen opacity and a pro-government attitude in its dealings thus far. Meanwhile, Election Commission officials said that records like CCTV footage, webcasting, and candidate videos during the Model Code of Conduct period are available to candidates, but restricting public access ensures voter secrecy and prevents misuse, though courts remain an avenue for access.

appoints Election Commissioners, and now they have resorted to stonewall electoral information, even after a High Court order". The Congress President also said that whenever the party approached the poll body, with concerns about specific poll irregularities, including voter deletions and a lack of transparency in EVMs, the Commission responded dismissively and failed to acknowledge some serious complaints.

"This again proves that the ECI, even though it is a quasi-judicial body, is not behaving independently.

Modi Govt's calibrated erosion of ECI's integrity is a frontal attack on the

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav meets protesters, backs demand for BPSC exams cancellation

PATNA. Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav has voiced support for the growing demand to cancel the recently conducted Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) exams. The exams, held under controversial circumstances, have sparked widespread protests among aspirants. Yadav, the former Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar, returned to the state capital late on Saturday night after a tour of the Seemanchal region, where he was mobilizing party support ahead of the assembly elections scheduled for next year.

The Nitish Kumar government will have to order cancellation of the exams". "For every step that you take, Tejashwi is ready to move four paces forward", he told the protesters.

His visit came a day after Yadav had held a video chat with protesters, many of



Demonstrating his solidarity with the protesting candidates, Yadav visited the Gardani Bagh locality in Patna, where a 24-hour demonstration has been underway. The protesters are demanding the cancellation of the 70th Combined Competitive Exams (CCE), conducted on December 13, citing allegations of irregularities and mismanagement.

This latest development has further intensified the debate surrounding the fairness and transparency of competitive examinations conducted by the BPSC. Accompanied by close aide and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Yadav, the former Deputy CM chatted with the protesters for a while, before declaring "We are fully with the students on the

whom urged the young leader to take time off to support their stir. Notably, hundreds of aspirants at an exam centre in the city had boycotted the tests, alleging that question papers had been leaked. The allegation has met with a strong denial from the BPSC, which claimed the disruptions were caused by "anti-social elements" who had turned up as part of a "conspiracy" to get the exams cancelled. The Commission, however, has ordered re-examination for about 5,000 candidates who had been assigned the "Bapu Pariksha Parisar", which was at the centre of the controversy.

416 People Arrested In Big Crackdown Against Child Marriage: Assam CM Himanta Sarma

Assam Police arrested 416 people and registered 335 cases in the third phase of its child marriage crackdown.

New Delhi. In its continued crackdown on child marriage, the Assam Police arrested 416 people and registered 335 cases during the third phase of the operation, which began on the night of December 21-22. The arrested individuals are set to appear in court on Saturday. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced the development against child marriage in the post on X and said, "#Assam continues its fight against child marriage. In Phase 3 operations launched on the night of Dec 21-22, 416 arrests were made, and 335 cases



were registered. The arrested individuals will be produced in court today. We will continue to take bold steps to end this social evil!"

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Amit Shah advises Northeast police to 'work for citizens' as insurgency is 'solved'

GUWAHATI. With the insurgency problem in the Northeast more or less solved, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday advised the police in the region to change its approach and work to ensure that people get their rights, including the protection of their lives and properties. "For four decades, the focus of the police in the Northeast was on fighting insurgency. Now that insurgency is gone, it will work to protect the rights of citizens as guaranteed by the Constitution. We have to change the focus and training of police," Shah said addressing the 72nd plenary session of the North Eastern Council in the Tripura capital Agartala. Governors and Chief Ministers of the Northeast were among dignitaries who attended the session.



these three new criminal laws would help citizens get justice within three years of lodging FIRs. "We kept fighting terrorism and violence. The goal of the police was to get rid of violence. That task has been almost accomplished. As there is peace now in the Northeast, the police will have to change its culture and direction," he

reiterated. He said a multi-dimensional approach with a different strategy for each state helped curb the incidents of violence. He said there was a 31 per cent drop in violent incidents and 86 per cent drop in civilian killings in the region in the last 10 years.

The home minister said peace accords were signed with various insurgent groups and 10,574 rebels surrendered. He cited the agreements signed between Assam and Meghalaya, and Assam and Arunachal Pradesh for solving border disputes. He said these agreements also helped establish peace. "We have initiated the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan. The Northeast has a special responsibility. The region is a transit route for narcotic-smuggling. I appeal to all Governors and Chief Ministers to help remove the blemish. We have to work very hard to make Bharat 'nasha-mukt'. The Northeast can contribute tremendously towards this end," Shah further stated.

S Jaishankar says India won't be intimidated to conform: No veto on our choices

New Delhi. India can never allow others to have a veto on its choices and it would do whatever was right in the national interest and for the global good "without being intimidated to conform", External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Saturday. "Independence should never be confused with neutrality. We will do whatever is right in our national interest and for the global good without being intimidated to conform. Bharat can never permit others to have a veto on its choices," he said in a video message for a function in Mumbai. He also said that India had been "schooled too long to visualise progress and modernity as a rejection of our heritage and traditions". The External Affairs Minister underlined that technology and tradition must march together in the age of globalisation. He also said that when India was etched more deeply in global consciousness, its repercussions were truly profound. "Bharat will inevitably progress, but it must do so without losing its Bharatiyata (Indianness). Only then can we truly emerge as a leading power in a multipolar world," he



added. Jaishankar spoke for the Mumbai event where he was conferred the 27th SIES Sri Chandrasekarendra Saraswati National Eminence Award. The awards are given in four fields - public leadership, community leadership, human endeavor, science and technology, and social leadership - with primacy on spiritualism. The awards are named after the late 68th seer of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam Sri Chandrasekarendra Saraswati.

Jaishankar said India was an exceptional nation as it was a civilisation state. "Such a country will only exercise influence when it fully leverages its cultural strengths in the global arena," he said. "To that it is essential that we ourselves, the younger generation, are fully aware of the value and significance of our heritage. This can be articulated at various levels, but most importantly it should have an impact at the societal level," he added. The External Affairs Minister said India had shown to everyone in the last decade that it had the capabilities, confidence and the commitment to advance development across board fronts. Asserting that India was poised today at a critical juncture, he said, "It has shown that the age-old problems of poverty, discrimination and lack of opportunities can indeed be addressed. On the global stage, it has established itself as an independent power, but one committed to global good, especially the well-being of the global south."

AAP Announces Door-To-Door Registration Drive For 2 New Welfare Schemes

Under the Mahila Samman Yojana, every woman in Delhi will receive ? 2,100 monthly. This initiative aims to support women in managing household expenses and pursuing higher education.

New Delhi. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) National Convenor and former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday announced the commencement of registrations for two new welfare schemes -- Mahila Samman Yojana and Sanjeevani Yojana -- starting December 23. Speaking at a press conference alongside Delhi Chief Minister Atishi and former Deputy CM Manish Sisodia, Kejriwal outlined the benefits of the schemes and the door-to-door registration drive that AAP workers will undertake to ensure widespread participation.



Under the Mahila Samman Yojana, every woman in Delhi will receive ? 2,100 monthly. This initiative aims to support women in managing household expenses and pursuing higher education.

Highlighting the importance of the scheme, Kejriwal said, "We know how hard mothers and sisters work. Many manage their households while working outside. This ? 2,100 will help daughters complete their college education and enable housewives to

handle rising household expenses or fulfil their personal aspirations, such as buying a saree or suit for themselves." "Ever since this scheme was announced, we have been inundated with calls and queries about registration. Today, I want to announce that registration will begin tomorrow. You do not need to stand in lines or waste time. Our AAP teams will visit your homes, register the women, and provide a registration card. Keep this card safe," the AAP convenor added. Kejriwal also elaborated on the Sanjeevani Yojana, a free healthcare initiative for senior citizens aged 60 and above. Under this scheme, the Delhi government will bear all treatment costs in both government and private hospitals, irrespective of income level.

"The middle class, which has tirelessly contributed to the country's progress by paying taxes, often finds itself neglected

during retirement. The biggest concern for many is how to afford healthcare in old age. I want to assure all senior citizens that the AAP government will take care of your medical expenses," Kejriwal stated. Registration for both schemes will start simultaneously, with AAP teams visiting households to ensure enrollment. Kejriwal emphasised that Delhi voters are eligible for the schemes and urged people to keep their voter IDs ready.

He also took an indirect dig at the opposition, accusing them of cancelling voter IDs to deprive people of welfare benefits. "Check if your voter ID is active. If it has been cancelled, inform us immediately, and we will ensure it is reinstated," he said. Kejriwal, along with Atishi and Manish Sisodia, announced that they would personally visit certain areas to kickstart the registration process. "This is a significant step towards empowering women and ensuring healthcare for the elderly. Tomorrow, the drive begins in full swing across Delhi," he concluded.

Why did Muslim-majority Syria & Afghanistan fall

ABOUT two weeks ago, Syrian rebel groups captured Damascus, ending more than half a century of rule by Hafez al-Assad and his son Bashar al-Assad, whose regime was long supported by Russia and Iran. Similarly, in mid-August 2021, Taliban insurgents toppled Ashraf Ghani's government, bringing a sudden end to two decades of US-backed administration in Afghanistan. The collapse of both regimes was strikingly swift—just 11 days in Syria and only 10 days in Afghanistan—catching many by surprise. These sudden downfalls marked the fall of two Muslim-majority countries in Asia within a span of just three years. What unfolded in these nations? What forces drove such rapid regime collapses?

Global powers played a decisive role in both cases, not only in sustaining the governments, but also inadvertently contributing to their collapses. In Syria, Assad's government heavily relied on military, political and diplomatic backing from Russia and Iran. Russia's war in Ukraine, coupled with the escalating Israel-Iran tensions, forced both Russia and Iran to divert attention away from Syria. As rebels intensified their offensive last month, Russia's focus on Ukraine limited its ability to respond effectively.

Similarly, Iran's support for Assad weakened amid rising tensions with Israel. Iran's allied militias suffered significant losses, reducing their operational capacity in Syria. Since 2013, Hezbollah had deployed thousands of fighters to aid Assad but later shifted many to southern Lebanon due to increased Israeli pressure, diminishing its military presence in Syria.

In Afghanistan, the US withdrawal strategy and direct talks with the Taliban sidelined the Republic, eroding its political legitimacy and military strength, paving the way for the government's swift collapse in August 2021. Following the US-Taliban Doha Agreement in February 2020, US military support to the Afghan forces dropped sharply, with airstrikes falling by 78 per cent—from 7,243 in 2019 to 1,631 in 2020—nearly half occurring just before the agreement. The loss of US air support enabled the Taliban to encircle major cities in the country. These downfalls were not solely driven by the influence of global major powers. Both countries had long grappled with state fragility marked by protracted conflicts, pervasive corruption, expanding illicit economies and overly centralised, exclusionary governments.

Despite the differences in their political systems, both governments were exclusionary and highly centralised. The Assad regime, led by a minority Alawite-dominated government, an offshoot of Shia Islam, was predominantly secular but deeply authoritarian. It maintained a highly centralised, militaristic structure, marked by systemic brutality, repression, entrenched nepotism and sectarian favouritism. These oppressive policies fuelled persistent religious-based militant opposition, ultimately contributing to the regime's fall. Afghanistan, as a fragile state, has long suffered from the authoritarian, exclusionary and centralised nature of governance. Every ruler who centralised power by excluding others has paved his own demise, with Ghani being the most recent example. While Ghani did not employ brutality and repression in his governance like Assad did, he overly centralised power and pursued exclusionary policies, keeping a tight, close circle and relying on a narrow support base.

While the Doha Agreement arguably triggered the state's collapse, Ghani's exclusionary governance approach exacerbated the structural weaknesses that ultimately led to his government's downfall.

Widespread, systematic corruption in both cases inevitably contributed to their collapse. In Syria, corruption existed at both the political 'macro' and administrative 'micro' levels. Transparency International's 2019 Corruption Perceptions Index placed Syria at rank 178 out of 180 countries, indicating that the civil war further exacerbated the country's already severe corruption problem. The broader ineptitude, brutality and systematic corruption within the army and other public institutions fuelled the government's downfall.

Christmas is about caring & sharing

TRYSTS AND TURNS: There is no greater reward than being loved by the men you had the honour of leading

THREE retired head constables invited me to participate in puja to mark Dattatreya Jayanti last week. On arrival at the venue in the Police Lines, I was met by retired and serving cops, who were genuinely pleased that I had come. It was easily the best Christmas gift I could have expected. There is no greater reward than being remembered and loved by the men whom you had at some stage of your career the honour of leading. That particular temple in the Police Lines had been inaugurated by me in 1982 when I was the city's Police Commissioner. That fact had escaped my memory. A plaque recording the event had been affixed to the temple wall. The men insisted on photographs being taken in front of the plaque that bore my name. Without a wife to help me deal with the pressure of touching base with family and friends, I am learning to cope with the Xmas season. There is a constant demand for my presence at gatherings planned for the last month of the year. At my age, it is extremely challenging to venture out of the house in the evenings even once a week, but in this season, the demand is for almost every day of the week. This year will be my 96th Xmas celebration. I have no recollection of the first seven. My father was the Superintendent of Posts in Baroda when I was born in 1929. He was transferred to Poona (now Pune) as Superintendent of the Railway Mail Service in 1930.

In 1964, I was appointed Superintendent of Police, Pune City. A Hindu priest dressed in a saffron robe strode into my office and introduced himself as "someone who knew me when I was two years old". He said his father had been my father's head clerk in the postal superintendent's office. He introduced himself by the name he had adopted after taking his vow of chastity and commitment to a religious discipline. Thirty years later, on my way to Rajgurunagar from Mumbai by car, I stopped at Lonavala. On learning of my arrival at the wayside restaurant, two or three men working in an ashram run by the same holy man came over to the table where my wife and I were sitting and greeted us. They told me that the baba had taken samadhi. Since the baba had mentioned me to them more than once, they were delighted to meet me.

That meeting remains etched in my memory, as do the baba's visits to my office in Pune. During one of those visits, he had talked of taking samadhi and I remember trying to dissuade him from doing so.

What I regret is that I just cannot remember his name after all these years. Two Christmases I do remember—one in 1956 and the other in 1989. In 1956, I was the Assistant Superintendent of Police, Nasik division. Deolali was under my jurisdiction. The Artillery Regimental Centre was located there. A young Christian officer named Valladares hitched a ride in my car from Nasik to Mumbai. Both of us were on leave for a week and since our respective parents were from Mumbai, we planned the trip for Xmas.

The young Army officer was from Bandra. I decided to drop him off at his residence. I had never seen a place so brightly illuminated and decorated as I did

neighbours and close friends will visit. With them I will share cake and wine.

Around Christmas every year, my friend, Leena Gandhi Tewari, observes an annual day for children from the Vakola slums whom she has literally adopted. In the beginning, she began with girls only, but recently she has been admitting boys to her centre, which she has named after her grandmother. These children of domestic help and drivers and the like are taught classical dancing, acting in plays and other forms of art and culture that helps them gain self-confidence, poise and knowledge. Tutors proficient in subjects taught to them in school are employed by the centre to encourage the girls and boys to excel in scholastics.

The results of her efforts over the years have been a source of great satisfaction to the children as well as their parents and also to Leena, her husband Prashant and the staff they have employed in the venture. Leena has spent not only her own money and her time but also her energy with a single-minded devotion to bettering the standards of living of the needy and the dispossessed. This year, two girls cleared the MBA (Finance) exams, three got through the Bachelor of Management Studies course and two in BAF (Bachelor of Accounting and Finance). Their skills are being developed to enable them to compete in the job market. The country needs many more Leenas who are willing to part with slices of

their wealth for those less fortunate than them. Both my own daughters, now into their sixties, mentor girls entrusted to their care by a Delhi-based NGO, the Udayan Shalini Foundation, which has opened a branch in Mumbai. They spend quality time with the mentees, introducing them to polite society and inculcating in them a feeling of self-confidence and pride in their own worth.

Two Muslim ladies I know, Mumtaz and Shameem, run the Botawala Trust established by their late father. The trust shelters 50 Muslim girls orphaned at a young age. They house the girls in a building constructed on their own property, feed them and generally attend to their emotional needs. The quality of life in Mumbai has improved for these unfortunate children because the city boasts of such compassionate women.



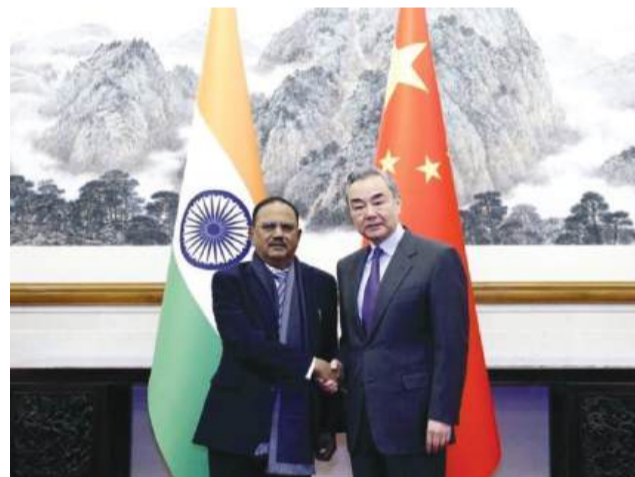
on that memorable Xmas eve in 1956. Bandra was almost entirely a Christian enclave in the 1950s. Today, it is only partly so, but the Christians of Bandra still continue to display bright lights.

In 1989, I was posted in Bucharest, the capital of Romania. That was the only year I failed to attend Mass in a church on Xmas Day. Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu had just been deposed. He and his wife Elena were executed by a firing squad that day after a cursory trial. A mini revolution against his dictatorship was at its peak at that time. We could not step out of the ambassador's residence. We spent the day watching armed men move menacingly on the road outside. This year, I will celebrate the festival in Mumbai in the traditional manner—go to Mass, greeting priests and the congregation, and having Xmas lunch with the family. Some

India-China talks

A step forward in bilateral relations

THE recent Special Representatives' meeting in Beijing between India's National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi marks a pivotal moment in bilateral diplomacy. This first dialogue in nearly five years, following the 2020 Galwan valley clash, reflects a cautious yet significant shift toward normalising ties between the two Asian giants. Central to the discussions was the implementation of the October 2024 disengagement agreement in Ladakh. Both sides committed to maintaining peace and tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control, a critical step to prevent future conflicts. The meeting also underscored a six-point consensus aimed at deepening cooperation in areas such as border trade, data sharing on trans-border rivers and the resumption of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra. While the agreements signal progress, challenges persist. The border dispute remains a complex and sensitive issue, compounded by historical grievances and mutual mistrust. The emphasis on confidence-building measures



and 'step-by-step' resolutions demonstrates pragmatic

diplomacy. However, translating these commitments into actionable change will require sustained political will and vigilance. The broader implications of this meeting cannot be overlooked. As both nations grapple with shifting global power dynamics, their engagement holds the potential to influence the multipolar world order. Collaborative initiatives in trade, technology and multilateral platforms like BRICS could pave the way for a more stable and prosperous region.

Yet, peace is only the starting point. Both nations must seize this opportunity to redefine their relationship through people-to-people exchanges, eased trade barriers and cultural cooperation. These steps are essential to build trust and overcome the lingering shadows of conflict. The path to reconciliation is long, but this dialogue offers hope for a more harmonious future. For India and China, peace is not just an ideal but a necessity.

The alarm over widening trade deficit is misplaced

The govt would rather sustain the narrative of corruption under the UPA than design new PPP policies for large, broad-based private investment in infrastructure.

INDIA'S September quarter (Q2) growth came in at a disappointing 5.4 per cent. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has lowered its growth projection for this year to 6.6 per cent, from its earlier forecast of 7.2 per cent. SBI economists put the likely growth rate for the year at 6.3 per cent. These estimates combine with ordinary folks' lived experience of high prices and persistent unemployment and news flashes of a surge in the trade deficit to record highs, with the official narrative still clamouring that India remains the fastest growing large economy. The economic news is both worse than it looks in some ways and better than it looks in some other ways. The unexpected spike in the trade deficit in November is no big deal, for example. It was caused by a surge in the import of gold. As global gold prices came down, importers more than doubled the imports of the precious metal—from \$7.13 billion in October to \$14.8 billion in November. The RBI has, of late, been shoring up gold reserves in the country's overall foreign exchange reserves as well. What really matters is not so much the trade balance as a broader measure, the current account balance, which takes into account not just the balance in merchandise trade, but also the balance in export and import of services (computer-related services matter a lot), and inflows and outflows of income from the factors of production, labour and capital, comprising remittances, profits, royalties, interest. The current account balance determines whether a country is a net supplier of savings to the rest of the world, running up a current account surplus, or a net drawer of external savings, running up a current account deficit. When the current account is in deficit, we end up owing foreigners money. How does that draw external savings into the economy? Let us consider savings and investment in real, rather than monetary, form. Everything an economy produces in a year is either consumed, invested or exported. Yet, when we

add up consumption, investment and exports, we do not get GDP, the value of everything produced in a year. That is because there is an element of imports in the things we consume, invest and even export—we import crude and export refined products, such as petrol and diesel, for example. So, GDP is the sum of consumption, investment and exports net of imports, exports and imports being seen comprehensively, including all services, covering factor services, apart from goods. Savings are that part of the output that is not consumed. In other words, savings are equal to GDP less consumption, meaning that savings are equal to investment plus net exports. If net exports, that is, the current account balance, is zero, that is, exports exactly match imports, savings would equal investment.

In a closed economy, what the economy can invest is necessarily what it saves, neither bigger, nor smaller.

If exports are less than imports, the current account balance (net exports) would be negative. Savings, remember, are the sum of investment and net exports. When the net exports element is negative, domestic savings are smaller than domestic investment by that element of net exports. In other words, domestic investment is greater than domestic savings, thanks to that current account deficit (CAD).

With a CAD, you either run down past reserves of foreign exchange or owe foreigners money. That is, foreigners must be willing to finance your CAD. The amount of foreign savings your economy ingests is measured by your CAD, not by capital inflows, classified as foreign



direct investments or foreign portfolio investments. These inflows remain as cash balances till they are absorbed into the real economy via financing a CAD.

This is why alarm over a trade deficit is misplaced. India's CAD for 2023-24 was 0.7 per cent of GDP and has nudged up to 1.1 per cent of GDP in the April-June quarter this year. A current account deficit up to 3 per cent is not only sustainable but also desirable, so that the economy can augment domestic savings to invest more and grow faster.

So, worry over a widening trade deficit is wholly misplaced. The only alarm on the external front is that

we are unable to run up a current account deficit large enough to accelerate domestic investment and growth.

Slowing growth is indeed a concern, as is the government's contradictory policy response. While the Budget did announce a massive capital outlay, spending has been deficient. At the end of October, while total receipts have been 53.7 per cent of the budget estimate (BE), capital expenditure has been just 42 per cent of BE, even as revenue expenditure has been 54.1 per cent of BE. Nor has there been any coherent policy to boost private investment. A quarter of the manufacturing capacity has been lying underutilised since 2015-16. This dissuades capacity expansion. The government would rather sustain the narrative of corruption under the UPA than design new public-private-partnership policies for large, broad-based private investment in infrastructure. Yet another dampener is the regressive tax reform. The latest is the proposal to create a sixth slab for GST, beyond the existing range of zero, 5 per cent, 12 per cent, 18 per cent and 28 per cent. Now, a 35 per cent rate has been proposed, purportedly, for sin goods. More goods and services are liable to turn sinful over time. The net result would be loss of revenue and reinforcement of a culture of tax complexity, avoidance and evasion. Higher import duties on gold and higher excise duties on cigarettes have both encouraged largescale smuggling. Higher rates on luxury goods would drive their purchases totally abroad. The goal in GST reform is convergence of rates and fewer slabs, not rate creep or retrospective levies.



आपकी तैयारी हमारा साथ

'अगर छात्र यह जान ले कि वह जो पढ़ रहा है, उससे आगे वह किस दिशा में जाएगा, तो लगभग 65 प्रतिशत छात्र बिना किसी शंका के अपने भविष्य का खाका बुन सकते हैं।' अमेरिका के राष्ट्रपति बराक ओबामा का यह कथन शतप्रतिशत सही है। अब वो वक्त आ गया है, जब बारहवीं के छात्रों को इस कथन पर अमल करना चाहिए। परीक्षाओं की तैयारी इस ओर पहला कदम है।

शिक्षा और करियर का चोली-दामन का साथ है। आप अपने लिए किस तरह की जिंदगी की रचना कर रहे हैं या अपने लिए क्या चाहते हैं, इसका उत्तर अब तक आपको मिल जाना चाहिए। ग्यारहवीं में आप स्कूल में जिन विषयों को चुनते

हैं और बोर्ड एग्जाम में शिरकत करते हैं, उनसे तय होता है कि आप आगे किस ओर बढ़ रहे हैं। बोर्ड एग्जाम हवा नहीं है, पर अहम है। इन परीक्षाओं को ले कर आपको डरने की जरूरत नहीं है। अगर आप आज से ही जुट जाएंगे और समय-समय पर अपने अध्यापकों से अपनी शंकाओं का समाधान करते जाएंगे, तो आप बड़ी आसानी से एग्जाम की वेंटरणी पार कर सकते हैं। शिक्षाविद और आईआईटी, मुंबई से शिक्षित डॉक्टर सलीम शीशावाला कोलंबिया यूनिवर्सिटी में प्रोफेसर हैं। उन्होंने कुछ समय पहले यूनिवर्सिटी में अपने प्रजेंटेशन के दौरान कहा था--अब वक्त आ गया है कि छात्रों को अपने बने-बनाए ढर्रे से बाहर निकल कर नया सोचना

चाहिए। वे सिर्फ मैथ्स, साइंस, इकोनॉमिक्स, लैंग्वेज और कॉमर्स के बारे में ना सोचें, बल्कि यह देखें कि वे आज जो पढ़ रहे हैं और कॉलेज में पढ़ना चाहते हैं, क्या वे उसी क्षेत्र में अपना करियर बनाना चाहते हैं? डॉक्टर सलीम ने कई मोटिवेशनल किताबें भी लिखी हैं। इंजीनियरिंग करने के बाद उन्होंने कुछ समय एक कारखाने में काम किया था। वहीं जा कर उन्हें लगा कि छात्र जीवन में उन्हें मशीनों से घ्यार करना नहीं सिखाया गया और उन्हें इस बात का अहसास हुआ कि नौकरी और शिक्षा में कितना ज्यादा फासला है।

बारहवीं की परीक्षा और उसका परिणाम आपकी जिंदगी को, भविष्य को और करियर को एक दिशा देता है। यह वक्त है अपनी समझ और काबिलियत के हिसाब से परीक्षाओं की तैयारी में पूरी तरह जुट जाने का। बारहवीं के बाद कॉलेज की पढ़ाई बहुत-कुछ आपके बोर्ड परीक्षाओं के नंबरों पर निर्भर करती है। अगर आप अब तक अपनी पढ़ाई को ले कर गंभीर नहीं हुए हैं, तो अब हो जाएं। बोर्ड एग्जाम तक हर सप्ताह नई दिशाएं आपको विभिन्न विषयों की तैयारी के अलावा परीक्षा से जुड़ी दूसरी तमाम बातों को लेकर आपको शंकाओं को दूर करेगी।



फॉरेंसिक साइंस तहकीकात की कला

अपराध की गुथियां सुलझाने में फॉरेंसिक साइंस काफी मददगार साबित होती है। इसकी पढ़ाई के बाद देश ही नहीं, विदेश में भी रोजगार के अवसर मिलते हैं।

जेनेटिक इंजीनियरिंग में करियर की संभावनाएं

जेनेटिक इंजीनियरिंग में एम-टेक या जेनेटिक्स में एमएससी की प्रवेश परीक्षा में बैठने के लिए छात्र को लाइफ साइंस, इंजीनियरिंग, एमबीबीएस या बीडीएस जैसे विषयों में 55 प्रतिशत अंकों के साथ स्नातक होना चाहिए। कई विश्वविद्यालयों में जेनेटिक इंजीनियरिंग एमएससी इन बायोटेक्नोलॉजी में

स्पेशलाइजेशन के तौर पर कराई जाती है, जिसमें पुणे यूनिवर्सिटी, दिल्ली यूनिवर्सिटी, मद्रास कामराज यूनिवर्सिटी, गुरु नानक देव यूनिवर्सिटी शामिल हैं। दिल्ली की जवाहरलाल नेहरू यूनिवर्सिटी दो सालों के एमएससी बायोटेक्नोलॉजी कोर्स के लिए कंबाइनड एंट्रेंस टेस्ट लेती है।

जेनेटिक इंजीनियरिंग मेडिकल क्षेत्र से काफी हद तक जुड़ी है, इसलिए छात्रों के लिए मानव स्वास्थ्य को समझना भी बेहद जरूरी हो जाता है। बारहवीं में फिजिक्स, केमिस्ट्री या बायोलॉजी से उत्तीर्ण छात्र लाइफ साइंस या बायोटेक्नोलॉजी से बीएससी करके मास्टर्स लेवल में विषय के रूप में जेनेटिक्स चुन सकते हैं।

गांवों के विकास में हाथ बंटाकर बनाएं करियर

आजकल राज्य सरकारें ही नहीं भारत सरकार भी ग्रामीण विकास पर पूरा ध्यान दे रही है। भारत में विश्व बैंक की विभिन्न परियोजनाएं भी खासतौर पर गांवों के लिए चालू की गई हैं। इसके अलावा गैर सरकारी संगठनों ने भी गांवों में काम करना शुरू कर दिया है। ऐसे में ग्रामीण विकास डिव्लोमा एक बेहतर करियर के रूप में उभरा है। खास बात ये है कि यह पाठ्यक्रम दूरस्थ पद्धति द्वारा संचालित किया जाता है। ग्रामीण विकास डिव्लोमा पाठ्यक्रम में दाखिला लेने के लिए उम्मीदवार का स्नातक होना अनिवार्य है। लेकिन उत्तर प्रदेश राजर्षि टंडन मुक्त विश्वविद्यालय ने बारहवीं कक्षा में भी इसे मान्यता दी है। वहीं अन्नामलाई विश्वविद्यालय ने स्नातक के साथ-साथ ग्रामीण क्षेत्र में दो वर्ष का कार्य अनुभव भी दाखिले के वक्त अनिवार्य तौर पर रखा है।

भारत में विश्व बैंक की विभिन्न परियोजनाएं भी खासतौर पर गांवों के लिए चालू की गई हैं। इसके अलावा गैर सरकारी संगठनों ने भी गांवों में काम करना शुरू कर दिया है। ऐसे में ग्रामीण विकास डिव्लोमा एक बेहतर करियर के रूप में उभरा है।

ग्रामीण विकास में डिव्लोमा पाठ्यक्रम की अवधि एक वर्ष की है लेकिन उत्तर प्रदेश राजर्षि टंडन मुक्त विश्वविद्यालय में एक से तीन वर्ष तक का पाठ्यक्रम है। पाठ्यक्रम का माध्यम केवल हिन्दी और अंग्रेजी ही हैं। इन संस्थानों से ग्रामीण विकास डिव्लोमा पाठ्यक्रम में प्रशिक्षण लिया जा सकता है--

- कर्नाटक स्टेट मुक्त विश्वविद्यालय, मनसागांगोत्री, मैसूर - 570006
- अन्नामलाई विश्वविद्यालय, डायरेक्टरेट ऑफ डिस्टेंस एजुकेशन, अन्नामलाई नगर - 608002
- कर्नातकी विश्वविद्यालय, स्कूल ऑफ डिस्टेंस लर्निंग एंड कंटीन्यूइंग एजुकेशन, वारंगल - 506009
- इंदिरा गांधी राष्ट्रीय मुक्त विश्वविद्यालय, मैदान गढ़ी, नई दिल्ली - 110068
- सेंटर फॉर डिस्टेंस एजुकेशन, एमवीपुरम, अनन्तपुर - 515003



फॉरेंसिक साइंस एक ऐसा विज्ञान है, जिसमें अपराधों की जांच-पड़ताल में वैज्ञानिक सिद्धांतों का इस्तेमाल किया जाता है। फॉरेंसिक साइंटिस्ट मौके पर जाकर कई तरह के वलू जैसे फिंगर प्रिंट, ब्लड सैंपल व साक्ष्य आदि जुटाते हैं। अन्य कई तरह की जांच में भी इनका अहम योगदान रहता है। फॉरेंसिक साइंटिस्ट से इनपुट लेकर ही इनवेस्टिगेटिंग ऑफिसर अदालत के समक्ष हजरि होता है। इसके अंतर्गत घटनास्थल से लेकर केस से जुड़े एक-एक तथ्य को बारीकी से जांचा जाता है।

कोर्स से जुड़ी जानकारी

फॉरेंसिक साइंस को लेकर आजकल तीन तरह के कोर्स संचालित हो रहे हैं। पहला सर्टिफिकेट कोर्स है, जिसमें फॉरेंसिक साइंस के विभिन्न पहलुओं के बारे में प्रारम्भिक स्तर का ज्ञान दिया जाता है। साथ ही भौतिकी, केमिस्ट्री, टैक्सिकोलॉजी, एंथ्रोपोलॉजी, मनोविज्ञान व मेडिसिन के बारे में जानकारी दी जाती है। दूसरा कोर्स स्नातक स्तर का बीएससी इन फॉरेंसिक साइंस होता है। तीन वर्षीय इस कोर्स में विभिन्न बिन्दुओं के अलावा सर्टिफिकेट अथवा डिव्लोमा में पढ़ाए विषयों को विस्तार के साथ बताया जाता है। इसमें थ्योरी व प्रैक्टिकल दोनों समान रूप से चलते हैं। पीजी लेवल पर पहले सेमेस्टर में क्रिमिनल लॉ, क्राइम सीन मैनेजमेंट, स्केचिंग सहित कई महत्वपूर्ण बिन्दुओं पर प्रकाश डाला जाता है, जबकि दूसरे सेमेस्टर में हेडराइटिंग परीक्षण के अलावा सेरोलॉजी, एंथ्रोपोलॉजी आदि पर ज्ञान बढ़ाया जाता है।

इस रूप में मिलेगा काम

फॉरेंसिक साइंस का कोर्स करने के पश्चात निम्न रूप में अवसर सामने आते हैं--
फॉरेंसिक पैथोलॉजिस्ट - इससे संबंधित प्रोफेशनल्स मर्डर अथवा संदेहात्मक परिस्थितियों में हुई मौत के समय का आकलन करते हैं।
फॉरेंसिक एंथ्रोपोलॉजिस्ट - एंथ्रोपोलॉजी में पीएचडी अथवा फॉरेंसिक साइंस में उच्च योग्यता हासिल करने के पश्चात फॉरेंसिक एंथ्रोपोलॉजिस्ट के रूप में काम किया जा सकता है। ये किसी बड़े हादसे जैसे अग्निकाण्ड, प्लेन क्रीश होने, विस्फोट आदि में मृत लोगों की पहचान अथवा उनके बारे में विवरण जुटाते हैं।
फॉरेंसिक साइकोलॉजिस्ट - साइकोलॉजी में स्नातक अथवा मास्टर डिग्री हासिल करने वाले छात्र फॉरेंसिक साइकोलॉजिस्ट का काम कर सकते हैं। ये किसी भी मामले से संबंधित फैक्ट जुटाने का काम करते हैं।

वलीनिकल फॉरेंसिक मेडिसिन एक्सपर्ट - मेडिकल के क्षेत्र में डिग्री अथवा पीजी डिव्लोमा करने वाले छात्र यह काम कर सकते हैं। ये किसी भी हादसे में घायल लोगों का उपचार करते हैं।
फॉरेंसिक सोरोलॉजी एक्सपर्ट - इनका काम किसी व्यक्ति के ब्लड ग्रुप, डीएनए टेस्ट आदि से संबंधित होता है। ये उसका आकलन करने से लेकर पहचान तक का कार्य करते हैं।
फॉरेंसिक केमिस्ट - वे छात्र, जिनके पास साइंस की डिग्री हो और जिन्होंने फॉरेंसिक केमिस्ट्री में स्पेशलाइजेशन किया हो, वे फॉरेंसिक केमिस्ट के रूप में जाँच कर सकते हैं। इनका कार्य संदेहात्मक परिस्थितियों में ड्रग्स आदि की जांच करने से संबंधित होता है।
लैंग्वेज एक्सपर्ट/टैक्सिकोलॉजिस्ट - ये किसी कोड अथवा विदेशी भाषा से जुड़ा संशय दूर करते हैं। कई बार अपराधी ऐसी कोड भाषा का प्रयोग करते हैं, जिसे सामान्य आदमी नहीं समझ पाता। लैंग्वेज एक्सपर्ट उसे सुलझाने अथवा समझने में मदद करते हैं।
टैक्सिकोलॉजिस्ट के रूप में केमिस्ट्री अथवा बायोकेमिस्ट्री स्टीम के

छात्र पुलिस को सहायता पहुंचाते हैं।

शैक्षिक योग्यता

फॉरेंसिक साइंस से संबंधित ज्यादातर कोर्स स्नातक एवं परास्नातक लेवल के हैं। इसके लिए वही छात्र आवेदन कर सकते हैं, जिन्होंने विज्ञान विषय के साथ 10+2 किया हो, जबकि एमएससी एवं पीजी डिव्लोमा पाठ्यक्रमों के लिए बीएससी होना जरूरी है। मास्टर डिग्री हासिल करने के बाद एमफिल एवं पीएचडी कोर्स में दाखिला मिलता है।

आवश्यक स्किल्स

एक फॉरेंसिक एक्सपर्ट को आंख व कान दोनों खुले रखने होते हैं। सामाजिक परिवेश व तथ्यों का खेल होने के कारण इसमें मनोविज्ञान की समझ आवश्यक है। इसके लिए एनालिटिकल स्किल्स व साइकोट्रिस्ट का गुण भी काफी काम आता है। खोजी मानसिकता, धर्यवान तथा साहसिक गुण वाले युवा इसमें काफी तरकी करते हैं।

सेलरी

युवाओं के लिए फॉरेंसिक साइंस उच्च सेलरी वाला आकर्षक प्रोफेशन है। सरकारी विभागों में सेलरी काफी कुछ पे स्केल पर निर्भर करती है, जबकि प्राइवेट जॉब में यह काम के स्वरूप एवं कंपनी पर आधारित होता है। आमतौर पर फॉरेंसिक एक्सपर्ट के रूप में जॉब ज्वॉइन करने पर 25-30 हजार रुपए प्रतिमाह आसानी से मिल जाते हैं। अनुभव व जिम्मेदारी बढ़ने पर सेलरी भी बढ़ती जाती है।

एजुकेशन लोन/स्कॉलरशिप

फॉरेंसिक साइंस का कोर्स करने के लिए कई तरह की स्कॉलरशिप अथवा एजुकेशन लोन दिए जाते हैं। देश-विदेश में अध्ययन के लिए एजुकेशन लोन की राशि प्रवाधान बैंक पर निर्भर करता है, जबकि अधिकांश स्कॉलरशिप मैरिट के आधार पर मिलती है।

फीस व खर्च

भारत में फॉरेंसिक साइंस का स्पेशलाइज कोर्स करने के लिए करीब 2-3 लाख रुपए का खर्च आता है। कई बार फीस की राशि संस्थान की रेटिंग पर निर्भर करती है। हालांकि केन्द्रीय विश्वविद्यालयों द्वारा ली जाने वाली फीस की राशि काफी कम होती है। आरक्षित समूह में आने वाले छात्रों को फीस के रूप में भारी छूट मिलती है।

रोजगार की संभावनाएं

यह ऐसा प्रोफेशन है, जिसमें समय के साथ डिमांड बढ़ती जा रही है। इसमें केंद्र व राज्य दोनों ही स्तरों पर अवसर मिलता है। सरकारी जांच एजेंसियों के अलावा प्राइवेट एजेंसी भी काम दे रही हैं। विवि व अन्य संस्थानों में टीचिंग का चलन भी बढ़ा है। कुछ क्षेत्र निम्न हैं--
सीबीआई व आईबी, सरकारी अपराध प्रयोगशाला, निजी चैनल, पुलिस प्रशासन के प्रमुख विभाग, न्यायिक एजेंसी, भारतीय सेना, प्राइवेट डिटेक्टिव कंपनी, रिसर्च एनालिसिस विंग और फीलासिंग।

विदेशों में भी अवसर

देश के साथ विदेश में भी रोजगार के पर्याप्त अवसर मिलते हैं। अमेरिका सहित अन्य कई विकसित देश भारी संख्या में फॉरेंसिक एक्सपर्ट्स की डिमांड करते हैं। विदेश में ज्यादातर संभावनाएं मेडिकल एग्जामिनर, क्राइम लेबोरेटरी एनालिस्ट, क्राइम स्कैन एग्जामिनर, फॉरेंसिक इंजीनियर व लैंग्वेज एक्सपर्ट के रूप में मिलती हैं।

NEWS BOX

Who is Gongadi Trisha? India's U19 World Cup winner, now U19 Asia Cup final hero

New Delhi. Gongadi Trisha was the star for India in the inaugural edition of the Under-19 Women's Asia Cup in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The 19-year-old finished as the top scorer of the tournament, having notched 159 runs from five innings at an average of 53 and a strike-rate of 120.45. It was on the back of her performance that India stayed unbeaten throughout the tournament. Trisha bagged a duck against Pakistan, after which he got an unbeaten 17 against Nepal. It was during the Super Fours that the teenager started showing her true class. She scored an unbeaten 58 against Bangladesh and helped India win by eight wickets. In the next Super Four match, Trisha made 32 against Sri Lanka as the Girls in Blue finished atop the points table. In the final against Bangladesh, Trisha scored 52 runs off 47 balls with the help of five fours and two sixes. On the back of her knock, India put up a decent score of 117 for seven. Thereafter, India bowled their opponents out for 76 runs in



18.3 overs to win the match by 41 runs. Not only did Trisha win the Player of the Match, but she also bagged the Player of the Tournament award. Gongadi Trisha shined for India Under-19. Interestingly, Trisha was a part of the Indian team that won the Under-19 Women's T20 World Cup in South Africa last year. In seven matches in the tournament, Trisha racked up 116 runs at an average of 23.20 and a strike-rate of 108.41. She got her top score of 57 off 51 balls against Katherine Fraser's Scotland at Willowmoore Park B Field in Benoni. In the final against England at the Senwes Park in Potchefstroom, Trisha made 24 runs off 29 balls with three fours, helping India chase down 69 in 14 overs. Trisha also plays for Hyderabad in domestic cricket.

India high on confidence after Gabba: Series 50-50 going into MCG, says Akash Deep

New Delhi. The Border-Gavaskar Trophy is 50-50 going into the final two Test matches of the series, said India seamer Akash Deep. Speaking to the media on Sunday, December 22, Akash Deep said that India took a lot of confidence from the 3rd Test match at the Gabba after they managed to save the follow-on, on Day 4. Akash Deep added that the team environment was quite cheerful after their sensational escape in Brisbane. Despite trailing for the majority of the Test match, India managed to eke out a draw in the 3rd Test match. Akash Deep and Jasprit Bumrah's heroic partnership was key to India's survival, as they added crucial 47 runs for the final wicket, saving India from the embarrassment of follow-on. In the process, Australia were forced to come out to bat for the second time, which cut into their crucial bowling hours on the final day. With inclement weather playing part, the hosts failed to capitalise on their advantage, with the Test match ending in a draw. Speaking



ahead of the Boxing Day Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, Akash Deep said that the entire dressing room was happy when he and Bumrah returned to the dressing room unbeaten at the end of Day 4. On that day, Virat Kohli, Gautam Gambhir and Rohit Sharma celebrated wildly after India had crossed the 245-run threshold. "The position that I bat it, if we can add 25 runs at the back end, it becomes very important. I always want to contribute with the bat. On Day 4 at the Gabba, my mindset was that I did not want to get out and thankfully by God's grace that worked out. When I went back to the dressing room, the mood had lifted up. When you save a follow-on, you get confident and you could see that on everybody's face, everyone was enjoying," Akash Deep said at the MCG on Sunday. "The series is 50-50 going into the last two Test matches. In the last Test match, while we were behind for the most part, the confidence we got in the last day, I think that matters and.

IND vs AUS: Injury scare for Rohit Sharma after blow to knee in Melbourne nets

India captain Rohit Sharma and batter KL Rahul copped injury blows ahead of the Boxing Day Test match in Melbourne. While Rohit was hit on his knee, KL Rahul was spotted getting attended by the physio after an injury to his right hand.



under the leadership of Virat Kohli and then under Ajinkya Rahane. The hope for the three-peat might be under threat if the India captain gets injured for the last two Tests of the series. On Sunday, Sharma was spotted applying an ice pack on his knee after his injury and had hobbled out of the nets in Melbourne. Earlier on Saturday, India opener KL Rahul got hit on his hand while batting at the nets and was promptly attended to by the team's physio ahead of the fourth Test against Australia. Rahul was hit on his right hand and was seen in some discomfort at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. The BCCI did not provide clarity on either of the injuries.

New Delhi. Ahead of the Boxing Day Test match, India captain Rohit Sharma copped a big blow on his left knee during practice on Sunday, December 22. Rohit was injured during a session with the throwdown specialist when the ball sneaked through his pads and hit him on the knee. The injury comes just four days ahead of the Boxing Day Test match in Melbourne. India are level 1-1 with Australia in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy and will push for a win in the final two Test matches of the series, in the hope of a three-peat vs Australia. India have won the last two tours Down Under, first

India's Record at MCG. India have played 14 Tests at the iconic MCG. The team has won only 4 of the 14 Tests and has lost in 8 occasions. Only 2 Test matches have ended in a draw. India first played at the

MCG in January 1948 against a Donald Bradman-led Australian side. Under the leadership of Lala Amarnath, India lost the

match by 233 runs. India's recent record at the MCG is however quite good. India have not lost at the 'G' since 2014.

Frustrated Flick says 'losing 9 points not normal' after tough Atletico result

New Delhi Barcelona's disappointing run continued as they slipped off the top of LaLiga, suffering a 2-1 home defeat to Atletico Madrid on Saturday. Despite the setback, coach Hansi Flick urged his team to learn from their mistakes and come back stronger after the winter break. The loss extended Barcelona's winless streak to three LaLiga games, with just five points earned from their last 21 available. This includes defeats to Leganes and Las Palmas in their previous two home matches. With the loss, Barcelona now trail Atletico by three points, having played one more game than their rivals. Flick, despite the defeat, praised his team's performance, emphasising that the winter break would provide the perfect opportunity for a reset. "Today it was unbelievable how we

played," said Flick. "Maybe this break came at the right time. I appreciate how we played, but we have to learn from these things. Losing nine points is not normal, and we have to work on it." Acknowledging the frustration of recent results, Flick remained optimistic about his young squad's potential. "The points lost against Las Palmas and Leganes are in the past. We will show after the break how strong we are. We are very disappointed with the defeat, but life goes on." Reflecting on his team's progress, the former Bayern Munich coach said he remained proud of his players and their potential. "When I drive at 0630 to go to training, I am happy because I can train with these players. Now, there is not a good atmosphere in the dressing room, but that's football.

Delhi SG Pipers' Rajkumar Pal aiming for Hockey India League spotlight

New Delhi For Delhi SG Pipers' Rajkumar Pal, the journey over the past years in hockey has been sensational. After missing the chance to make the trip for the Tokyo Olympics, the midfielder went back to the drawing board and worked hard. This was rewarded in 2024, when he was part of the Indian team that won the bronze medal at the Paris Olympics. Now, set to be part of the revamped Hockey India League, Rajkumar is hoping to make the spotlight his own with the Delhi SG Pipers. The team made heads turn at the auction table with their eye for young talent and the midfielder feels this will help the side in the long run. Speaking exclusively to Indiatoday.in, Rajkumar was realistic about Delhi's chances in the 2024-25 season and also opened up about being reunited with PR Sreejesh. The midfielder also gave a sneak peek into his journey so far and his goals going forward.

same impact from the upcoming league? Rajkumar Pal: Absolutely! In this league, I think three or four players will shine. I also want to give my 100 percent and take the

confidence and motivation and the game continues to improve. I hope that if I start the tournament well, I can aim for better performances throughout the league.



India Today: As you mentioned, you are playing for Delhi SG Pipers. What makes the Delhi SG Pipers team special compared to other teams this time? Rajkumar Pal: I think our team has the most number of young players, which is going to be a huge advantage for Delhi SG Pipers. The players are young and fit, and we've built a well-balanced team. We have experienced forwards, midfielders, and defenders, and even the

Rajkumar Pal interaction India Today: Let's start with the Hockey India League again. Last time we were here, many stars got a chance to make a name for themselves. People at home started recognising players. Do you expect the

spotlight. Every player wants to be noticed, and everyone will try their best. It's great to be a part of a team. The whole game should be about making an impact, as every team has that one player who consistently scores goals and gets noticed. Scoring gives

juniors are getting the support they need. So, I believe it's a strong team, and we will all support each other. The more experienced players will guide the younger ones. We have a good balance, and now it's just about preparing well and putting in our best effort.

India captain Niki elated after historic Asia Cup win: Bowlers did a fantastic job



New Delhi. Skipper Niki Prasad admitted that India were around 20 runs short in their Under-19 Women's Asia Cup 2024 final against Bangladesh. But she also heaped praise on the bowlers for defending a low total as India became the champions of the inaugural edition after winning the match by 41 runs at the Bayuemas Oval in Kuala Lumpur. After being asked to bat first, all India could manage was 117 for seven on the

back of Gongadi Trisha's half-century and a 17-run cameo from Mithila Vinod. Thereafter, Aayushi Shukla picked up three wickets as India bowled their opponents out for 76 in 18.3 overs. Prasad, who will play for the Delhi Capitals (DC) in the upcoming Women's Premier League (WPL), said that staying calm under pressure has helped the Indian team in the tournament. "We felt we were a few runs short, maybe 20 runs short,

but scoring 117 on this wicket is good. But we knew that we had a good bowling side and would bowl well. We were trying to stay in the game, have that intent, body language and our bowlers and fielders did a fantastic job," Prasad said in the post-match presentation ceremony.

"The first thing is that all of us are very calm in the dressing room and so, that brings a lot of confidence. When the batters are batting and things are not going in our side, it doesn't matter as we are calm and that's why we got to that score," Prasad said.

Niki lauded Trisha for scoring 52 runs off 47 balls while opening the batting. She also hailed Trisha as India's "mystery bowler" after the latter bowled three overs for 10 runs. "The way G Trisha has batted, it was fabulous. I liked the approach we had, and we batted really well. She is also our mystery bowler, and she bowled really well," Prasad added. After becoming the champions of Asia, India are set to defend their title in the Under-19 Women's T20 World Cup to be held in Malaysia from January 18 to February 2.



dominate. Aayushi Shukla steps up again Bangladesh did not get off to the best of starts as Mosammam Eva and Sumaiya Akhter could not go past single digits. Opening batter Fahomida Choya and Juairiya Ferdous scored 18 and 22 respectively. Skipper Sumaiya Akhter faltered after Sonam Yadav accounted for her wicket. Sonam and Parunika Sisodia picked up two scalps apiece. It was again Aayushi Shukla, who was the pick of the bowlers for India. Shukla, who finished the tournament as the top wicket-taker, rattled the Bangladeshi batting with figures of 3.3-0-17-3. After VJ Joshitha dismissed Eva for a duck in the second over, India did not look back. Bangladesh also slumped to a batting collapse as they lost their last seven wickets for 21 runs in a space of 40 balls. India, in the meantime, will be looking to carry the momentum into the U19 World Cup next year.

Disciplined Akash Deep credits Rohit-Kohli for massive growth-curve in Australia

India pacer Akash Deep credited senior batters Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma for the betterment of young India fast bowlers. The seamer credited the duo for helping young pacers not look like novices on their first tour of Australia.

New Delhi. Sunil Gavaskar has been critical of the timing of R Ashwin's retirement call, claiming that the spinner should have made the decision after the end of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Ashwin would make the shock call after the Gabba Test on Wednesday, December 18, after the match ended in a draw. The rumours had started to come in on Wednesday morning when Ashwin was seen

sharing a warm embrace with Virat Kohli in the dressing room as the game was halted by rain. Ashwin would then appear alongside Rohit Sharma in the post-match press conference and announce his decision to the reporters. Speaking to the broadcasters, Gavaskar said that the shock call had now left the Indian squad one man short. The Indian legend feels that Ashwin could have had a chance to make it to the side during the Sydney, where the pitch could have offered support to spinners. He could have said, listen after the end of the series, I won't be available for selection for India. What it does is that, similarly when MS Dhoni retired at the end of the 3rd Test in 2014-15 series, it leaves you one short. The selection committee has



picked so many players for a tour with a purpose. If there are any injuries they can select from the reserve players to have in the team. So, Sydney is somewhere where there

So that's the end of Ashwin as an international cricketer. He has been one heck of a cricketer," said Gavaskar.

is a lot of support on offer for spinners. So India could have played with 2 spinners. You never know. He could have been there for sure. I don't know how the pitch in Melbourne will be like. "Normally, you tend to look at the end of the series. That's it. In the middle, it is not usual," said Gavaskar. When asked if Washington Sundar was ahead of Ashwin in the pecking order, Gavaskar said that could be the case. The Indian legend ended by hailing Ashwin as a fine cricketer. "Maybe Washington Sundar is ahead of him. Rohit said he is flying out tomorrow. So that's the end of Ashwin as an international cricketer. He has been one heck of a cricketer," said Gavaskar.

Tamannaah Bhatia's

kurta set is perfect for your Mehendi night

The wedding season is upon us, and with all the mehendi, sangeet, and shaadi celebrations, it's the perfect time to plan your ideal outfit. If you've been considering a kurta set for the mehendi night, Tamannaah Bhatia's throwback look is a total game-changer! This stunning kurta and sharara combo strikes the perfect balance of comfort, elegance, and desi glam—just what you need for a mehendi ceremony. Let's take a closer look at her outfit.

Tamannaah Bhatia looked absolutely striking in an outfit that beautifully fused traditional and contemporary styles. The short, sleeveless purple kurta with a round neckline was exquisitely detailed with a scalloped border and silver embroidery. Silver piping around the neckline added a touch of sophistication to the ensemble.



The actress paired the kurta with a white sharara featuring bold stripes in shades of purple, orange, and black. The sharara created a beautiful contrast against the purple kurta, making the entire outfit pop. To complete the look, she draped a white dupatta with red borders, adorned with the same multicolored stripes seen on the sharara. The dupatta's dot prints and tassel details brought a playful element to the outfit, making it both stylish and distinctive.

Tamannaah opted for minimal yet impactful accessories, perfectly complementing the ensemble. A pair of jhumkas added a traditional touch while keeping the focus on the outfit itself. This choice was ideal for a mehendi night, where comfort and style are essential.

For her makeup, Tamannaah went for a fresh, matte base that gave her skin a natural, glowing look. Coral blush added a soft flush to her cheeks, while neatly groomed, bushy brows polished the look with an effortlessly chic vibe. She finished with glossy nude lips, which beautifully highlighted her radiant skin and subtle features.

Tamannaah Bhatia's outfit is the perfect choice for your mehendi ceremony this wedding season. The kurta and sharara combination, paired with minimal makeup and just the right accessories, makes it unique and stylish. For those who want to stand out while keeping it comfortable, fresh, and easy-chic, Tamannaah's look is a perfect example. Get ready to twirl, laugh, and make beautiful memories while looking fabulous!

Varun Dhawan

Reveals Why Diljit Dosanjh Was First Choice For Nain Matakka Song: 'Atlee Sir Was So...'

Varun Dhawan is excited about his upcoming film Baby John co-starring Keerthy Suresh. The film song Nain Matakka created a sensation among the audience. However, recently in conversation with Pinkvilla, Varun has opened up about an exciting collaboration with singer-actor Diljit Dosanjh for the foot-tapping number. He revealed that Atlee always wanted Diljit Dosanjh to sing this song. During the conversation, he revealed that filmmaker Atlee had made it clear from the beginning that he wanted Diljit Dosanjh to sing a



song for the film. He also shared that the Jawan director admires the Punjabi singer a lot. He said, "Atlee sir was so clear from day one. He told me, 'We need Diljit Dosanjh to sing this song,' he made it happen." The actor praised Atlee's creative vision, who could anticipate the benefit of that opportunity. Baby John, directed by Kalees, featured Wamiqa Gabbi, Salman Khan, Jackie Shroff, and Rajpal Yadav in significant roles. The film is all set to release on December 25, 2024. At a recent press event, Varun explained why Theri director Atlee

brought the project to him, acknowledging changes in the film's geography and storyline. Speaking about the adaptation, Varun stated, "Like you see, a lot of the frames and a lot of the story angles are different. So, if someone comes in expecting a book-by-book remake, they will be disappointed because that's not what the film is. It's an adaptation. We're not running away from that, but it's more of an adaptation." The Tamil original, Theri, was released in 2016, starring Thalapaty Vijay and directed by Atlee Kumar. Featuring Samantha Ruth Prabhu and Amy Jackson in key roles, it became a major success. Now, Baby John brings a fresh spin to the story with a stellar cast including Wamiqa Gabbi, Keerthy Suresh, Jackie Shroff, and Rajpal Yadav. The film also promises special appearances by Salman Khan, Diljit Dosanjh, and Sanya Malhotra, adding to the excitement.

The Baby John trailer teases a heartfelt yet intense storyline. It highlights the bond between Varun's character and his daughter, showing him as a dedicated father who balances parenting with his role as a police officer. His daughter jokingly remarks that just because she calls him "baby" doesn't mean he is one! Glimpses of romance with Keerthy Suresh and appearances by Sanya Malhotra and Wamiqa Gabbi add emotional depth, while the film's antagonist, played by Jackie Shroff, steals the spotlight with his menacing performance. The trailer concludes with Varun's character unleashing his fury to protect his daughter at all costs.



Anurag Kashyap Fixing Daughter Aaliyah's Dupatta Is Love



Anurag Kashyap is one happy father as his daughter Aaliyah Kashyap married Shane Gregoire in a star-studded wedding ceremony earlier this month. Several pictures and videos from the wedding festivities have been doing rounds on social media. And, we must say, that the ceremonies were all things magical. Besides the traditional setting, the couple has also registered their marriage. In a new video, we can see Anurag performing his father duties as Aaliyah completed the legal formalities of her marriage. The clip shows an intimate moment where Aaliyah Kashyap and Shane are seen signing the wedding documents and completing the legal formalities for registration. Surrounded by their close family members, the couple looked beautiful in their traditional outfits. The bride wore a traditional red suit paired with a contrasting net dupatta. She also covered her head with another red dupatta, honouring the traditions. The groom also embraced Indian attire for the special occasion, wearing a coordinated red and white ethnic kurta. In a wholesome moment that left many in awe, we saw the ace filmmaker and proud father Anurag Kashyap repeatedly fixing his daughter's dupatta as she signed her wedding document. Standing behind his daughter, he was all smiles when he shared the tender moment with his piece of heart.

Earlier, Anurag Kashyap also shared photos and videos from the wedding ceremony on Instagram. The wholesome clicks featured him and his ex-wife Aarti Bajaj together as they performed the wedding rituals of their daughter together. Aarti Bajaj is a film editor. Accompanying the post, Anurag wrote, "Ye bhi gayi.. Shane Gregoire my Silly take care of her. And I will get back to my stubborn self. Thank you Aarti Bajaj and Rhea Dewan for making it happen so beautifully. Thank you everyone for coming."

Aaliyah Kashyap and her longtime partner, Shane Gregoire tied the knot on Wednesday, December 11 with family and close friends in attendance. The wedding celebration was all about unforgettable moments, with the standout one being Anurag turning into a DJ at the reception, much to the delight of the guests.

Jeetendra And Rakesh Roshan's Dance On Song Naino Mein Sapna Goes Viral, Fans React



Veteran actors Jeetendra and Rakesh Roshan have recently proved that age is just a number as they hit the dance floor during the celebration of Jeetendra's 50th wedding anniversary. A video of the duo grooving to the iconic song 'Naino Mein Sapna' has taken the internet by storm. Fans are seen reacting to it and dropping heart emojis.

Mushtaq Sheikh took to his Instagram handle and shared a video in which we can see a grand celebration being organised at their residence in Mumbai. Daughter Ekta Kapoor and several other celebrities marked their attendance. Rakesh Roshan also attended the party, where he was seen dancing with Jeetendra on popular songs. Neelam Kothari, Sameer Soni, Krystle D'Souza, and others, are all seen in the party. One of the fans wrote, "Wow I love the way the two heroes are still killing it with their dance moves." Another wrote, "Wow." In a sweet gesture, Ekta captured a video showing several celebrities, including herself, Krystle D'Souza and Riddhi Dogra, along with Fabulosa Lives of Bollywood Wives stars Bhavana Pandey and Neelam Kothari, dancing and paying tribute to the couple's love. The celebration was made even more memorable with the presence of several renowned personalities — Anil Kapoor, Sonali Bendre, Padmini Kolhapure, David Dhawan, Manish Malhotra, Rakesh Roshan, Anita Hassanandani, Kriti Kharbanda and Samir Soni, among others. While the dance performances added energy to the event, the highlight of the evening happened when Jeetendra and Shobha exchanged garlands and recreated the moment from their wedding.

Jeetendra and Shobha Kapoor, married in 1974, continue to share a strong bond. Looking back on their relationship, veteran actress Mumtaz once shared her experience working with Jeetendra and mentioned how difficult it was to get along with him due to his closeness with Shobha.

Recently, the OTT platform Netflix announced an exclusive docu-series on Hrithik Roshan's family. The audiences will experience the rich tapestry of their multi-generational legacy through song and stories.