



## India Rejects US Claim On Trade Deal Delay Says 'PM Modi Did Not Call...'

(Gns). India has strongly denied the recent statement made by US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, who claimed that a trade deal between India and the United States fell through because Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not personally call US President Donald Trump.

India's government refuted US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick's claim that a trade deal with the US failed due to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's reluctance to call President Donald Trump, asserting ongoing and professional trade talks. The External Affairs Ministry stated that India and the U.S. have been working towards a balanced agreement since

February of the previous year, with discussions and phone calls between Modi and Trump occurring, despite tariff challenges.

The Indian government called this claim "not accurate" and clarified that talks between the two countries have been ongoing and professional.

India Says Claim Is "Not Accurate"

During a press briefing on Friday, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India and the US have been working seriously toward a balanced and fair trade agreement since February last year. He explained that both sides have held many rounds of discussions to find common ground and that they were close to reaching a deal on several

occasions.

"We have seen the remarks. The description of these talks is not accurate," Jaiswal said. He added that India remains committed to achieving a trade deal that benefits both nations, which have strong and complementary economies. He also noted that Prime Minister Modi and President Trump had spoken on the phone eight times in 2025 to discuss different areas of cooperation, including trade.

India's response came just hours after Lutnick claimed that the deal was delayed because Modi chose not to personally call Trump. According to Lutnick, "It was all set up, and you just had to have Modi call the President. But they were uncomfortable

doing it. So Modi didn't call."

linked to India's continued purchase of Russian oil.



How the Trade Talks Broke Down

Negotiations between India and the US reportedly stalled last year, after which President Trump raised tariffs on Indian imports to 50%. This included a 25% increase

pressure on the Indian rupee and worried investors who were hoping for progress in the long-pending trade discussions.

Lutnick said India was looking for a tariff rate similar to what the US offered to countries like the UK and Vietnam. However, he admitted that the earlier offer is no longer valid.

He also compared India's situation to that of the UK, saying British Prime Minister Keir Starmer personally called Trump before a key deadline, which helped finalize

their trade deal quickly.

Lutnick described India's hesitation as being "on the wrong side of the seesaw," meaning that timing and personal diplomacy made a difference.

Strain in India-US Relations

Relations between India and the US faced challenges last year when Trump imposed additional tariffs after India continued importing Russian oil. Reports suggested that Trump tried to reach Modi several times but did not get a response, which

added to the tension.

Despite these differences, communication between the two leaders later resumed through phone calls on occasions such as Modi's birthday, Diwali, and in December. However, the trade deal still remains uncertain, with both countries yet to agree on final terms.

India maintains that it is ready to continue discussions and hopes to reach a fair and beneficial agreement that strengthens the economic partnership between the two nations.

## Kejriwal, Bhagwant Mann Assure Punjab Traders of Hassle-Free Governance at State Traders Commission Meet

(Gns). Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal and Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann on Friday assured traders and shopkeepers across Punjab that they would no longer be forced to run from office to office to get their issues resolved, as the state government will now reach markets directly through the newly formed Punjab State Traders Commission.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) launched the Punjab State Traders Commission, with Arvind Kejriwal and Bhagwant Singh Mann, to address traders' issues directly, promising to resolve problems and simplify the tax system while

ensuring the welfare of shopkeepers.

Addressing the maiden meeting of the commission held in SAS Nagar, Kejriwal said the initiative marked a decisive break from years of bureaucratic neglect and harassment faced by traders under previous governments. He stressed that protecting small shopkeepers and ensuring ease of doing business was essential for the country's economic progress.

"No nation can progress unless its small shopkeepers and traders are protected. Governments have traditionally treated traders as

thieves, subjecting them to tax terrorism, harassment and endless paperwork," Kejriwal said, adding that the AAP government aims to simplify the tax system, make it transparent and



trader-friendly, and eliminate unnecessary procedural hurdles.

Kejriwal alleged that traders across the country were squeezed by governments through taxes while

political parties sought donations during elections. "On one hand, traders are harassed through taxation, and on the other, they are pressured for donations. We do not see traders as thieves. I come from a trading family and understand the struggles of shopkeepers," he said.

He announced that trader commissions would function at state, district and constituency levels, with local traders working alongside police and administration officials. These bodies will hold meetings in markets to identify individual, market-level and policy-related problems, many of which, Kejriwal said, would be resolved on the spot.

## Shri Amit Shah, inaugurates National IED Data Management System of NSG through video conferencing

(Gns). Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah today inaugurated the National IED Data Management System (NIDMS) of the National Security Guard (NSG) in New Delhi through video conferencing. The event was attended by the Union Home Secretary, the Director of the Intelligence Bureau (IB), the Director General of NSG, the Director Generals of Central Armed Police Forces, and the Director Generals of Police of various states.

Addressing the program, Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, in the last six years, significant work has been done to generate various types of data and collect it in a systematic manner. He

said that NIDMS will prove to be extremely important in the coming days for the investigation of all types of terrorist incidents occurring



in the country and for the analysis of their various aspects. Further, NIDMS will become the next-generation security shield against terrorism. Shri Shah said that the Ministry of Home Affairs has generated various types of data in the past years, but until now they were in silos, i.e., separate from each other. Now, we are making efforts

to connect all these data sources with one another and to develop an advanced Artificial Intelligence-based software

NIA, Anti-Terrorism Squads (ATS) across the country, state police forces and all Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs). He said that data related to any explosion or IED incident occurring at any location can be included in this system. By utilising this data, necessary guidance can be obtained during investigations in every state. He said that NIDMS will prove extremely important in investigating terrorist activities, understanding trends in explosions, and formulating effective strategies against them.

Union Home Minister said that the database available with NSG contains data related to all bomb explosions from 1999 till now. He said that through NIDMS, this data will now be made available to police forces across the country and relevant agencies.

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## Vikas Utsav Celebrated in Newly Formed Shamlaji Taluka in the Presence of Chief Minister Shri Bhupendra Patel

**Chief Minister graces at the Conclusion of Shamlaji Mahotsav at the Renowned Pilgrimage Centre Shamlaji**  
**Darshan and Worship Performed at Shamlaji Temple**  
**Aravalli District Receives Development Works Worth Rs. 168 Crore**

Gandhinagar, 09 January 2026 : At the conclusion of the Shamlaji Mahotsav at the renowned pilgrimage centre of Shamlaji, Chief Minister Shri Bhupendra Patel gifted Aravalli district multiple development works worth Rs. 168 crore.

After Shamlaji was recently declared a new taluka by the state government, this marked the Chief Minister's first programme in Shamlaji, turning the Shamlaji Mahotsav into a development festival (Vikas Utsav) for the entire Aravalli district.

Sharing details of Rs. 1,232 crore worth of development works approved for Aravalli district over the past three years, the Chief Minister said the Prime Minister has ensured adequate funding to bring remote areas and deprived sections into the mainstream of development.

The Chief Minister said the Prime Minister has pro-



moted modern development while preserving the divinity and grandeur of religious and historical sites through the mantra "Vikas bhi, Virasat bhi." He stated that housing, education, livelihood and healthcare facilities have been provided in tribal areas. Community health centres are being upgraded and converted into sub-district hospitals. He added that through 12 science colleges, two universities and 11 medical colleges in these tribal areas, opportunities have opened up for the children of tribal families to become doctors and engineers.

To realise the vision of Viksit Bharat and Aatmanirbhar Bharat, the Chief Minister urged the promotion of tribal traditional arts, skills, occupations and products through Vocal for Local and Local for

Global.

On this occasion, Minister Shri Raman Solanki said that under the leadership of Chief Minister, Gujarat has seen unprecedented development, with notable progress in education, healthcare, employment and livelihoods in the tribal areas of Aravalli district through state and central schemes.

Minister of State Shri P. C. Baranda stated that the Shamlaji Mahotsav is a living symbol of the unity, culture and faith of the tribal community. This year, with the participation of thousands of people and the folk music, dance and devotional ambience created by artists, the community's heritage has been further strengthened. The development works received today and their inauguration will give further momentum to the

## Shiva devotees arrive by special trains to participate in the Somnath Swabhiman Parv: Receive a warm welcome at Veraval Station

**Devotees arriving by train from Rajkot, Surat, Vadodara, and Ahmedabad were accorded a vibrant welcome with drum beats, shehnai, and traditional Bhathigal Garba**  
**The land of Prabhas and the station premises resonated with chants of 'Har Har Mahadev' and 'Jai Somnath'**

Gandhinagar, 09 January 2026: Under the 'Swabhiman Parv', a celebration of India's spiritual faith being held from January 8 to 11, the State Government has made special arrangements for Shiva devotees. As part of these efforts, special train services have been introduced for devotees travel-

ling to Somnath from Rajkot, Surat, Ahmedabad, and Vadodara, ensuring safe, smooth, and convenient travel to the sacred Somnath Dham.

On the occasion of the Somnath Swabhiman Parv, a special welcome programme was held at Veraval Railway Station. Shiva devotees arriving by train from various cities were greeted with kumkum tilak and bouquets, along with drum beats, shehnai, and Bhathigal Garba, reflecting

deep devotion, warmth, and strong faith in Somnath.

At the break of dawn on January 9, the land of Prabhas resonated with



chants of 'Har Har Mahadev - Jai Somnath' as the Veraval Railway Station premises echoed with devotional fervour.

The Gujarat State Road Transport Corporation has arranged special bus services between the station and the temple, enabling a large number of devotees from Rajkot, Surat, Ahmedabad, and Vadodara to have darshan at Somnath.

With the introduction of special train services, Shiva devotees are benefiting from timely and comfortable travel.

Under the Somnath Swabhiman Parv, a range of facilities, including transportation, guidance, and overall management, have been implemented smoothly for devotees.

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**11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2026**  
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## Editorial

### After the Fall of Caracas

Venezuela was not an aberration. It was a declaration. The forcible removal of Nicolás Maduro was presented as a corrective to criminality and democratic collapse, but it has also reset expectations about how power will now be exercised. The operation's brazenness ~ a sitting head of state seized, a government displaced, an interim authority installed ~ was not merely tactical. It was signalling.

And signals, in international politics, are rarely sent without intended recipients. Those recipients are already visible. Greenland is the most unsettling case, because it collapses the distinction between strategic interest and territorial ambition. The language used ~ necessity, security, inevitability ~ mirrors justifications historically associated with expansionist powers, not treaty-bound democracies. If strategic value alone becomes sufficient rationale, alliance membership offers no immunity. Colombia sits at the intersection of ideology, narcotics and geography. A left-leaning government, persistent drug flows, and rising US frustration form a combustible mix. Historically a close security partner, it is now being rhetorically recast as a problem state.

That shift matters. When partners are redefined as liabilities, the space for coercive action widens rapidly. Mexico is more complicated and therefore more dangerous. Its proximity to the US makes restraint harder, not easier. Cartels, migration and domestic US politics combine to create pressure for action that diplomacy struggles to absorb. Any cross-border intervention, even limited, would fracture a foundational bilateral relationship. But the logic of "if they won't, we will" has already been articulated. Once that logic is normalised, execution becomes a matter of timing, not principle. Iran lies outside the hemispheric frame, but not outside the doctrine. Here the justification is moral rather than geographic: human rights, nuclear threat, regional destabilisation. The problem is that morality, when weaponised, becomes indistinguishable from convenience. If domestic repression is sufficient cause for external force, the list of eligible targets expands dramatically ~ and selectively. Cuba, finally, is the low-hanging fruit. Isolated, economically brittle, and now deprived of Venezuelan support, it is being openly described as a regime waiting to fall. That language is not analytical; it is anticipatory. It prepares audiences for an outcome, and outcomes tend to follow preparation. Taken together, these cases reveal a pattern. This is not a scatter of unrelated grievances. It is a coherent posture: strategic impatience combined with ideological certainty. Influence is no longer sufficient; control is the goal. Legitimacy is no longer negotiated; it is asserted. The danger is not that power is being used. Great powers always use power.

The danger is that constraint is being discarded. When intervention becomes normalised, resistance becomes rational. Smaller states hedge, rivals harden, and institutions hollow out. Venezuela will be defended as a special case. Every intervention is. But precedents do not remain isolated. They travel. They are cited. They are eventually turned. Venezuela was the breach. The question now is whether it will remain the exception ~ or become the template as America turns brazenly rapacious.

## Chief Minister Shri Bhupendra Patel inaugurates Rashtriya Khanij Chintan Shibir in Gandhinagar

**Guided by the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, this Chintan Shibir will act as a robust platform to chart a strategic roadmap for the mining sector in shaping a New India:- CM Chief Minister:-**

**The Prime Minister has implemented holistic reforms across all sectors to make the country Atmanirbhar**

**Gujarat holds a strategic position for key minerals, including lignite, limestone, and bauxite.**

**Leveraging its mineral wealth, Gujarat is committed to advancing the "Viksit Bharat @ 2047" vision, promoting vocal-for-local and Atmanirbhar Bharat**

**India's mining sector is set to become a key pillar in realising the vision of a "Viksit Bharat@2047": Union Minister of Mines Shri G. Kishan Reddy**

**Mineral resources form the backbone of our economy:- Union Minister of Jal Shakti Shri C.R. Patil**

**Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar and Ministers of Mines from various states participate**

Gandhinagar, 09 January 2026: Chief Minister Shri Bhupendra Patel, while inaugurating the Rashtriya Khanij Chintan Shibir organised by the Ministry of Mines at Mahatma Mandir, stated that this Chintan Shibir will serve as a strong platform to develop the roadmap for building a New India.

The Ministry of Mines' inaugural Chintan Shibir is being held at Mahatma Mandir for three days, with

participation from Ministers of Mines, officials, and stakeholders representing various states across the country.

Chief Minister Shri Bhupendra Patel inaugurated the three-day Chintan Shibir in the presence of Union Ministers Shri G. Kishan Reddy and Shri C.R. Patil, Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar, the Union Minister of State for Mines, and other dignitaries.

CM added that the mining sector is a key pillar of India's industries and economy. By strengthening this pillar, the Chintan Shibir aims to accelerate national development through collective strategic deliberations.

He noted that the Prime Minister has introduced holistic reforms across all sectors to make India Atmanirbhar, with the mining sector reflecting these reforms—enabled by clear policies, strong political will, and transparent governance.

Shri Bhupendra Patel emphasised that the Prime Minister's approach prioritises sustainable development in harmony with nature, and in mining, this is being achieved through green mining, scientific reclamation, and technology-driven monitoring.

CM underscored Gujarat's strategic significance for key minerals like lignite, limestone, and bauxite, adding that the state has set an example not just in production and auctioning but also in transparency, discipline, and regulatory compliance.

11 years, noting a 190% increase in mineral exploration since 2014. Production of minerals such as iron, limestone, lead, and zinc has seen double-digit growth. Transparent auction mechanisms and the District Mineral Foundation (DMF) have significantly boosted state mining revenues.

To achieve the vision of a Viksit Bharat, the central government is emphasising critical minerals like lithium, cobalt, and tungsten. Shri Reddy stated that India is now focusing on the full value chain, including extraction, refining, recycling, and reprocessing, with special programs in place to recover critical minerals from e-waste by 2030.

The primary objective of Chintan Shibir is to develop a strategic plan for the coming years, aiming to minimise the time from mineral block auction to operation, enhance the use of next-generation technologies and digitisation, focus on R&D and skill development, and position India as

a global processing hub. The Minister also urged initiatives like "Urban Mining" and "Waste to Wealth" to promote environmental sustainability and resource reuse.

Union Minister of Jal Shakti Shri C.R. Patil emphasised the critical coordination required between the mining sector and water management in achieving "Viksit Bharat @ 2047." As India progresses toward a Viksit Bharat under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, mineral resources remain the backbone of the economy, providing essential raw materials for technological and infrastructural development.

He stressed the importance of environmental and water resource conservation during mining, advocating the principle of "Mining with Mindfulness." Recycling and reusing water during mining is essential, and modern technology must be applied to protect groundwater levels.

The Minister added that strengthening self-reliance in the mining sector will reduce import dependence, save foreign exchange, and create local employment opportunities. During the Shibir, he commended the digital and innovative methods adopted by the mining department to enhance transparency and efficiency.

Union Minister of State Shri Satish Chandra Dube described the Conclave as

a decisive roadmap for India's mining future, highlighting 2026 as a critical year for achieving the goal of a Viksit Bharat. To make India Atmanirbhar in critical minerals used for battery production and energy storage, the government is accelerating auctioning and production processes. In the current technological era, the use of artificial intelligence and modern tools in mining is essential to increase efficiency, reduce pollution, and save time and costs.

Highlighting environmental protection alongside mining development, the Minister stressed that restoring environmental balance and compensating for mining-related impacts is a shared moral responsibility. He clarified that government efforts alone are insufficient, and private sector collaboration is essential.

Shri Piyush Goyal, Secretary, Ministry of Mines, delivered the welcome address.

The event was attended by Ministers Shri Kollu Ravindra (Andhra Pradesh), Shri Bibhuti Bhusan Jena (Odisha), Shri G Vivek Venkatswamy (Telangana), Dr. Arun Kumar (Uttar Pradesh), Shri Chingwang (Nagaland), Additional Chief Secretary (Gujarat Industries & Mines Department) Ms Mamta Verma senior officials from the Ministry of Coal and Mines, and dignitaries from the state government.

## Essence of Women Empowerment and Self-Reliance

**Employment worth Rs. 9 crore is provided to 363 women annually through the Somnath Temple**

**252 women are effectively serving in various roles within the Somnath Temple Trust**

**Women completely manage the Bilva Van**

**55 women are engaged in prasad distribution, while 35 women serve in the temple Bhojanalya (dining hall)**

Gandhinagar, 09 January 2026: The Shree Somnath Temple, a living emblem of India's ancient cultural heritage and spiritual legacy, is globally recognised as a centre of faith and devotion. Today, however, this sacred dham goes beyond worship and darshan, emerging as a powerful and inspiring hub for women's empowerment. Through the human-focused and socially responsible initiatives of the Somnath Temple Trust,



women are being guided toward greater self-reliance. Currently, the Somnath Temple Trust has a total of 906 employees, including 262 women. This is not just a number, but a testament to the Trust's inclusive vision and commitment to equal opportunities. The active involvement of women in temple management, service activities, and daily operations brings a distinctive combination of sensitivity, discipline, and dedication to the functioning of the Trust.

Women, a source of great pride, entirely manage the sacred Bilva Van within the temple premises. The 16 women working here maintain the temple's sanctity while promoting environmental protection, green conservation, and cleanliness. This initiative serves as a remarkable example of women's skilled management and strong sense of responsibility.

Additionally, 30 women are providing dedicated service in the temple dining hall. By serving food with care and devotion to thousands of devotees, they keep the temple's tradition of service alive. Similarly, the involvement of 65

women in the sacred task of prasad distribution highlights their discipline, commitment, and reliability.

In total, 363 women receive direct employment through the Somnath Temple Trust. Collectively, they generate an estimated annual income of around Rs. 9 crore, clearly reflecting their economic self-reliance and the positive impact on their standard of living. This income also contributes significantly to the overall development of society.

In this way, the Shree Somnath Temple Trust has established a model worth emulating, blending spiritual heritage with social responsibility and women's empowerment. From this sacred centre of faith, the essence of self-confidence, self-respect, and self-reliance is spreading far and wide.

eternal testament to the unyielding spirit of our Adivasi bravehearts. Their sacrifice, often overshadowed in the annals of India's freedom struggle, deserve to be remembered and recognised.

Buru hills, nestled in the Khunti district of Jharkhand, are more than a geographical landmark; they embody the indomitable spirit of Adivasi courage and valour. This symbolism is deeply rooted in the revolutionary movement led by Bhagwan Birsa Munda in 1899, known as the Ulgulan or "Great Tumult." Birsa Munda, a visionary tribal leader, rallied his people against the oppressive British colonial regime, which had encroached upon their lands, exploited their resources, and eroded their cultural autonomy through exploitative land policies and missionary influences. The Ulgulan was not merely a rebellion; it was a profound assertion of self-rule, encapsulated in Birsa's rallying cry: "Abua Raj e jana, Maharani Raj tundu jana" (Let the queen's rule end, and our rule begin).

Dombari Buru became the epicentre of this resistance, where thousands of Mundas gathered to strategize and stand firm against imperial might. Today, these hills symbolize the timeless Adivasi ethos of resilience, unity, and defiance against injustice, inspiring generations to uphold their heritage and fight for their rights. The events leading to the Dombari Buru massacre unfolded amid escalating tensions in the late 1890s. Birsa Munda's movement gained momentum as tribals resisted the British zamindari system and forest laws that deprived them of their ancestral lands. On 5 January 1900, Birsa's followers clashed with colonial forces, killing two police constables in Etkeidih. Two days later, on January 7, they stormed a police station in Khunti, resulting in the death of another constable. Fearing a full-scale uprising, the British mobilized troops

under Captain H.H. Dalton. On January 9, over 400 unarmed Munda tribals – men, women, and children – had assembled peacefully at Dombari Buru for a meeting. Without warning, British forces opened fire, unleashing a hail of bullets that turned the hill into a slaughter ground. Reports describe the nearby Tajna River running red with blood, as hundreds were mowed down in cold blood. This atrocity, which claimed over 400 lives, predated the infamous Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919 by nearly two decades and was far bloodier in its brutality against an indigenous population. It is appropriately called the "Jallianwala Bagh of Jharkhand" because, like Amritsar's tragedy, it exposed the ruthless face of colonialism, targeting defenceless people in a confined space with no escape.

Munda himself evaded capture briefly but was arrested on 3 February 1900, and died in Ranchi jail on 9 June 1900, under suspicious circumstances at the age of 25. As the nation celebrates the 150th birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsa Munda, the time could be right to consider Dombari Buru being declared a national memorial, not just for the martyrs of 1900, but as a tribute to all tribal freedom fighters across India. Such a memorial would serve as a sacred site of pilgrimage, educating visitors about the often-forgotten contribution of the Adivasi community to India's independence. It could include museums, memorials, and cultural centres that highlight tribal histories, fostering national unity by integrating indigenous narratives into the mainstream freedom story.

This recognition would honour the sacrifices made in remote hills and forests, ensuring that the legacy of Adivasi resistance is preserved for posterity. Designating Dombari Buru as a national memorial could be the finest homage to India's tribal freedom fighters, spanning from Raghunath Mahato's revolt in 1769 to Jaipal Singh Munda's advocacy in the 1940s. Raghunath Mahato, a leader from the Jungle Mahals, spearheaded a rebellion against the East India Company's exploitative policies, mobilizing local communities in a fierce uprising that challenged early colonial dominance. His efforts laid the groundwork for future resistances.

## Military Transformation

(Gns).

Warfare today is witnessing a massive change. But when we analyse some ongoing wars, it is hard to decipher what is changing, and what is not. In this age of media-hype, every new idea or technology is touted as a game-changer, leaving little room for honest understanding on the future of warfare. Understanding where warfare is headed can help political leaders, defence policy makers and military practitioners to make informed decisions, and take control of their strategic choices.

Three aspects of recognising change are important. First, recognising those changes that are transactional or incremental in nature. For example, India buying additional fighter jets to supplement



its air warfare capabilities. Or, buying tanks, guns and warships. These are useful increments, but nothing spectacular in terms of altering the balance of power. They simply enhance operational efficiency. The capacity might improve, but not the broader concept to fight the adversary. Newsmakers and analysts tend to obsess over such transactional changes as it produces a constant flow of news-worthy content and hype. They fail to ask 'how' and 'why' each change can, or cannot, cause a fundamental shift in India's overall war-fighting capacity. Notwithstanding this, the incremental change is necessary to maintain status

quo, particularly against China and Pakistan, and to affect more profound changes within the three Services, envisaged at the systemic level.

Second, identifying those changes that have the potential to re-shape the force. They are systemic in nature. They are both doctrinal and structural, and invariably driven by changes in technology, unlike those incremental changes these are somewhat different. Here, while the wider system remains

the same, the balance between these factors undergoes a change. They typically show up as doctrinal or technological preferences, to define new concepts, structures and tactics on the battlefield. For instance, India's quest for theatre-isation of its armed forces has the potential to produce a systemic change, but only if it is grounded in an inspiring joint doctrine and right choice of technologies. That the Air Force wants to stick to the status quo is a different matter.

In that context, systemic changes are easy to conceive or pronounce, but these are difficult to operationalize, as most militaries are inherently resistant to change. Essentially, the inter-Service tussle boils down to who gets to define the system.

(Gns).

India today stands among the world's largest automotive producers, yet remains a minor presence in global automotive trade. This is not a contradiction of scale, but of strategy. The country builds millions of vehicles each year, employs tens of millions of people across the value chain, and anchors a vast ecosystem of steel, rubber, electronics, and services. And still, in the segments that truly shape global demand – passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles and electric mobility – India's footprint is surprisingly small.

The explanation lies in how the industry has evolved. For decades, policy, protection and market design have encouraged manufacturers to look inward. High tariffs, local content rules and a vast domestic consumer base created a comfortable ecosystem where growth could be achieved without intense export competitiveness. The result is an industry finely tuned to Indian price points, Indian regulations and Indian tastes, but only selectively aligned with global demand. This inward orientation shows up clearly in export patterns. India performs well in motorcycles and tractors, categories where it has cost advantages and established manufacturing depth. But these segments form a relatively narrow slice of world trade. In contrast, the global automotive market is driven by passenger cars, light commercial vehicles and now, increasingly, electric vehicles. It is here that India lags ~ despite having the engineering base, supplier networks and labour scale to compete. The electric vehicle transition makes this imbalance starker. While global EV trade has surged, India's participation remains marginal. This is not for lack of policy intent, but because EV ecosystems are built on deep integration: battery supply chains, power electronics, software, charging infrastructure and global platform manufacturing.

Without scale in these critical inputs, exports cannot take off. Domestic assembly alone does not create export competitiveness.



## WESTERN RAILWAY SHINES AT 70TH RAILWAY WEEK CENTRAL FUNCTION - ATI VISHISHT RAIL SEVA PURASKAR 2025

Mumbai, **Celebrating Excellence in Service, Safety and Infrastructure Development** Western Railway once again distinguished itself at the national level by securing multiple prestigious Railway Week Shields and individual honours under the Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar (AVRSP) – 2025, reaffirming its steadfast commitment to excellence in railway operations, safety, infrastructure development and passenger-centric services. The 70th Railway Week Central Function was held at India International Convention & Expo Centre, Yashobhoomi, New Delhi on Friday, 09th January, 2026, during which the Hon'ble Minister of Railways, Information and Broadcasting and Electronics and Information Technology - Shri Ashwini

Vaishnav, felicitated the Shield winners as well as individual awardees. According to a press release issued by the Chief Public Relations Officer of Western Railway, Shri



**Shri Vivek Kumar Gupta, General Manager, Western & Central Railways along with Principal Head of Departments receiving Shields from Hon'ble Minister of Railways, Information and Broadcasting and Electronics and Information Technology - Shri Ashwini Vaishnav.**

Vineet Abhishek, the Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar Shields were conferred under 26 categories covering various operational and technical domains, recognising excellence across the Indian Railways system.

At the national level, among all Zonal Railways, Western Railway achieved remarkable success by winning several prestigious Railway Week Shields and were also the highest Shield win-

Western Railway, reflecting sustained excellence across critical operational, technical and medical fields. In addition, Western Railway also emerged as a joint winner of the Civil Engineering Shield and the Civil Engineering Construction Shield, shared with Central Railway.

Shri Vineet Abhishek further stated that about 100 railway employees from all Zonal Railways were honoured with individual awards at the national level this year. Of these, seven officers and staff of Western Railway received the coveted Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar in recognition of their meritorious and exemplary performance, reflecting their exceptional dedication, professionalism and commitment to duty. The recipients of the Ati Vishisht Rail Seva Puraskar – 2025

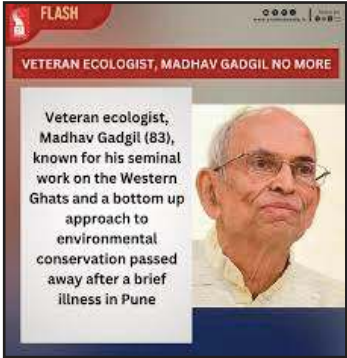
ners amongst the Zonal Railways this year. The Comprehensive Health Care Shield, the Non-Fare Revenue Shield, the Track Maintenance Shield and the Electrical Engineering Shield were won solely by

## Environmental Stalwart Dr Madhav Gadgil Dies at 83 in Pune

(Gns). Senior ecologist, environmentalist and writer Dr. Madhav Gadgil (83), who authored the landmark report on the conservation of the Western Ghats, passed away in Pune on Wednesday night. Dr. Gadgil was a former member of the Prime Minister's Scientific Advisory Council and headed the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) in 2010. The report prepared by the panel under his leadership came to be widely known as the Gadgil Commission Report.

Dr. Madhav Gadgil, the 83-year-old ecologist and author of the Western Ghats conservation report, passed away in Pune; he led the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel in 2010 and also served on several national bodies. Born on May 24, 1942, in Pune, Dr. Gadgil completed his BSc in Zoology from Fergusson College,

Pune. He went on to earn his MSc from Harvard University in 1965 and later obtained a PhD in Biology from Harvard in 1969. After returning to India in 1971, he joined the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, in 1973. He served the institution for nearly three decades and held several key positions before retiring in 2004.



**Veteran ecologist, Madhav Gadgil (83), known for his seminal work on the Western Ghats and a bottom up approach to environmental conservation passed away after a brief illness in Pune**

Dr. Gadgil also served in various national bodies, including as a member of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and the National Advisory Council (NAC). A talented sportsman in his younger days, Dr. Gadgil set records in the high jump at the Maharashtra State Junior level and at Pune University in 1959 and 1961. He also represented Pune University at the All India Inter-University athletics competitions.

## NASA Plans Early Return of Crew-11 Astronauts After Medical Emergency on Space Station

(Gns). NASA is preparing to return four Crew-11 astronauts from the International Space Station (ISS) earlier than scheduled after a medical emergency led to the indefinite postponement of a planned spacewalk on January 8, 2026. The US space agency said the affected crew member is currently stable, but mission managers have opted for an early return to allow for comprehensive medical evaluation and treatment on Earth. NASA is expediting the return of four Crew-11 astronauts from the International Space Station after a medical issue involving one crew member led to the indefinite postponement of a January 8, 2026, spacewalk, prioritizing the astronaut's medical evaluation on Earth. NASA officials stressed that while scientific research aboard the ISS continues, crew health has taken priority. Mission planners are now reworking schedules for a SpaceX Crew Dragon return flight,

and the agency is reassessing a follow-up spacewalk that had been planned for January 15. NASA said further updates on crew movements and revised timelines will be shared within 24 hours. Medical Issue Halts US Spacewalk

The medical concern surfaced on Wednesday afternoon, involving one unnamed Crew-11 astronaut. NASA has not disclosed the individual's identity, citing medical privacy protocols. The postponed US EVA 94 spacewalk was scheduled for Thursday morning and was expected to involve astronauts Mike Fincke and Zena Cardman, who were set to conduct external work on the ISS, including upgrades to solar arrays and power systems. Preparations for the spacewalk were immediately halted once the medical issue was reported, with

mission control shifting focus to crew monitoring. Fincke, a veteran astronaut with multiple spacewalks to his credit, and Cardman, who was prepar-



ing for her first-ever spacewalk, had undergone extensive training for the operation. Late Wednesday, NASA confirmed that the EVA was placed on hold as ground teams began planning for the crew's return. Crew-11 launched months earlier with a multinational team of American, Japanese and Russian astronauts, assigned to conduct research in microgravity, biology and emerging space technologies. NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman said the

decision reflects the agency's strict safety standards, which allow for planned missions to be shortened when health concerns arise. Extended exposure to microgravity is known to cause fluid shifts, bone density loss and vascular changes, and NASA has previously documented rare cases of venous thrombosis during space missions.

Astronauts aboard the ISS are trained to manage medical emergencies using onboard equipment and telemedicine support from Earth-based doctors, but NASA noted that some diagnostic tests and treatments are only possible after landing.

NASA pointed to past missions where astronauts required additional medical checks after returning to Earth, including Crew-8 in 2024, even as station operations continued without disruption.

The situation highlights the challenges of human spaceflight, where health risks are amplified nearly 400 km above Earth.

## Karnataka at 3% Fiscal Deficit: What It Means for State Spending and Borrowing

(Gns). Karnataka has reached the 3 percent fiscal deficit limit allowed under the Fiscal Responsibility Act, as higher borrowings support expenditure promised in the 2025-26 budget. Earlier, the state had projected a fiscal deficit of 2.95 percent of gross state domestic product (GSDP), estimated at Rs 90,428 crore.

Karnataka has reached the 3 percent fiscal deficit limit for the 2025-26 budget, projected at Rs 90,428 crore, attributed to revenue shortfalls and increased borrowing, with the upcoming budget factoring a balancing act between expenditure demands and fiscal constraints. Finance department officials attribute the rise in the deficit to revenue shortfalls, with income growth lagging behind committed spending. The mid-term fiscal plan indicates that actual revenue collections have been lower than anticipated, even as costs for welfare schemes and guarantee



programmes across departments continue to rise.

As a result, borrowing levels have increased. "We have begun preparations for this year's budget, and the Chief Minister will have to decide on the approach for the next fiscal," said Ritesh Kumar Singh, Additional Chief Secretary (Finance). He added that borrowings are expected to rise as the year progresses. "While borrowings may touch Rs 93,000 crore in the upcoming quarter, as projected by a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) report, this is not alarming or unusual," Singh explained.

"Each year, our fiscal deficit and borrowings grow. Traditionally, 75 percent of annual borrowing happens in the fourth quarter, and this year may mark the highest share yet."

Singh noted that states follow different strategies to manage cash flow depending on past dues and pending bills. "Some states carry a two-month overhang from the previous fiscal year and may need to borrow heavily in the first quarter. Karnataka's situation is more controlled."

Officials in the finance department emphasise that Karnataka maintains limited payment backlogs at the start of a new financial year. "Our overhang is around two weeks in the first quarter."

## A New Chapter of belief and Women Empowerment from the Sacred Land of Somnath; Vastra Prasad initiative transforms local women into 'Lakhpati Didi's'

**"Our handmade kurtas, carrying the blessings of Shree Somnath – a thought that fills us with pride."- Empowered Women**

**From the sanctum to the flag, and from the Bilva Van to the Vastra Prasad, women empowerment takes centre stage in Somnath**  
**Women creatively convert the sacred yellow cloths (pitambar) offered to Mahadev into kurtas worn by devotees across India and abroad**

Gandhinagar, 09 January 2026: In the presence of the first Jyotirlinga, Shree Somnath Mahadev, lives are being transformed. With divine blessings, local women of Somnath are gaining employment and moving forward on the path of empowerment. At Shree

Somnath Temple, leading from the sanctum to the flag and from the Bilva Van

become a source of economic independence for rural women. Under a



to the vastra prasad, the Temple Trust gives priority exclusively to local women.

From this sacred land of Shree Somnath, a new chapter of faith, women's empowerment, and an Atmanirbhar Bharat has been written. Here, the sacred yellow cloths (pitambar) offered to Mahadev are no longer mere symbols of devotion; they have

unique initiative by the Shree Somnath Trust, these sacred garments are transformed into artistic and appealing kurtas, which reach Shiva devotees across India and abroad as Mahadev's prasad, while opening the path for women in surrounding villages to become 'Lakhpati Didis'. The vision of Shree

Somnath Trust Chairman and India's esteemed Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, to transform 'women power' into 'national power' is clearly reflected in this initiative. This effort extends Somnath's deep tradition of social responsibility, where sacred garments used in the adornment of Shree Somnath Mahadev and Mata Parvati were previously distributed to thousands of people in need. When Mahadev's vastra prasad reaches someone, it carries a priceless message: they are never alone, for 'Somnath, "Sauna Nath eva Somnath" the Lord of All, is with them'.

Building on devotion, divinity, and empathy, the Trust has linked faith with

## Eight Dead After Bus Plunges Into Gorge In Sirmaur, Himachal Pradesh

(Gns). A tragic road accident in Himachal Pradesh's Sirmaur district claimed at least eight lives and left several others injured when a private bus fell into a deep gorge near Haripurdhur on Friday morning.

In Himachal Pradesh's Sirmaur district, a private bus traveling from Kupvi to Shimla fell into a gorge near Haripurdhur on Friday morning, resulting in at least eight fatalities and several injuries, with rescue operations ongoing and authorities investigating the cause. Superintendent of Police Nishchint Singh Negi and Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu provided

updates and expressed their condolences.

The bus, which was travelling from Kupvi to Shimla, lost control and plunged down the steep hillside, leading to a major rescue operation in the area.

According to Superintendent of Police (SP) Nishchint Singh Negi, there were around 30 to 35 passengers on board when the incident occurred. "Eight deaths have been confirmed so far. The number of casualties may increase as rescue teams continue their work," he said.

Local villagers were the first to reach the accident site. Videos and photos

from the scene showed residents helping police and emergency personnel in pulling injured passen-



gers out of the wreckage. Several people were rushed to nearby hospitals with serious injuries.

Police, medical teams, and local administration officials arrived at the scene soon after receiving the information. SP Nishchint Singh Negi said

that the rescue operations were ongoing and that the injured were being shifted to nearby hospitals in Higher Sangrah, Dadahu, and Nahan for treatment.

The condition of at least five passengers is said to be critical. Due to the location of the accident, rescue efforts have been difficult, as the bus fell into a narrow and deep valley surrounded by rough terrain.

The cause of the accident is not yet known. However, initial reports suggest that the bus may have skidded off the road due to sharp turns and poor visibility in the hilly area. Authorities are investigating whether speeding or mechanical failure played a role.

## Who Is Exiled Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi & Why Is His Name Surfacing During Iran Protests?

(Gns). Exiled Iranian Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi on Friday slammed the Iranian government for cutting all lines of communication, including shutting down the internet, and even attempting to jam satellite signals as the protests intensifies in Iran.

In a post on X, Pahlavi thanked US President Donald Trump for his promise to hold the Iranian regime accountable. He called for the use of "all technical, financial, and diplomatic resources available to restore communication to the Iranian people so that their voice and their will can be heard and seen."

Reza Pahlavi, the exiled Iranian Crown Prince, criticized the Iranian government for cutting communication lines amid intensify-

ing protests, and he thanked former President Donald Trump for his promise to hold the regime accountable. Pahlavi, son

lite signals. I want to thank the leader of the free world, President Trump, for reiterating his promise to hold the regime to account. It is



of the last monarch of Iran, urges the restoration of communication to support the protesters.

"Millions of Iranians demanded their freedom tonight. In response, the regime in Iran has cut all lines of communication. It has shut down the Internet. It has cut landlines. It may even attempt to jam satel-

time for others, including European leaders, to follow his lead, break their silence, and act more decisively in support of the people of Iran.

I call on them to use all technical, financial, and diplomatic resources available to restore communication to the Iranian people so that their voice and their

will can be heard and seen. Do not let the voices of my courageous compatriots be silenced," Pahlavi stated in the post.

Who Is Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi?

Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi is one of the most recognizable figures in the Iranian diaspora and a long-standing symbol of opposition to the Islamic Republic. Born in Tehran on October 31, 1960, he is the eldest son of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, the last monarch of Iran who was deposed during the 1979 Iranian Revolution. When the revolution swept across the country, ending the Pahlavi dynasty and establishing the Islamic Republic, Reza Pahlavi was still a teenager and soon went into exile with his family.

## "India's languages are not contradictory; rather, they contribute to one another." - Vice President Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan

**The Third International Bharatiya Languages Conference – 2026 inaugurated in New Delhi** (Gns).

The inaugural session of the Third International Bharatiya Languages Conference – 2026 was held at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Janpath, under the joint aegis of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), Ministry of Culture, Government of India, Antarashtriya Sahyog Parishad, Vaishwik Hindi Parishad, and the Department of Indian Languages and Literary Studies, University of Delhi. The conference was inaugurated by the Honourable Vice President of India, Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan.

On this occasion, Dr. Ramesh Pokhriyal

'Nishank', Union Minister of Education and former Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, attended as distinguished guest. The inaugural session was chaired by the President of IGNCA and eminent scholar, Padma Bhushan Shri Ram Bahadur Rai. Shri Shyam Parande, Secretary General of Antarashtriya Sahyog Parishad, and renowned Japanese linguist Padma Shri Tomio Misokami also attended as special guests. Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, Member Secretary, IGNCA, and Prof. Ravi Prakash Tekchandani, Head of the Department of Indian Languages and Literary Studies, University of Delhi, were also present on the occasion. The session was conducted by Anil Joshi, Director of the International

Bharatiya Languages Conference. Shri C. P.



Radhakrishnan, while speaking at the Third International Bharatiya Languages Conference, said that languages are the living conscience of civilisation, as they are not merely instruments of communication but carriers of memory, culture, tradition, and values passed down through generations. India's unity has never rested on uniformity; rather, it has been sustained by mutual

respect among many languages, which are bound together by a shared civilizational ethos and dharma. Bharatiya languages are not contradictory; instead, they constantly contribute to one another, thereby enriching philosophy, knowledge, and cultural expression.

From ancient inscriptions and palm-leaf manuscripts to contemporary digital forms, languages have shaped thought, preserved knowledge, and nurtured collective imagination. Since they have always travelled beyond borders, long before diplomacy, our responsibility today is not only to protect linguistic diversity but also to support endangered languages and carry them confidently into the future through education and technology.



## Shri Dharmendra Pradhan chairs meeting on Samagra Shiksha 3.0 - 'Reimagining Samagra Shiksha' in New Delhi

Schools must be entrusted to society - Shri Dharmendra Pradhan Union Education Minister calls for a nation-wide, unified plan to drive Samagra Shiksha 2026-27 Consultations to shape a clear roadmap to strengthen school education and reimagine Samagra Shiksha in line with the vision of Viksit Bharat

Posted On: 09 JAN 2026 5:12PM by PIB Delhi Union Minister for Education, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, chaired a day-long consultation meeting with the stakeholders on Samagra Shiksha 3.0, titled 'Reimagining Samagra Shiksha', at Sushma Swaraj Bhawan, Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra, New Delhi, today. The meeting aimed to

develop a strategic, consultative, and implementable roadmap for Samagra Shiksha 3.0 through collaborative deliberations with



States, UTs, and sectoral stakeholders. The discussions focused on emerging challenges, best practices, and priority interventions required to strengthen governance, infrastructure, teacher training, and student entitlements in the next phase of the scheme. The meeting was attended by Shri Jayant

Chaudhary, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship and

Education; Shri Sanjay Kumar, Secretary, School Education and Literacy; Dr. Vineet Joshi, Secretary, Higher Education; Additional and Joint Secretaries of the Ministry; State Education Secretaries and State Project Directors (SPDs) of Samagra Shiksha from 11 States and Union

Territories; representatives from various Ministries and eminent experts from the education sector.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Pradhan said that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has outlined a vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047, which can be realised only when every child in India has access to quality education and the country achieves 100 per cent enrolment up to Class XII. He emphasised that bridging learning gaps, reducing dropouts, improving learning and nutrition outcomes, strengthening teacher capacity, fostering critical skills, and moving the 'Amrit Peedhi' beyond the Macaulay mindset are collective responsibilities for building a strong human capital base.

## District Magistrate held a meeting regarding the traffic system of Mathura, discussed deeply with his subordinates regarding the traffic jam.

Mathura. A meeting regarding the traffic system of the district was held under the chairmanship of District Magistrate Chandra Prakash Singh. The objective of the meeting was to strengthen and streamline the traffic system in the district and to discuss various necessary suggestions. In the meeting, the District Magistrate directed that new traffic rules should be implemented in Mathura-Vrindavan area for road management, parking system and route determination. Before the implementation of the rules, the general public should be sensitized and made aware of the proposed changes. He also gave instructions to initiate immediate and effective action at the identified most jam-packed places. During the meeting, a detailed discussion was held regarding the traffic jam at Govardhan Square, Mandi Square, Chhatikara Square and Narhauli Tiraha of Mathura city and suggestions for alternative arrangements were invited. After a thorough review, Narhauli inter-



District Magistrate SSP Vipra while having a detailed discussion regarding the traffic jam with other officials including Municipal Corporation.

section was identified as the most complex traffic jam point requiring immediate attention. In this regard, it was agreed that to solve the problem of Narhauli intersection, all the concerned agencies including traffic police, police department, municipal corporation, NHAI, electricity department will work in coordination. Instructions were given to make Govardhan Square, Chhatikara Square and Mandi Square more suitable for quick action. Under this, instructions were given to complete the works like shifting of the police post located near the intersec-

tions, trimming of trees, line marking on the routes, shifting of the high-mast to the divider near Govardhan intersection, scheduling for the movement of heavy vehicles and widening of service lanes on priority.

Also, the removal of encroachments made during the festival at Chhatikara Square, Mandi Square and Govardhan Square and immediate strictness on the operation of e-rickshaws was reviewed. Municipal Commissioner and Superintendent of Police Traffic informed that the

biggest hindrance in traffic is being caused by e-rickshaws. To prevent this, immediate notices were issued to e-rickshaw owners and instructions were given to make vehicle registration mandatory. It was also decided that boarding and deboarding of passengers would be allowed from one direction only. For this, it will be made mandatory to get the fabrication done by permanently welding a rod on one side of the e-rickshaw or installing a lockable permanent door. In the meeting, Senior Superintendent of Police Shlok Kumar, Vice President Mathura-Vrindavan Development Authority Lakshmi N, Municipal Commissioner Jag Pravesh, Chief Executive Officer Uttar Pradesh Braj Teerth Vikas Parishad Suraj Patel, Chief Development Officer Manish Meena, Additional Superintendent of Police Rural Suresh Rawat, Additional District Magistrate Administration Amresh Kumar, Additional Superintendent of Police Traffic informed that the

## ARTO is creating awareness about National Road Safety Month

Meeting held regarding 'No Helmet-No Fuel' campaign, petrol pump operators participated

Mathura. In compliance with the instructions given by the Chief Minister, National Road Safety Month is being organized from 01.01.2026 to 31.01.2026. Instructions have been given to celebrate the said month as Zero Fatality Month, in order to make the 'No Helmet-No Fuel' campaign effective under the Road Safety Month under the chairmanship of the District Supply Officer in the district, Ms. Pooja Singh Passenger/Malkar in the meeting hall of Jai Gurudev



Senior Assistant Divisional Transport Officer Enforcement Rajesh Rajput making bike riders aware of the rules at the petrol pump.

Petrol Pump NH-19A meeting was called in the presence of the officer in which all the petrol/diesel pump operators of the district were present. All petrol pump operators present in the meeting were advised not to provide petrol and

diesel at any cost to two wheeler vehicle owners/drivers who are not using helmets and four wheeler vehicle owners/drivers who are not using seat belts and to install CCTV cameras at their petrol pumps. Instructions have

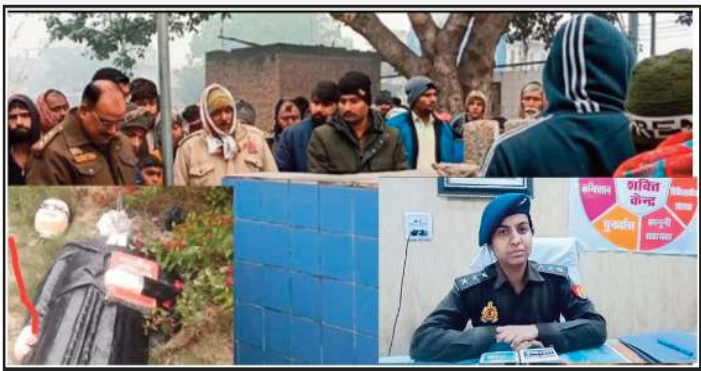
been given to keep public address systems operational and put up banners of 'No Helmet, No Fuel' campaign at petrol pumps.

Senior Assistant Divisional Transport Officer Enforcement Rajesh Rajput has instructed all the passenger/goods vehicle owners/drivers of the district to keep the clutch, steering, brake system of their vehicles in good order as well as follow the rules related to road safety. It has been directed not to use pressure horn/multi horn, if any vehicle is still found using pressure horn/multi horn, then it will have to pay a heavy fine of ten thousand rupees

## Antisocial elements damaged Ambedkar's statue, anger among people

Mathura. Anti-social elements broke the statue of the author of the Constitution, Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, on Hathras Road in Raya town last night. When people came to know about the incident in the morning, the statue of Baba Saheb was lying broken into three parts in Ambedkar Park, seeing which the society became very angry.

As soon as information about the incident of vandalism of the statue was received, there was huge anger among the people of the area. On information, Raya police station in-charge Inspector



Ambedkar's statue damaged in inset while police in the area are trying to convince the angry people

Ravibhushan Sharma along with police force reached the spot. As soon as the information was received, BSP District President Jitendra Singh, Nagar Panchayat President Rajkumar Aggarwal

Ambedkar, Social Reform Committee President Gulab Chaudhary Arvind Sharma Rakesh Bansal Abhishek Parashar, Councillor Sarwan Ahmed Laik Singh and hundreds of workers reached the spot

and arrested those who damaged the statue from the administration. Demanded action against.

On receiving information about the incident, area officer Mahavan Sweta Verma and a large number of police reached the spot and pacified the angry people by assuring them of installing a new statue. Police are checking the CCTV cameras installed around the park. Gulab Chaudhary, President of Ambedkar Social Reform Committee, has filed a complaint against unknown people in the police station

## The tale of regal pride and vintage cars

The maharaja of Alwar, Jaysingh Prabhakar has the famous anecdote on how he turned British pride into street sweepers of their colony, India.

(Gns). The 55th edition of The Statesman Vintage and Classic Car Rally happening on 11 January, Sunday is a live window into the past. Cars like Rolls Royce Phantoms built before 1920 will be present at the rally as well. One such incident happened during the colonial times in the Indian sub-continent.

The maharaja of Alwar, Jaysingh Prabhakar has the famous anecdote on how he turned British pride into street sweepers of their colony, India.

The history of Indian royalty spending on vintage cars is nothing new, but

when the maharaja of Alwar was insulted by a British Rolls Royce showroom in Mayfair, London, in the doubts that he was poor, and couldn't afford one, the king went on a vendetta to show his influence. It is said that he went back to the store in his royal attire, with his army of entourage, and bought some 7 to 10 cars in the showroom, and had them

shipped to India. 6 cars he paid for at the spot, and 4 cars he paid for once they were in India.

What followed was wilder than the frivolous buying habit of the king. The Rolls Royce cars,

including a 1920s Phantom were used as street-sweepers, and garbage collectors. The cars were stripped of the aristocracy they boasted, reducing them to everyday objects of use.



It must have been quite a sight to see a fleet of Rolls-Royce cars being used as garbage vans... and the British carmakers were certainly not thrilled to hear about their best-sellers being used in a deem-

ing capacity. Worried about the impact this would have on their reputation as the top car-sellers in the market, and the sales it would stand to affect, Rolls-Royce sent Jai Singh a telegram apologising for their employee's misconduct, and even offered him about six or seven more Rolls-Royce cars for free.

In response, the king accepted their apology and stopped using Rolls Royce cars for garbage collection, restoring them to their original prestige. He had achieved his revenge and proved his point.

The Statesman Vintage and Classic Car Rally will commence on 11 January at the Royal Calcutta Turf Club, Hastings. The rally will flag off from 9:10 am, and will be followed by cultural programmes.

## Odisha second Indian state after Rajasthan to offer transparency in grid, bay availability

The OGRI Portal offers comprehensive technical and geographical information on all 201 grid substations across Odisha.

(Gns). Odisha has become the second state after Rajasthan to offer a high level of transparency in grid substation and bay availability with the launch of the Odisha Grid Insight (OGRI) Portal (ogri.optcl.co.in), providing a transparent and unified digital view of the state's transmission network.

The OGRI Portal offers comprehensive technical and geographical information on all 201 grid substations across Odisha. For DISCOMs and power generation companies, the portal provides valuable

insights into installed transformation capacity, existing load, available margins, spare bay availability, and power take-off arrange-

DISCOMs to avail new 33 kV connections in a more informed, transparent, and efficient manner. Beyond the power sector, the portal



ments, Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo, Deputy Chief Minister, who launched the portal, said on Friday.

With the integration of the SANJOG application, the portal will function as a single unified platform for

will greatly benefit investors and industrial units by offering authentic and reliable information on power availability at various locations across the state, thereby enabling informed and timely investment decisions.

## RSS to establish Hindu organisations in Bangladesh; Sangh in 'mission mode' for minority protection

According to sources, the Sangh is now preparing to strengthen its presence and support Hindu organisations in neighboring countries where Hindus are a minority and face continuous threats.

(Gns). A major strategy is emerging from the All India meeting of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) held here on Friday. The national executive meeting, chaired by Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat, has been underway since early this week.

According to sources, the Sangh is now preparing to strengthen its presence and support Hindu organisations in neighboring countries where Hindus are a minority and face continuous threats. The Sangh has

expressed deep concern over the declining Hindu population, particularly in Bangladesh and Pakistan.

During the meeting, data and discussions highlighted that the proportion of Hindus in the global population is decreasing. Top RSS officials deliberated that where Hindus are a minority, they are not organised, which makes them vulnerable to violence and persecution. Sources indicate that the Sangh will now work on the principle of "organisation wherever Hindus are a minority."

The current situation in Bangladesh was the subject of extensive discussion at the meeting.

According to sources,



the RSS is now planning to establish local-level volunteers and Hindu organisations in Bangladesh. The objective is to prepare local Hindus for self-defence during times of disaster or violence and to protect their cultural identity.

To implement this

## Congress alleges irregularities in Sardar Patel's 150th birth anniversary tableaux procurement

(Gns). The Congress party on Friday launched a stinging critique against the Union Home Ministry, alleging significant irregularities and a lack of transparency in the procurement of tableaux for

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's 150th birth anniversary celebrations in Gujarat.

Addressing a press conference at the AICC headquarters, senior leader and Gujarat MP Shaktisinh Gohil claimed that the min-

istry bypassed standard open tendering processes to favor a select group of five firms for the 'Ekta Parade.'

Gohil dismissed the government's justification of a "paucity of time," noting that

preparations had been underway for over a year, and suggested that the restriction was a deliberate move to benefit specific entities, some of which reportedly share common ownership or familial links.

Central to the controversy is the appointment of Pankaj Modi, brother of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as an "expert" tasked with finalizing the tableaux designs at a daily remuneration of 10,000.

Gohil questioned the criteria for this appointment and the sweeping authority granted to a single individual. He further detailed a history of alleged service rule violations during Pankaj Modi's tenure in the Gujarat Information Department, claiming he received rapid, non-compliant promotions and an irregular indefinite re-appointment following his retirement in 2016.

While Gohil stated that Congress generally avoids involving the families of political opponents.



26 innocent tourists.

India also took several other measures, including closure of trade and borders with Pakistan, expelling diplomats from the Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi, and suspending visas of

Pakistani nationals in India. The Indus Water Treaty, which was signed in 1960, governs the sharing of the waters of six rivers — Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej — between India and Pakistan.