



PM Modi to kick off NDA's Tamil Nadu assembly poll campaign on January 23

(Gns). Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to kick off the NDA's campaign for the Tamil Nadu Assembly Elections 2026 with a mega rally at Madurantakam on January 23.

The announcement was made by Tamil Nadu BJP president Nainar Nagenthran on Sunday.

Speaking to reporters, Nagenthran said that Prime Minister Modi would address the rally to mark the formal launch of the

NDA's poll campaign in the southern state.

"On January 23, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch the NDA campaign in Madurantakam. He will participate in the meeting to send home the anti-people DMK government currently ruling Tamil Nadu," he said.

In Singur, PM Modi accuses Mamata Banerjee govt of non-cooperation in Bangladesh border fencing

However, Nagenthran did not disclose the full list of parties that would be part

of the NDA alliance in Tamil Nadu. Reports suggest that



T.T.V. Dhinakaran's AMMK, former Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam, and the

DMDK could also be included in the alliance.

He hinted that all alliance partners would be present on the stage during

Modi's rally. "You will see that on the stage on January 23," the Tamil Nadu BJP chief said.

Nagenthran also dismissed allegations that the

Union Ministry of Defence had rejected the proposed Hosur International Airport project.

"Permission has not been denied. Certain clarifi-

cations have been sought, and it would be wrong to term it a rejection," he clarified.

The All India Anna Dravida Munnetra

Kazhagam (AIADMK) and the BJP have already formed an alliance to contest the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections, which are due later this year.

Union Budget 2026: Why Teachers, Technology, And Skills Must Be Budget Priorities - Experts Review

(Gns). India's Union Budget for 2026-27 will be presented on February 1, 2026, a Sunday, with education experts urging the government to prioritize quality learning, teacher development, and job-ready skills to leverage the country's youth population for economic growth.

Shweta Sastri and Niru Agarwal emphasize the need for investments in teacher training, technology, STEM education, and skill-based learning, while also addressing the urban-rural education gap and promoting public-private partnerships.

For the financial year 2026-27, the Union Budget 2026 will be tabled on Sunday, February 1, 2026, at 11 am, marking the first time in India's history that the Union Budget is being presented on a Sunday.

As the country prepares for this significant moment, education experts are urging the government to use the budget to strengthen learning quality, teacher development, and job-ready skills.

Rather than focusing only on infrastructure and enrolment figures, experts believe the emphasis

should be on improving learning outcomes and aligning education with future workforce needs, especially for students in smaller towns and rural areas.

With one of the world's largest youth populations, the upcoming budget is seen as a crucial opportunity to turn this demographic advantage into long-term economic growth.

infrastructure, and encouraging innovation, while keeping holistic development at the core.

She highlighted the need for continued investment in teacher training, modern classrooms, and technology-enabled learning spaces to promote inclusion, curiosity, and critical thinking.

According to her, empowering educators

education gap.

This would be particularly impactful for government schools that educate the majority of children across the country. She further emphasised the importance of strengthening STEM education and introducing skill-based, application-focused learning from an early stage to help students build future-ready skills.

Technology integration, she said, should continue to expand access to high-quality and personalised learning, while measures such as lowering interest rates on education loans and encouraging international partnerships can improve access to higher education and strengthen India's global education standing.

Turning Policy Vision into Measurable Outcomes

Echoing similar expectations, Niru Agarwal - Managing Trustee of Greenwood High International School, said the education sector is currently at a decisive stage. While recent policy reforms have laid a strong foundation, she believes the Union Budget must now focus on delivering clear and measurable outcomes.



Shweta Sastri, Managing Director of Canadian International School, Bangalore, expressed optimism that education will receive sustained and future-oriented attention in the upcoming budget. She said nurturing well-rounded learners depends on strengthening teaching quality, improving

through regular professional development and digital upskilling must remain a priority, as teachers form the foundation of any strong education system.

Sastri also noted that higher budgetary allocations could help establish new K-12 schools, upgrade educational infrastructure, and reduce the urban-rural

Jaishankar discusses Indo-US ties with Senator Steve Daines

(Gns). Amid the ongoing tensions in relations with the United States on a plethora of issues, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met US Senator Steve Daines on Sunday and discussed bilateral ties.

Later, Jaishankar wrote in a social post on X, "A pleasure meeting Senator Steve Daines this morning in Delhi. A wide ranging and open discussion on our



bilateral relationship and its strategic significance." The meeting came even

as the two countries were trying to resolve differences over key issues in the proposed trade deal that they have been negotiating since February last year.

The bilateral relationship between the two countries is currently undergoing a

bad phase, primarily because of the punitive tariffs imposed by President Donald Trump on Indian imports for purchasing Russian oil.

On Tuesday, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio spoke over the phone with Jaishankar, reviewing key areas of cooperation, including civil nuclear energy, trade talks, and regional security in the Indo-Pacific.

The Fadnavis - Satam 'Ram - Laxman' Duo Sparks a Saffron Surge: Mahayuti Ends Thackeray-Era Dominance in BMC

(Gns). Mumbai's political landscape has been decisively reshaped by the recent Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections. In a result that marks a clear break from decades of entrenched control, the Mahayuti alliance, led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) alongside Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena, secured a commanding majority, decisively ending the long-standing dominance of the Thackeray family in India's richest civic body.

The Mahayuti clinched 118 of the 227 seats, with the BJP emerging as the single-largest party at 89 seats, complemented by 29 seats from the Shinde-led Shiv Sena. The mandate reflects not merely an electoral swing, but a decisive shift in public sentiment toward performance-led governance and institutional reform.

In the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation

(BMC) elections, the Mahayuti alliance, led by BJP and Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena, won a majority, ending the dominance of the Thackeray family,



where BJP secured 89 seats. Devendra Fadnavis and Ameet Satam's leadership was central, focusing on infrastructure and a ₹74,400-crore budget for smart-city reforms.

At the centre of this watershed moment stands the formidable partnership between Devendra Fadnavis, Maharashtra's Chief Minister, and Ameet Satam, BJP's Mumbai President, widely hailed as the political "Ram-Laxman"

duo. Their complementary leadership proved pivotal: Mr. Fadnavis brought strategic depth, administrative experience, and a compelling vision for a renewed



Mumbai, while Mr. Satam spearheaded an energetic, data-driven grassroots campaign that translated vision into votes. The entire grassroot and team of BJP was galvanised by this duo in a manner that mattered the most.

Throughout the campaign, Mr. Fadnavis foregrounded transformative infrastructure initiatives-the Coastal Road, Metro expansion, Atal Setu, and the Navi Mumbai

International Airport - presenting a coherent roadmap for a globally competitive metropolis. This development-centric narrative resonated strongly with voters seeking tangible progress over rhetoric.

Appointed in August 2025, Mr. Satam rapidly galvanized the party's organizational machinery under the banner of "Safer, Cleaner Mumbai." His meticulous micro-planning and voter outreach contributed to an impressive 65% voter turnout, a clear endorsement of the "Modi-Fadnavis" governance model over the emotive, legacy-driven appeals of the opposition.

Ideologically, the contest extended beyond party lines. The alliance of Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena (UBT) and the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) sought to frame the election around Marathi Asmita, attempting to portray the BJP as an external force.

RJD may see leadership transition as Tejashwi Yadav set for bigger role

(Gns). Bihar's political circles are abuzz with speculation over a possible leadership change in the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD).

Amid concerns over his deteriorating health, the party's founder and national president, Lalu Prasad may decide to step down after holding the reins for 28 years and appoint Tejashwi Yadav as the new national president. Alternatively, he may elevate his younger son to the post of National Executive President.

The final decision is expected to be taken at a special meeting of the RJD Working Committee sched-

uled for 25 January.

According to party sources, there is near-consensus within the organisa-



tion on the proposal. Even at present, almost all major organisational decisions are being taken by Tejashwi Yadav. A formal appointment would allow

him to officially assume charge of the party.

Lalu Prasad's declining health is considered the pri-

once did.

Lalu Prasad has served continuously as the RJD's national president since the party's formation on 5 July, 1997. In June 2025, he was elected unopposed to the post for a record 13th time. His current term will run till 2028.

In a significant political development ahead of the 2025 Bihar Assembly elections, the RJD National Executive Committee had authorised both Lalu Prasad and Tejashwi Yadav to take all major decisions related to the Assembly polls. This decision was formally ratified at the party's National Council meeting held in July 2025.

Jairam Ramesh cites World Bank report to criticise Modi Govt's response to India's worsening air pollution crisis

(Gns). Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Sunday launched a strong critique against the Narendra Modi-led government, highlighting a recent World Bank report to emphasise the Centre's ongoing "denial" of the escalating air pollution and public health emergency in India. He drew attention to alarming figures on premature deaths and economic impacts in northern India, stating that the data demands immediate and decisive policy measures.

In a post on X, Ramesh referenced the World Bank's new report, A Breath of Change, which examines air pollution in the Indo-Gangetic Plains and Himalayan foothills. Describing the report as "comprehensive, evidence-based, and unambiguous," he said its timing was critical, given the deteriorating

air quality across much of the country.

The report reveals approximately 1 million premature deaths annually in the region, alongside economic losses equating to around 10 per cent of regional GDP each year. Ramesh highlighted these severe human and economic costs of persistent air pollution.

He pointed out that the World Bank out-

lined a clear action plan, including strict enforcement of emission standards for coal-fired power plants and the expedited retirement of older units. The report also urges a shift from fragmented city-level pollution controls to a "legally empowered airshed-based governance" model that tran-

scends state boundaries, alongside expanding and electrifying public transport and tightening vehicle emission and fuel standards.

Ramesh noted that these recommendations align with the Congress party's long-standing demands, particularly as the air quality index (AQI) health crisis has become increasingly urgent. He emphasised the party's calls for a thorough review of the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, and the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), 2009, with a stronger focus on fine particulate matter (PM2.5), known for its severe health risks.

He also advocated for a significant expansion of the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) in both funding and geographic reach, insisting that PM2.5 measurements should be the key performance indicator, as current metrics underestimate the problem's magnitude. Additionally, Ramesh called for "tougher and uncompromising enforcement of air pollution norms and standards without any relaxations or dilutions," implicitly criticizing periodic exemptions granted to industries and power plants.



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गरवी गुजरात हिंदी चैनल देखिये

Editorial

Frosty Aspirations

In the Arctic, ambition wears a colder mask. It speaks the language of security, wraps itself in maps and radar arcs, and insists it is driven by necessity rather than desire. The renewed American fixation on Greenland must be read in this light, not as a passing provocation, but as an assertion of power in a region where the ice is melting and old instincts are thawing. What is unfolding is not just a debate over territory; it is a stress test for international law, alliance politics, and the meaning of self-determination in the twenty-first century.

At one level, the strategic logic is undeniable. Greenland sits astride critical sea routes, hosts missile-warning infrastructure, and will become more accessible as ice recedes. Security planners have studied its value since the Cold War. That part is not new. What is new is the language. The real fault line is between two incompatible ideas of power. US President Donald Trump's is transactional: leverage creates rights, control creates security, and pressure is simply a tool. Denmark and the European Union's is institutional: law creates rights, consent creates legitimacy, and alliances exist precisely to remove coercion from relationships among friends. Greenland now sits uncomfortably between these philosophies.

Legally, the territory remains part of the Kingdom of Denmark under a self-rule arrangement that recognises Greenlanders as a people with the right to self-determination. That framework is built for autonomy and, if chosen, independence. It is not built for transfer to the United States. Independence is decolonisation. Annexation by the US, militarily or otherwise, is alienation. International law treats them very differently. Even a hypothetical vote to join the United States would not erase Denmark's sovereignty. Without Danish consent, any attempted acquisition would collide with the UN Charter, the principle of territorial integrity, and post-war norms that protect borders. Referendums do not magically override sovereignty. The world has been clear about that elsewhere. Then there is Nato. Denmark is an American ally, not a neutral bystander.

If the idea takes hold that alliance membership does not shield a country from territorial pressure, the psychological architecture of collective security collapses. European unease is therefore rational. The fear is not simply about Greenland changing hands, but about hierarchy returning to a system built on equality. None of this means security concerns in the Arctic are imaginary. They are real, and they will grow. But there is a difference between partnership and possession. There is a difference between access and ownership. There is a difference between influence and annexation. The likely endgame is therefore less dramatic and more ambiguous: expanded US bases, military integration, rare earths and oil for America and US dominance without ownership. It satisfies security planners without detonating alliance politics. Greenlanders have been clear. They are open to cooperation, not ownership. In the race for the Arctic, that distinction matters. Cold ambition may be understandable, but it is not automatically legitimate.

THE EVOLUTION OF INDIRECT TAXATION REACHED GST

(Gns). In India, the evolution of indirect taxation reached a historic milestone with the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) from 1 July 2017. This reform marked one of the most ambitious and transformative policy shifts in the country's economic history. Prior to GST, India's tax landscape was fragmented, characterized by a web of Central and State levies such as excise duty, service tax, VAT, and entry tax ~ often leading to cascading effects, inefficiencies, and lack of transparency. The introduction of GST aimed to dismantle this complexity by subsuming multiple indirect taxes into a unified, destination-based tax system.

The main objectives of GST were to enhance economic efficiency, promote ease of doing business, and create a seamless national market by eliminating inter-state tax barriers. With a view to carry the growth-oriented, transparent, and equitable reform process forward, the Government restructured the GST system in September 2025, referred to as GST Reforms 2.0. By means of this restructuring, the Government has streamlined the tax slabs with the main aim of reducing rates on those items which had been affected by higher import duty imposed by the USA.

The basic assumption underlying this GST reform is that the reduction in GST rate would concurrently reduce the cost of sales on one hand and on the other, there would be a reduction in cash outflow, thereby making a situation that might save them from facing working capital deficiency. But then, how has it

been done? On September 3, the GST Council replaced the four intricate tax slabs of 5, 12, 18, and 28 per cent with a more straightforward two-tier structure of 5 per cent (merit rate) and 18 per cent (standard rate).

Also, a new rate of 40 percent has been kept for luxury and sinful goods like tobacco, sugary drinks, expensive cars, yachts, and private planes. Common wisdom would want to know how the affected companies would derive benefit from this reform? The answer is that in the face of global uncertainty, these changes would increase retail consumption and directly benefit labour-intensive industries like textiles, micro, small, and medium-sized businesses (MSMEs), and the automotive sector. Lower tax rates will generally result in lower prices for many consumer goods, which would boost consumption because consumers with more disposable income will spend more.

The GST Council has reduced rates in several areas: on cement it has been cut from 28 to 18 per cent, while small cars, two-wheelers up to 350cc, buses, trucks, and ambulances will now attract 18 per cent. Healthcare and education items like medical devices, life-saving medicines, and study materials now face either 5 per cent tax or are tax-free. Essential foods, daily necessities, and consumer goods such as packaged foods, dairy, textiles, electronics, footwear, and paper products have to pay taxes of 0 or 5 per cent only. Now, let us look at the issue from a macro angle.

According to preliminary estimates from the Ministry

of Finance, India's gross GST collections in FY 2024-2025 reached a record Rs 22.08 lakh crore. The country's taxpayer base also increased from

safeguard American manufacturers, it has caused a stir in India's export industries. Up to two-thirds of India's exports to the US market are anticipated to



6.6 million in 2017 to 15 million in FY 2024-2025. This illustrates how indirect tax has become crucial to India's financial system and shows the expanding scope and effectiveness of the GST network. Despite these achievements, the external shock from the U.S. tariff hike poses a major challenge for India's trade sector. The United States, India's largest trading partner, accounts for nearly one-fifth of India's total merchandise exports.

According to data from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, India's exports to the United States climbed from USD 48 billion in 2018 to nearly USD 86 billion in FY 2025, while imports from the U.S. reached USD 52 billion. However, this steady upward trend is now at risk. In August 2025, President Donald Trump announced a 50 per cent tariff hike on Indian goods. Although the goal of this action is to

be impacted by these new tariffs, particularly in labour-intensive industries like engineering goods, textiles, gems, and pharmaceuticals. Indian products will be less affordable in the U.S. market due to their higher prices.

The higher costs will make them less competitive, pushing American buyers to seek alternatives from countries like Vietnam, Mexico, and Bangladesh. Economists estimate that these new tariffs could pose a 60-80 basis point downside risk to India's annual GDP growth, primarily through falling exports. Additionally, a drop in export earnings could weaken the rupee and reduce the current account balance. Now the question is whether the effective GST cut will be significant enough to fully compensate export losses from tariffs? Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman mentioned that the government

Arvind Kejriwal and Isudan Gadhvi administered the oath to AAP office-bearers: "Now we will not allow BJP to ruin Gujarat anymore..."

Big announcement by Arvind Kejriwal in Gujarat

Power is going to change in 2027: Arvind Kejriwal

Aam Aadmi Party will bring a change of power in Gujarat: Arvind Kejriwal

BJP will put many more people in jail: Arvind Kejriwal
We must not be afraid of going to jail: Arvind Kejriwal

When BJP was asleep, Kejriwal's revolutionaries stayed awake and began the change at 3 AM: Gopal Rai
Permissions were blocked, threats were given, yet Aam Aadmi Party did not bow down: State In-charge Gopal Rai

Kick BJP out, support the broom and clean the problems: Isudan Gadhvi
Frightened by Aam Aadmi Party's meeting, BJP misused the government systems: Gopal Italia

Ahmedabad / Gujarat While Aam Aadmi Party National Convenor and former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is on a Gujarat visit, a booth workers' convention was held at Loderiyal village in Sanand in his special presence. Gujarat In-charge Gopal Rai, Co-in-charge Durgesh Pathak, State President Isudan Gadhvi, Visavadar MLA Gopal Italia, Organization General Secretary Manoj Sorathiya, farmer leader Sagar Rabari, Rajubhai Solanki, Yuva Morcha President Brijraj Solanki, Vice President Gauri Desai, along with a large number of leaders

and people, were present at the convention. Despite the program being finalized at Loderiyal village in Sanand at the last moment, a massive gathering of people turned up.

Addressing the booth workers' meeting, Aam Aadmi Party National Convenor and former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said that today's program was not a public rally but an organizational meeting of booth, taluka, and district-level workers and office-bearers. Even so, the presence of thousands of workers proves that public support for the Aam Aadmi Party in Gujarat is continuously increasing. Arvind Kejriwal said that as the saying goes, "when destruction approaches, wisdom turns upside down," and today the BJP government has panicked after seeing its end approaching in Gujarat. The BJP government, which has been in power for the last 30 years, is now nearing its exit, and for this reason, government machinery is being misused to stop Aam Aadmi Party meetings. Referring to the workers' meeting that was to be held in Nikol, Ahmedabad, he said that last night the stage was dismantled, chairs were thrown away, and permission was cancelled. BJP thought the meeting would not take place, but Aam Aadmi Party workers did not get scared, and despite

would lend support to the sectors hit hard by the 'trade of tariffs' and would ensure that exporters were not left 'high and dry'.

Keeping in view these steps taken by the Government, one would understand that notwithstanding the sharp rise in U.S. tariffs straining India's export performance, the timely and concurrent steps taken by the central Government by putting into operation the GST Reforms 2.0 has emerged as a powerful tool to stabilise the economy. The logic is a matter of accentuation. While there will be increase in the landed cost of Indian goods abroad by virtue of higher tariff, reduction in GST rate will offset that adverse impact and maintain overall price competitiveness.

Reduction in GST on crucial inputs such as engineering components, textiles, and automobile parts would effectively enhance supply-chain efficiency, preserve export viability, and prevent contraction in trade volumes.

Sectoral estimates made by the Progress Harmony Development (PHD) Chamber of Commerce and Industry would lay bare the scenario more clearly. While engineering, electronic items and pharmaceutical products may experience loss of about USD 4.2 billion (USD 1.8 billion for engineering goods, USD 1.4 billion for electronic items and USD 1 billion for pharmaceutical products), tex-

tiles sectors, small cars and two-wheelers industries, MSMEs and ancillary industries would make good that amount of loss. According to the projections made by the Ministry of Finance, there would be an 8-12 per cent reduction in production costs and a boost in competitiveness for domestic producers.

Robust household spending, supported by lower GST rates and increased disposable income, would act as a buffer even if external demand declines. According to the ministry's estimates, a 10 per cent fall in export-driven growth can be offset by a 7-9 per cent increase in domestic production and consumption under the new GST regime. This implies that India's growth trajectory will be driven by internal demand and industrial efficiency rather than dependence on exports. In conclusion, one may say that the effective GST cut may not fully neutralize the loss in export revenue, but it would provide a sufficient, strategic domestic stimulus to mitigate the loss, sustain competitiveness, and reinforce the economy's resilience. Ultimately, the GST reform would serve as a strategic fiscal tool that stabilizes India's price competitiveness, which will strengthen the nation's economy in the midst of a volatile global trade situation, arising from the increase in tariff by the US Government.

crops, the education and healthcare systems have deteriorated, and youth are being pushed toward addiction instead of employment.



Visavadar MLA Gopal Italia has also come to light. The person who threw the shoe himself released a video admitting that a BJP leader gave him ₹50,000 and liquor to carry out the act, exposing BJP's true face. He alleged that for the past three months, Aam Aadmi Party workers and leaders have been sent to jail in false cases. Leaders like Raju Karpada and Pravin Ram, who raised their voices for farmers' rights, are still in jail.

Arvind Kejriwal further stated that there was a time when Gujarat was the most prosperous state in the country and farmers were happy, but in the last 30 years, BJP has hollowed out Gujarat. Today, farmers, youth, women, traders, and industrialists are all distressed. Farmers are not getting fair prices for their

He further said that if BJP had truly made Gujarat prosperous in the last 30 years, then why would such a large number of people have gathered today for the Aam Aadmi Party? The public will respond in the 2027 elections. He said that just as the Aam Aadmi Party came to power in Delhi and Punjab, a change of power in Gujarat is also certain. In conclusion, Arvind Kejriwal said that this fight is like a righteous war, where on one side there is power, money, and agencies, and on the other side there is truth and the strength of the people. He appealed to the workers to move forward with determination to end hooligan rule from the land of Sardar Patel and Mahatma Gandhi, because the victory of truth is certain.

Aam Aadmi Party Gujarat In-charge Gopal Rai said that the wave of change that has arisen in Gujarat is moving forward very rapidly. BJP has been in power in Gujarat for the last 30 years and also governs Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra. Wherever you look around Gujarat, BJP is in power, but Kejriwal has created such revolutionary workers in Gujarat that BJP has become afraid. BJP is not afraid of workers, the party, or MLAs, but it is afraid of these revolutionaries. They cannot openly show courage, so they dismantle our stage in the darkness and break chairs.

Rising up in defence of the Fed Chair

(Gns). Central bankers from around the world have issued a joint statement of support for US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell, as he faces a criminal probe on top of mounting pressure from US President Donald Trump to resign early. It is very unusual for the world's central bank governors to issue such a statement. But these are very unusual times. The reason so many senior central bankers ~ from Australia, Brazil, Canada, Europe, New Zealand, South Africa, South Korea, the United Kingdom and other countries, as well as the central banks' club the Bank for International Settlements ~ have spoken up is simple.

US interest rate decisions have an impact around the world. They don't want a dangerous precedent set. Over the course of my career as an economist, much of it at the Reserve Bank of Australia and the Bank for International Settlements, I have seen independent central banks become the global norm in recent decades. Allowing central banks to set interest rates to achieve inflation targets has avoided a repeat of the sustained high inflation which broke out in the 1970s. Returning the setting of monetary policy to a politician, especially one as unpredictable as Trump, is an unwelcome prospect. Trump has repeatedly attacked the US Federal Reserve (known as the Fed) over many years. He has expressed his desire to remove Powell before his term as chair runs out in May.

But legislation says the president can only fire the Fed chair "for cause", not on a whim. This is generally taken to mean some illegal act. The Supreme Court is

currently hearing a case about whether the president has the power to remove another Fed board member, Lisa Cook. And this week, Powell revealed he had been served with a



subpoena by the US Department of Justice, threatening a criminal indictment relating to his testimony to the Senate banking committee about the US\$2.5 billion renovations to the Fed's historic office buildings. Trump has denied any involvement in the investigation. But Powell released a strong statement in defence of himself.

He said the reference to the building works was a "pretext" and that the real issue was "whether the Fed will be able to continue to set interest rates based on evidence and economic conditions ~ or whether monetary policy will be directed by political pressure or intimidation." Last Tuesday, more than a dozen of the world's leading central bankers put out a statement of support: "We stand in full solidarity with the Federal Reserve System and its Chair Jerome H Powell. The independence of central banks is a cornerstone of price, financial and economic stability in the interest of the citizens that we serve. It is

therefore critical to preserve that independence, with full respect for the rule of law and democratic accountability." Another statement of support came from leading US econo-

Nixon to improve his chances of re-election. This easing of monetary policy contributed to the high inflation of the mid-1970s. A more recent example comes from Turkey. In the early 2020s, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan leaned on the country's central bank to cut interest rates. The result was very high inflation, eventually followed by very high interest rates to try to get inflation back under control. What will happen if Trump is able to appoint a compliant Fed chair, and other board members, and if they actually lower the short-term interest rates they control to 1 per cent? Expected inflation and then actual inflation would rise. This would lead to higher long-term interest rates. If Trump gets his way, US voters may face a greater affordability problem in the run-up to the mid-term elections in November. This could then be followed by a recession, as interest rates need to rise markedly to get inflation back down. And as over a dozen global central bank leaders have just warned us, what happens in the US matters world-

wide.

including all the living past chairs of the Fed. This included the legendary central bank "maestro" Alan Greenspan, appointed by Ronald Reagan and reappointed by George HW Bush, Bill Clinton and George W Bush. This statement warned undermining the independence of the Fed could have "highly negative consequences" for inflation and the functioning of the economy. Trump has said he wants the Fed to lower interest rates dramatically, from the current target range of 3.5-3.75 per cent down to 1 per cent. Most economists think this would lead to a large increase in inflation. At 2.8 per cent in the US, inflation is already above the Fed's 2 per cent target. The Fed's interest rate would normally only drop to 1 per cent during a serious recession. A clear example of the dangers of politicised central banks was when the Fed lowered interest rates before the 1972 presidential election. Many commentators attribute this to pressure from then president Richard

to improve his chances of re-election. This easing of monetary policy contributed to the high inflation of the mid-1970s.

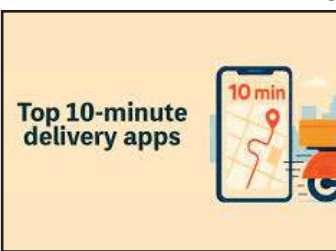
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wide.

India's decision to push quick-commerce platforms away from the headline promise of "10-minute delivery" is not a crack-down on innovation; it is a course correction on a model that has normalised risk for convenience. The urban consumer has been trained to expect groceries, chargers, and snacks at near-teleport speed, while the worker bearing that speed has remained largely invisible. The recent intervention acknowledges what riders have said for years: velocity is being

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monetised, safety is being externalised. The timing



matters. India's gig workforce is expanding rapidly, and for a large section of riders this is not pocket money but primary income. When algorithms reward haste and penalise delay, they do more than optimise

logistics ~ they reshape behaviour on crowded roads. Tight delivery windows, opaque ratings and income volatility create a constant pressure loop. Even a small traffic snag becomes a financial threat. In such a system, accidents are not aberrations; they are predictable outcomes. Critics argue that removing the slogan will change little because speed is "built into the system." They are right to be sceptical. If order allocation,

surge incentives and customer ratings continue to privilege the fastest, the countdown clock merely goes off-screen. Riders will still read the signals. The platform may no longer promise ten minutes, but the algorithm will.

This is why the present move should be seen as an opening, not a conclusion. India's regulatory challenge is to reconcile two truths: quick commerce has created jobs and convenience, and quick commerce has also created precarity.

Democrats Take Narrow Lead Before 2026 Midterms as Trump Disapproval Rises: Poll

(Gns). A CNN poll conducted by SSRS in late October 2025 indicates Democrats hold a five-point lead on the generic congressional ballot, with 47% of registered voters supporting Democratic candidates compared to 42% for Republicans; President Trump's approval rating has fallen to 37% amid public dissatisfaction with the direction of the country. While the margin is narrower than past midterm cycles, the findings suggest growing dissatisfaction with the direction of the country and renewed energy among Democratic voters. According to the CNN survey conducted by SSRS, Democrats currently hold a five-point advantage on the generic congressional ballot. About 47 percent of

registered voters say they would support the Democratic candidate in



their district, compared with 42 percent who favour the Republican option. Though smaller than the Democrats' double-digit edge at a similar point before the 2018 midterms, the lead reflects a favourable environment for the party as concerns

about governance, democracy and the economy intensify.

President Trump's approval rating has fallen to 37 percent, marking the lowest level of his second term and equalling the weakest point of his first presidency. His disapproval rating now stands at 63 percent, the highest across both terms.

While CNN's polling places his approval slightly higher at 41 percent, both figures underline a steady erosion of support across partisan lines and demographic groups since mid-2025. Public frustration extends to major national issues, with 68 percent saying things in the United States are going badly and 72 per-

cent describing the economy as poor. A majority, 61 percent, believe Trump's policies have worsened economic conditions.

Voter motivation tilts towards Democrats

Democratic voters appear far more energised heading into 2026. Nearly 67 percent of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents say they are "extremely motivated" to vote, compared with 46 percent among Republican-aligned voters.

Motivation is strongest among those worried about the "state of democracy". About 82 percent of voters who prioritise this issue report high enthusiasm to turn out, well above the 57 percent of those who consider the economy their top concern.

Five Killed In Road Accident On Solapur-Pune Highway During Pilgrimage; Preliminary Report Says Car Lost Contr

(Gns). A tragic road accident on the Solapur-Pune National Highway claimed the lives of five devotees late Saturday night, turning a religious journey into a heartbreaking incident.

On the Solapur-Pune National Highway near Devdari Pati, a car carrying pilgrims from Panvel to Akkalkot for temple darshan met with an accident late Saturday night, resulting in five fatalities and one critically injured person; the Mohol police are investigating the cause.

Switch To Shorts The crash took place near Devdari Pati in the

Mohol area when a car carrying pilgrims from Panvel met with a severe accident while travelling towards Akkalkot for darshan at a well-known temple.

The impact of the accident was fatal for most of the occupants, while one woman sustained critical injuries and is currently undergoing treatment.

The victims were on their way from Panvel to Akkalkot to visit the revered temple for worship. The journey, which began as a spiritual trip, ended in disaster around midnight on the busy national highway.

According to initial information, the vehicle was

travelling at a high speed when the accident occurred, raising concerns over the dangers of night travel on highways.

The sudden crash left little time for help to arrive, and the severity of the impact resulted in the immediate death of five passengers.

The accident occurred near Devdari Pati when the driver reportedly lost control of the vehicle. The car veered off the road and crashed into a tree with great force. Five people died on the spot due to the impact, while the lone survivor, a woman, was rushed to the government

hospital in Mohol in a critical condition.

Police Begin Investigation, Identification Underway

The Mohol police have registered a case and begun an investigation into the incident. Preliminary findings suggest that excessive speed and loss of control may have led to the crash. Police are working to identify the deceased and inform their families.

Authorities have once again appealed to motorists to drive cautiously, especially during night hours, as road accidents continue to pose a serious risk on national highways.

“If You’re Hiding Your Face, It’s Criminal”: Reform UK Candidate’s Burqa Comments Face Backlash

(Gns). Reform UK's newly announced London mayoral candidate Laila Cunningham has triggered a sharp political and community backlash after suggesting that Muslim women wearing the burqa should be subjected to stop and search.

Reform UK's London mayoral candidate Laila Cunningham faced backlash after suggesting stop and search for Muslim women wearing burqas, sparking criticism from politicians and Muslim advocacy groups; London Mayor Sadiq Khan warned against divisive rhetoric. Cunningham, a British-born Muslim, made the remarks during a podcast, leading to accusations of deepening social divisions.

Her remarks, made during a podcast discussion, have drawn criticism from senior politicians and Muslim advocacy groups, who argue that the comments risk deepening

social divisions in the capital.

Cunningham's remarks



on face coverings and identity

Cunningham argued that covering one's face has no place in what she described as an open society. She claimed that concealment should automatically raise suspicion, saying, "It has to be assumed that if you're hiding your face, you're hiding it for a criminal reason."

During the podcast, she also described cultural changes in certain parts of the city, stating, "If you go to parts of London, it does feel like a Muslim city. The signs are written in a differ-

ent language. You've got burqas being sold in markets." She went on to argue

for cultural uniformity, insisting there should be "one civic culture" and that it "should be British."

Background of the Reform UK candidate Cunningham, who is a British-born Muslim of Egyptian descent, was named as Reform UK's candidate for the 2028 London mayoral election last week. Her comments have attracted particular attention because of her own background, with critics saying this has not softened the impact of her remarks on Muslim communities.

Sadiq Khan warns against divisive politics

London Mayor Sadiq Khan responded by warning that such rhetoric weakens the city rather than strengthening it. He said politicians who "sow division" undermine London's core values, adding that the capital's strength lies in its diversity and freedom of religion.

Strong backlash from Muslim leaders and Labour MPs

Shaista Gohir, chief executive of the Muslim Women's Network UK, condemned Cunningham's comments as "dangerous" and described them as a "dog whistle" to racists. The Guardian quoted Gohir saying that despite Cunningham's background, she was "sending a message to Muslims that they do not belong" and "emboldening people who already abuse Muslims and influencing those people who are reading this misinformation."

Congress accuses UP Government of destroying Kashi's heritage, targets CM over Manikarnika Ghat

(Gns). Uttar Pradesh Congress President Ajay Rai on Sunday launched a sharp attack on the state government over issues related to Manikarnika Ghat in Varanasi, alleging that it is damaging the city's historic and religious heritage.

Addressing a press conference at the Pradesh Congress Committee office in Lucknow, Rai said that centuries-old heritage sites and places of mythological significance in Kashi are being demolished in the name of development.

He alleged that whenever the Congress raises these concerns, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath attempts to mislead the public by dismissing them as false.

Referring to Prime

Minister Narendra Modi, the Varanasi MP, Rai said that despite calling himself the "son of the Ganga," several religious sites have been damaged during his tenure.

Highlighting the importance of Manikarnika Ghat, Rai said it is believed to be the sacred place where Goddess Parvati's jewel (mani) fell. He added that the ghat is thousands of years old and was renovated by Ahilyabai Holkar.

Rai criticised the government for celebrating Ahilyabai Holkar's birth anniversary every year on May 25 while allegedly destroying the heritage she restored. "On the one hand,

the government pays tribute to Ahilyabai Holkar, and on the other, her legacy is being demolished with bulldozers," he said.



Questioning the government's claims, Rai asked why the Chief Minister described visuals related to Manikarnika Ghat as "AI-generated videos." He also raised questions about the disappearance of the Akshay Vat tree, the idol of Lakshmi Narayan, and the

removal of the idol of Lord Shani.

Rai pointed out that Yashwant Rao Holkar, a member of Ahilyabai Holkar's family, has written a letter stating that idols and heritage structures at the site were damaged. He sarcastically asked whether the government would now file a case against him as well.

The Congress leader further alleged that the current government is primarily working in the interest of big traders and is commercialising religious sites wherever there is an opportunity to generate revenue. He accused the government of using Ahilyabai Holkar's name only for political gains and also alleged irregularities in the Prabhu Ram Trust.

WESTERN RAILWAY RUNS WITH MUMBAI AT TATA MUMBAI MARATHON 2026

Mumbai, Marking 150 Years of Vande Mataram : 150-member WR contingent promotes fitness, rail safety and civic responsibility

Western Railway participated in the Tata Mumbai Marathon 2026 held in Mumbai today, making a vibrant and purposeful presence while spreading a strong message of fitness, discipline and safety awareness. A 150-member strong contingent comprising officers and staff of Western Railway participated as a mark of respect and celebration of 150 Years of Vande Mataram, symbolising national pride, collective discipline and the importance of healthy living in everyday life.

According to a press release issued by Shri Vineet Abhishek, Chief Public Relations Officer of Western Railway, the General Manager of Western Railway Shri Vivek Kumar Gupta led the Western Railway contingent, while several Senior Officers also actively participated in the marathon, demonstrating leadership commitment towards fitness, safety and public engagement. The contingent included representation from key frontline and operational categories such as Station Masters, Ticket Checking staff, Train

Managers, Coaching Depot staff and Trackmen, who participated in full uniform

lence and personal wellbeing. This symbolic participation resonated strongly

nect while reinforcing the importance of safety consciousness and responsi-



(Left) Leadership in stride — General Manager, Western Railway Shri.Vivek Kumar Gupta along with senior officers of Western Railway participating in the Tata Mumbai Marathon 2026. (Right) Western Railway staff in uniform carrying powerful safety and social messages as part of the organisation's marathon contingent.

to convey strong social and safety messages to the public. The team carried impactful awareness messages through creative branding and outreach material, prominently featuring rail safety and civic responsibility slogans such as "Run for Rail Safety", "Respect the Tracks" and "Stay Off Tracks – Stay Alive", along with Western Railway brand lines including "Mumbai Ki Lifeline", "Western Railway Cares" and "Mumbai Runs Because We Do."

A distinctive highlight of the participation was that 50 members of the contingent ran in their official uniforms, powerfully demonstrating that fitness is integral to professional excel-

with the ethos of the Fit India Movement envisioned by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, reinforcing the message that physical fitness must be embedded into daily life across all professions and age groups.

Western Railway's participation carried a larger significance beyond the run itself. It reinforced the organisation's belief that physical fitness is essential for everyone, irrespective of profession or life circumstances, and that a healthy workforce directly contributes to safer, more efficient and reliable public service delivery. The visibility of a disciplined, uniformed contingent also strengthened public con-

ble civic behaviour.

The marathon platform was further leveraged to promote Western Railway's brand and safety outreach through banners, placards, hand posters and themed visual elements, supported by structured social media amplification to extend the reach of the campaign beyond the event venue.

Western Railway compliments all participating officers and staff for representing the organisation with pride and purpose, and reiterates its continued commitment to promoting rail safety, public awareness, fitness and nation-building values through sustained and meaningful public engagement initiatives.

Severe cold, dense fog trigger multiple road accidents across UP; 12 dead, 75 injured

(Gns). Severe cold and dense fog continued to wreak havoc across Uttar Pradesh on Sunday, leading to a series of tragic road accidents.

Poor visibility caused at least 22 road accidents in different districts of the state, involving nearly 70 vehicles. As a result, 12 people lost their lives, and around 75 others were injured, several of them seriously.

The worst pile-up occurred in Amroha, where 15 vehicles collided with each other amid dense fog, causing long traffic jams on the highway. One person was killed in the incident.

Fatal accidents were also reported from Kanpur and Amethi (two deaths each), while Barabanki, Kasganj, Muzaffarnagar, and Mainpuri reported one death each.

In Bareilly, a major accident took place around 8 am near the Dwarikesh Sugar Mill in the Faridpur police station area. Due to extremely low visibility, a

truck, a canter, and several buses collided one after another. The driver of a UPSRTC bus, Atar Singh,

exiting a sugar mill when the accident occurred due to poor visibility.

In Hapur's



died on the spot.

Another serious accident was reported from Ayodhya on the Lucknow-Ayodhya National Highway near Rauzagaon around 9 am. A speeding truck lost control in the fog and rammed into a double-decker bus travelling from Jaipur to Gorakhpur. The impact caused the truck to overturn, leaving six bus passengers injured. Three critically injured passengers were referred to the Ayodhya District Hospital. Police said the truck was

Garhmukteshwar, a bus and two auto-rickshaws collided on National Highway-9 and fell into a deep roadside ditch. More than a dozen passengers are feared injured.

In Kanpur's Sujatganj area, a speeding Innova car hit two cyclists in dense fog, killing both on the spot. Panic prevailed at the scene following the accident.

In Barabanki, a head-on collision between an Innova and an Ertiga, followed by a bus crash, left

one man dead and eight injured. In Muzaffarnagar, a 38-year-old man named Sunny died while returning home from work. In Lakhimpur Kheri, four people were injured in a collision between a tempo and a pickup vehicle. In Kasganj, a tractor-trolley overturned, killing a 40-year-old man and seriously injuring his nephew. In Shravasti, a car got trapped between two trucks on NH-730, leaving four people seriously injured.

In Shamli, a car was hit by a dumper in heavy fog, critically injuring two occupants. The dumper driver fled the scene. In Amroha, multiple accidents claimed three lives, including a woman travelling after a Ganga bath and a labourer returning from Haryana, when a pick-up vehicle overturned.

Police and administration teams remained busy throughout the day, conducting rescue operations and clearing traffic from accident-prone highways.

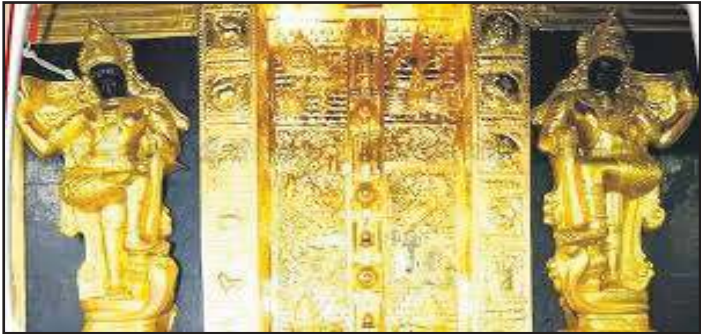
VSSC report confirms gold shortage in Sabarimala temple artefacts

(Gns). Scientific tests by the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) have confirmed that a large-scale gold loot had taken place in the Sabarimala Ayyappa temple.

The Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) inspection report has made a crucial finding that there is a shortage in the amount of gold plating on the Dwarapalaka sculptures, Sreekovil door frames, and other artefacts in Sabarimala. The report reportedly indicates that there is a big difference between the weight of gold plating on the sculptures and Sreekovil door frames in 1998 and the current weight. This shortage has been found to be particularly pronounced in the Dwarapalaka sculptures.

The VSSC report was prepared by conducting a comparative examination of

the layers covered with gold contributed by Vijay Mallya's UB Group in 1998



and the layers returned after being plated with gold in 2019. The report will be submitted to the High Court on Monday along with the SIT conclusions.

The VSSC analysis, which included a scientific comparison of samples from the current structures with other gold-plated layers from 1998, found a clear mismatch and major shortfall in the gold content. The report precisely recorded the amount of

gold present in the current copper layers and determined their age, revealing

the discrepancies.

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) suspects that the original gold layers may have been removed, the gold extracted into bars using a chemical process, and the structures replaced with new, less-gold-plated copper replicas.

The crucial scientific analysis report on the gold plating of copper claddings covering various artefacts, including the Dwarapalaka

sculptures and door frames of the Sabarimala Lord Ayyappa temple, conducted at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), was submitted in a sealed cover to the Vigilance court in Kollam on Friday.

The examination results of 15 samples, including the Dwarapalaka sculptures and the door frames, were handed over to the court. The Kollam Vigilance Court subsequently handed over the report to the SIT on Saturday. The report will be submitted to the High Court on Monday along with the SIT conclusions.

The SIT will now have to find out whether the gold that is currently in Sabarimala is not the old one. If not, where it has gone and whether it has been replaced with new gold. There is also a suspicion that an international antique smuggling mafia is involved in the Sabarimala

Kozhikode man commits suicide after video of his misbehaviour with woman in bus goes viral

(Gns). A youth in Kerala's Kozhikode committed suicide after a video went viral, allegedly showing him misbehaving with a woman on a bus journey. The young woman has accused him of sexually assaulting her on a bus journey, and the video filmed by her while she was travelling on a busy bus went viral on social media. The deceased has been identified as Deepak (40), a native of Govindapuram, Kozhikode. Relatives of Deepak allege that the young woman had spread false propaganda on social media and that Deepak was under severe mental stress after the video went viral. The family said and there was no response



Raghavendra became president of Bar Association and Manoj became secretary, huge enthusiasm among supporters, sweets distributed

Mathura. In the prestigious election of the Bar Association, the presidential candidate Raghavendra Singh defeated his nearest rival Trilok Chand Sharma by 111 votes. Raghavendra got 1171 votes while Trilok Chand Sharma got 1060 votes. There was a lot of commotion among the lawyers for the last several days regarding this prestigious election. Manoj Sharma has won the post of Secretary. Manoj Sharma secured 1013 votes, while his nearest rival Atal Bihari got 708 votes, thus Manoj Sharma won the post of Secretary by 305 votes. Late night in the Bar elections, there was a wave of happiness among the candidates who won the posts of President and Secretary, besides candidates who won the posts of Vice President and other posts. His supporters enthusiastically welcomed their officials by wearing patukas and garlanding them. Drums were played and sweets were distributed. The entire court complex was busy welcoming the victorious candidates in the hustle and bustle of elections. It is noteworthy that on Saturday, the counting of votes started from morning and continued till late night. It took about 15 hours to count the votes. There is a wave of joy among the victorious candidates and their supporters. In the counting of votes after the Bar elections, Raghavendra Singh, the President, continued to lead from the first round. Rajkumar Upadhyay, who contested for the post of President, got 785 votes, Prahlad Singh Tarkar got 241 votes and Krishna Kumar Choudhary got 44 votes. Rajkumar Upadhyay, who got 1409 votes, has won the post of Vice President. Ballabh Sharma got 854 votes. Devendra Singh Insan got 824 votes, Surendra Sharma got 920 votes for the post of Joint Secretary, he defeated Sunil Sagar by 404 votes. Devaki Nandan Sharma has won on the post of Auditor and Vinod Sharma has won on the post of Treasurer. There were 12 candidates in the fray for the post of Secretary. Among these, Gopal Prasad Sharma has got 697 votes.



Supporters Raghavendra President and Manoj Secretary welcoming other officials after victory

District Magistrate inspected Mega Camp-Special Booth Day

Special Booth Day/Mega Camp organized at all 2266 polling places of the district. Forms 6, 7 and 8 were received by BLOs at all polling places. Mathura. District Magistrate / District Election Officer Chandra Prakash Singh inspected the polling place located at Government Inter College Mathura and Primary School Aurangabad First Mathura in connection with the Special Intensive Revision Campaign 2026. The District Magistrate took information from the BLO that how many names have been deleted in his area, how many Forms 6, 7 and 8 have been received and how many people have been given notices. The District Magistrate informed that as per the instructions of the Election Commission of India, the draft of the special intensive revision of the electoral rolls of the Assembly Constituency on the basis of eligibility date dated 1 January 2026 will be published on 06 January 2026 under the district 81 Chhata, 82 Mant, 83 Govardhan, 84 Mathura and 85 Baldev (SC) Claims/objections are being received from 06 January 2026 to 06 February 2026 at all the polling places/designated places (polling centres) of the Assembly constituencies. District Magistrate Chandra Prakash Singh has informed that as per the instructions of the Election Commission of India, a special booth day was organized today, January 18, 2026, at all the 2266 polling places in the district. In the said special booth day, claims/objections were received from eligible citizens by being present at all the BLOs and designated



District Magistrate Chandra Prakash Singh while inspecting and giving instructions for Mega Camp and Special Booth Day

abled personFor correction of entries/transfer of residence, you can fill your application on Form 8 and submit it to BLO and designated officers and the said work can also be done online. The District Magistrate instructed all the BLOs that no eligible citizen should be left out and no ineligible person should be included. He said that the administration is committed to making the final electoral roll completely pure and error-free. The final electoral roll will be published on 6 March 2026. District Magistrate Chandra Prakash Singh, Additional District Magistrate Finance and Revenue Dr. Pankaj Kumar Verma, Additional District Magistrate Amresh Kumar, Deputy District Magistrate Sadar/Joint Magistrate Abhinav J Jain, Deputy Collector Narendra Yadav and other officers were present in the inspection

Painful death of JE of Chhatikara power plant in a road accident, wave of mourning in the department

Mathura. Junior engineer Shailendra Kumar Singh, posted at Chhatikara power substation of Mathura, died in a horrific road accident in Sikandra police station area of Agra. The accident happened when he was returning home after completing his duty. It is noteworthy that JE Shailendra Kumar Singh had left from Mathura for his residence in Agra after finishing duty on Saturday evening. After getting down from the bus at Sikandra intersection in Agra, he was crossing the road when a speeding truck hit him hard. The collision was so severe that Shailendra Kumar Singh died on the spot. As soon as the news of Shailendra Kumar Singh's untimely death was received, a wave of mourning ran among the officers and employees of the Electricity Department. Department colleagues remembered him as a dutiful and friendly officer. He has left behind a full family, which includes his wife and two daughters. After this accident, the family members are in bad condition and crying. As soon as information about the incident was received, the local police took possession of the body and sent it for post-mortem. Police is busy searching for the unknown truck driver through CCTV



File photo of deceased JE

INS Sagardhwani flags off for Sagar Maitri V

(Gns). INS Sagardhwani, India's oceanographic research vessel under the Naval Physical and Oceanographic Laboratory (NPOL) of DRDO, was flagged off for the fifth edition of the Sagar Maitri (SM-5) initiative from Southern Naval Command, Kochi, on Saturday, January 17. The vessel was flagged off by Radha Mohan Singh, Member of Parliament and Chairperson, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence. Sagar Maitri is a flagship collaborative initiative of the Indian Navy and DRDO, aligned with the Government of India's vision of 'Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions (MAHASAGAR)'. The initiative aims to promote closer cooperation in socio-economic aspects and greater scientific interaction, especially in ocean research, among Indian Ocean Rim (IOR) countries. The ceremony was done in the presence of Members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence, Dr Samir V Kamat, Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman DRDO; RAdm Upal Kundu, Chief of Staff, Southern Naval Command; Dr R. V. Hara Prasad, Director General (Naval Systems & Materials); and Dr Duvvuri Seshagiri, Director, NPOL, along with senior officials from the Indian Navy and DRDO. Naval Physical and Oceanographic Laboratory (NPOL), Kochi, has been conducting oceanographic missions under the Sagar Maitri programme to strengthen scientific cooperation and build capacity among IOR nations. Under the aegis of this programme, DRDO initiated a scientific component titled 'MAITRI (Marine & Allied Interdisciplinary Training and Research Initiative)' to establish long-term collaboration with IOR countries in the field of ocean research and development. According to the official release, under the Sagar Maitri programme, INS Sagardhwani will retrace the historic routes of INS Kistna, which participated in the International Indian Ocean Expedition during 1962-65.



Car mows down two labourers in Jabalpur

(Gns). At least two labourers were killed on the spot and around a dozen were injured when a speeding car ran them over in Jabalpur town of Madhya Pradesh on Sunday afternoon. The incident occurred at around 2.30 pm near the Sigma Colony, police said. ASP Pallavi Shukla said all the labourers were residents of the adjoining Mandla district and were installing a railing on the road divider when the incident happened. The official said one of the injured is in critical condition, while the erring car driver sped away from the spot after the mishap.

Efforts are on to trace the absconding driver. All the injured were referred to the Jabalpur Medical College for treatment. Police said the workers were sitting near iron railings installed on the road divider near Ekta Chowk and were having lunch when a white, high-speed car without a registration number, coming from Bareilly towards Jabalpur, mowed them down and fled the spot. More than 24 labourers were working at the site at the time of the incident. After the accident, locals informed the police and called for ambulance services.

The Great Khali assails opponents of Sanatan Dharma, says 'make them squat like chickens'

(Gns). WWE legend 'The Great Khali' is known for his outspoken style. Recently, during the 'Sanatan Influencer Award' programme held in Vrindavan, he strongly defended Sanatan Dharma and reacted sharply against those who target it. Khali unequivocally stated that those who raise their voices against Sanatan Dharma should be made to 'squat like chickens'. Khali, who attended the special programme in Vrindavan, highly praised the efforts of spiritual guru Devkinandan Maharaj. He said, "The step taken by Devkinandan Maharaj to unite the followers of for the national interest and religion without any self-interest."

Expressing concern over the attacks on Sanatanis around the world and incidents like those in Bangladesh, Khali said that all this is very wrong. Giving a message of unity, he said, "We all have to come together so that no one can target us in the future."



86th All India Presiding Officers' Conference (AIPOC) to begin at UP Vidhan Sabha tomorrow

(Gns). The 86th All India Presiding Officers' Conference (AIPOC) will begin at the Uttar Pradesh Vidhan Sabha here on Monday. UP Governor Anandiben Patel will inaugurate the conference with her address. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will also address the inaugural session. UP Assembly Speaker Satish Mahana will deliver the welcome address, and the Chairman of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council, Kunwar Manvendra Singh, will deliver the vote of thanks at the inaugural session. Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, S Harivansh, and Leader of the Opposition in the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly, Mata Prasad Pandey, will also address the distinguished gathering on the occasion. Ministers of the Uttar Pradesh government, members of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council and Uttar Pradesh

Legislative Assembly, and other dignitaries will also grace the occasion. During the three-day conference from January 19 to 21, the dignitaries will brainstorm on the following agenda items: i. Leveraging technology for transparent, efficient, and citizen-Centric legislative processes; ii. Capacity building of legislators to increase efficiency and strengthen democratic governance; and iii. Accountability of the legislature towards the public. The conference will conclude on January 21 with the valedictory address by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha Harivansh, Chairman of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council Kunwar Manvendra Singh, and Speaker of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly Satish Mahana will grace and address the valedictory session.



Former CPM MLA S Rajendran joins BJP in Kerala

(Gns). In a major setback to the CPM in Kerala ahead of the Assembly elections, the left party's three-time MLA, S Rajendran, joined the BJP on Sunday. Rajendran accepted the party membership from BJP state president Rajeev Chandrasekhar at a function held at the BJP state committee office in Thiruvananthapuram. Speaking after accepting the BJP membership, Rajendran said that he had decided to change politics after losing faith in the movement that he had been working with for many years. He clarified that he is joining the BJP not for personal interests but for the general needs and development of Idukki district. He said there are no special conditions for joining the BJP. Rajendran added that he has received an assurance from the BJP president that he will intervene to resolve the issues in the high range. Assembly elections. It was alleged that Rajendran had worked against LDF candidate Raja in Devikulam. A party-level inquiry later found the allegations to be true, following which Rajendran was suspended from the CPM in 2022 for a period of one year. Though the party leaders made repeated efforts to bring him back into the CPM,

Rajendran remained unwilling to return. Earlier, he had gone to Delhi and held discussions with BJP Kerala prabhari Prakash Javadekar. Rajendran was in the news recently for seeking votes for BJP candidates in the local body elections. He went out to seek votes in the plantation areas, including Idamalakudy and Devikulam. CPI leader Gurunathan from Idukki and CPM activist Santosh also accepted BJP membership along with Rajendran. The BJP leadership announced that hundreds of people will accept membership under the leadership of S Rajendran at a public programme to be held in Munnar shortly.



As suspense over Mumbai mayor continues, Fadnavis dismisses rumours of dispute, says decision will be taken by him and Eknath Shinde

(Gns). As suspense over Mumbai mayor continues, Fadnavis dismisses rumours of dispute, says decision will be taken by him and Eknath Shinde. Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis (Photo: IANS) As the suspense over the Mumbai mayor continues with Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena moving its corporators to hotels, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has dismissed rumours of a dispute among the Mahayuti allies. Fadnavis said that the decision on who will become the mayor will be made by him, Eknath Shinde and other party leaders. His remarks came after

"Who will become the mayor, when the mayor will be elected, where it will be Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray's "God willing" remark. In the recently concluded BMC elections, the BJP emerged as the single largest party with 89 seats, and Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena bagged 29. Addressing party workers after BMC election results, Thackeray had said that if God is willing, Mumbai will have a Shiv Sena (UBT) mayor. Maharashtra civic polls: Mahayuti secures thumping

