

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

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



Modi was giving respect to the workers who constructed the Ram Mandir. That is one side where the PM was raining flowers on them, but on the other hand, the situation before was such that the workers who constructed the Taj Mahal had their hands chopped off...

Mughal emperor who commissioned the Taj Mahal, ordered the hands of the workers to be chopped off after the construction. However, there are no historical records to prove the claim. Commenting further about India's history and heritage, Adityanath remarked that foreigners' bloodlines in India cannot tolerate the country's progress or Indians gaining respect globally.

New Delhi. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that while the hands of workers who built the Taj Mahal were "chopped off", Prime Minister Narendra Modi honoured the construction workers who worked at the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

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

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

New Delhi. Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar responded sharply to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent Lok Sabha speech, where the PM accused Congress of repeatedly undermining the Constitution.



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

boosting India's strength and unity. Speaking to reporters, DK Shivakumar said, "The Prime Minister should know that Congress has given him all rights — with the Constitution, the national flag, the national anthem, and independence. It is because of Congress that democracy was established, and now he is the Prime Minister of this country."

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

New Delhi. Attacking Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah has said that the Congress leader's "source of inspiration" for raising issues is abroad and he comes up with a new charge every time a Parliament session is on.



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

the allegation does not come from them. Every time a Parliament session is on, there is an allegation from outside and he talks about them, wears jerseys. His source of inspiration is abroad, which does not surprise me. I know why his source of inspiration is abroad," Mr Shah said at the Agenda Aaj Tak event on Saturday.

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

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

Srinagar. Acknowledging growing discontent among INDIA bloc partners with the Congress, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has asked the party to justify its leadership role in the alliance instead of taking it for granted.

opposition movement," Abdullah told PTI in his first interview after becoming the chief minister in October. Yet there is a sense of disquiet among some of the allies because they feel the Congress is "not doing enough to justify it or to earn it or to keep it. That's something the Congress might wish to consider."



engagement, warning that the coalition risks becoming a mere election-time convenience. Abdullah stressed the need for sustained interactions beyond the electoral cycle, noting that the alliance's current approach appears sporadic and ineffective.

only just come out. There has been no formal or informal sort of work that has been done for the INDIA bloc," he said. Abdullah, who is the vice president of the National Conference, also stressed the importance of establishing a structured communication framework.

also not been very happy with the electoral alliance his National Conference party formed with the Congress before the Jammu-Kashmir assembly elections, where it failed to pull its weight during campaigning.

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

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



The BJP, which holds a significant share of cabinet berths, is expected to bring in new faces during the expansion. However, sources indicate that some of its 20 allotted seats will remain vacant for now, leaving room for future adjustments.

Four family members, including newlyweds killed in car-bus collision in Pathanamthitta

PATHANAMTHITTA. A newlywed couple returning from their honeymoon among four members of a family were killed after their car collided with a bus carrying Sabarimala pilgrims at Murinjakkal in Koodal in the district on Sunday. The deceased have been identified as Mathayi Eappen, Biju P George, Nikhil, and Anu, all residents of Mallassery in Pathanamthitta. The accident occurred around 4 a.m. on the Punalur-Muvattupuzha state highway, just seven kilometers from the victim's house. After a honeymoon trip to Malaysia, the couple—Anu, the daughter of Biju, and Nikhil, the son of Eappen—were heading back home from Thiruvananthapuram airport. According to reports, Nikhil was employed in Canada. Prima facie, the police assessed the accident might have happened as the driver fell asleep at the wheel. Carrying Ayyappa devotees, the bus from Tamil Nadu, was damaged partially while the front portion of the car was completely disfigured and crumbled. Driver, including a few passengers, suffered minor injuries in the collision. Immediately after the accident, Police and the Fire Force reached the spot and carried out the rescue services. While they reached the spot, three men in the car died on the spot, while Anu succumbed to her injuries at a nearby private hospital. The police, led by the SP and other senior officials reached on the spot and are investigating the accident.

Buoyed by bypoll wins, UDF to go for micro-level management

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. Taking a cue from the BJP which prioritised assembly constituencies as A, B and C on the basis of winnability, the UDF is also taking a similar step to maximise its winning chances in the coming LSG and assembly elections. However, unlike the BJP, the UDF would be focusing on booths, instead of assembly segments. The UDF is set to enter into micro-level election management ahead of the 2026 assembly elections by prioritising each booth in the assembly constituencies as A, B and C based on the strength of the front. The UDF meeting to be held on December 17 would start a preliminary discussion on formulating a strategy along this line. In the last assembly election, the BJP had classified around 40 constituencies as A class and identified these as seats where the party had a good chance of win. The candidate selection was also based on the winnability factor in these seats. However, the UDF plans to go one step further. The front leadership has decided to classify booths as A, B and C based on the front's strength in each booth. "The UDF has created wonderful results through micro-management and disciplined work," UDF secretary C P John told TNIE. "This is an achievement for the front. We will prepare

a plan for this," he said. According to the UDF leadership, of the 100 constituencies, there are 15 in which the front's chances of winning are grim. In 20 seats the front could win. The idea of booth-level classification came after the UDF implemented it successfully in Palakkad, Chelakkara and Wayanad by-election. In Palakkad, where all the fronts fought for survival, the booth-level experiment gave an upper hand for the UDF. "In Palakkad, we identified 2,000 elders who had crossed 85. We categorised the booths based on winning chances. Around 40 booths were in C category in Palakkad," a UDF leader who was in charge of the constituency told TNIE. In Thiruvananthapuram parliament constituency, out of 1,300 booths, 175-180 are identified in C category. The leadership is also of the view that after identifying the front's strengths and weaknesses in the booths ahead of the election, it could concentrate on rectifying the faults. "There are some booths where we couldn't do much as our opponents have the majority there. As far as B category booths are



concerned, we can recapture them if we rectify the weaknesses. Through this we could increase the chances of winning," a Congress leader told E.The idea to concentrate on booths came up as the Congress, which is leading the UDF has organisational issues at the grassroots level. The lack of workers in many booths is a challenge to the Congress and UDF. The leaders are also aware that in the assembly elections the strategy used in by-elections would not work. "In by-elections, we can successfully parachute workers from other constituencies. However, in the

general election it is not possible. Hence, identifying the pitfalls will be decisive," he said.

Meanwhile, the Congress central leadership has started a survey ahead of the assembly election. The aim is to categorise assembly segments into A, B and C. "There are some seats where we could win if we field a good candidate.

Community is also a factor. In Thiruvananthapuram district, in the last election, there was a complaint that enough representation was not given to Ezhava and Nadar communities. Such matters would be taken care of in the future," a KPCC leader said.

Tried and true method

The UDF has decided to classify booths as A, B and C based on the front's strength in each booth. According to the UDF leadership, of the 100 constituencies, there are 15 in which the front's chances of winning are grim and 20 where it could win. The idea of booth-level classification came after the front implemented it successfully in Palakkad, Chelakkara and Wayanad by-elections. In Palakkad, the booth-level experiment gave an upper hand for the UDF.

Less than 40 per cent urban homeless in Odisha have got pucca house: H&UD department

Similarly, work of 8,085 pucca houses against the approved 13,167 have been completed in Koraput district.

BHUBANESWAR. Less than 40 per cent of the total urban homeless identified across all civic bodies in state have been provided pucca houses so far. Sources in the Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) department said more than 3,53,000 homeless families had been identified in the state in the 'Housing for All' plan of action survey in 2017-18.

However, a little over 1.33 lakh families, only about 38 per cent, have been provided pucca houses in these seven-and-half years between 2017-18 and 2024-25 fiscal so far. All the beneficiaries have been provided the houses under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) as the state didn't have its own scheme. Housing and Urban Development minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra had also informed the Assembly recently that Odisha government doesn't have any system in place to provide pucca houses to urban homeless under its own



scheme. Moreover, the state government has also been unable to ensure construction of all the houses approved for the beneficiaries under PMAY-U. Out of a total of 1,84,627 pucca houses approved for the beneficiaries in the state so far, the government has been able to complete

about 1,33,023 housing units so far. Out of 14,481 pucca houses approved for the urban homeless in Khurda district under PMAY-U, only about 5,042 units have been completed so far. Similarly, work of 8,085 pucca houses against the approved 13,167 have been completed in Koraput district. In Cuttack, the

number of PMAY-U housing units completed so far is about 6,800 against the approved target of 10,035. Considering the delay in completion of houses, state government in November this year had sought extension of the project timeline of PMAY-U, which is set to end on December 31, by another year. Two months back, it had also sought an assistance of around Rs 180 crore from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) to complete several PMAY-U houses that were under different stages of construction. Officials in the Odisha Urban Housing Mission (OUHM) said the launch of PMAY-U 2.0, unveiled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in September this year, will pave way to cover more left out beneficiaries under the scheme. The state government and OUHM have already worked out a plan to take up IEC drive in urban areas to cover more number of beneficiaries under the scheme, they said.

Inflow to Thamirabarani receding, 52k cusecs flowing into sea: Collector K Elambahavath

THOOTHUKUDI. Residents living along the Thamirabarani riverbank need not panic as inflow is gradually receding due to declining rainfall, said Collector K Elambahavath on Saturday.

In the wake of heavy rainfall triggered by low pressure, Thamirabarani was in full spate on Saturday and submerged two old bridges at Aathoor and Eral, and inundating several villages. Notably, the two new bridges at Aathoor and Eral were damaged during the December 2023 floods and the old bridges were providing access. However, both old bridges have been submerged, forcing authorities to provide alternate routes. Over 18 main road stretches across the district have become unusable and alternate routes have been charted. Speaking to Collector Elambahavath said the Thamirabarani was carrying 52,000 cusecs through Srivaikuntam Anaicut into the sea as of 6 pm. The water level in the river would reduce further as water release from Gadanandhi Dam has reduced to 10,000 from 20,000 cusecs, he said after a consultation meeting with the Tenkasi collector. "As the Thamirabarani is capable of carrying over one lakh cusecs of water, we are safe. However, the public is urged to exercise caution," he added. The collector further said, "Officials from the revenue and public works department are involved in removing sand dune blocking at the mouth of the Thamirabarani at Punnakayal. As many as 1,238 persons have been shifted to relief camps across the district and provided with necessities," he said. "Most of them were shifted from flood prone areas along the Thamirabarani early on, by the revenue, police and civic bodies," the collector said. Meanwhile, SP Albert John appealed to devotees not to approach the beach at the Tiruchendur Murugan temple on full moon day. He said that road access through Thoothukudi-Tiruchendur and Tirunelveli-Tiruchendur are unsafe.



Staff must be treated on par with cops, give solatium for death in line of duty: TN forest staff association

COIMBATORE. The Tamil Nadu Forest Staff Association alleged that in stark contrast to police personnel, the state government does not provide solatium to the kin of forest department staff who died while on duty hours. They pointed out that even after the death of a 32-year-old forest guard, who was the sole breadwinner of his family in a road accident at Dindigul three weeks ago, the state government have not made any announcement to provide solatium to his wife and two kids.

The forest staff members across the state crowd-funded Rs 7 lakh and deposited the amount in the account of the deceased's children. The deceased V Ramasamy, a resident of Chindaiyankottai, was working as a forest beat guard in Sengadampatti under the Kannivadi forest range in the Dindigul

forest division. On November 20, Ramasamy was returning on his bike to his house at Koolampatti Pirivu on the Sempatti-Vathalakundu National Highway, along with his relative Arun Pandian (17) and an acquaintance Arvind Pandian, both of whom were riding pillion. While plying along Sempatti, a truck moving at a high speed hit the two-wheeler from behind, killing all three. On Saturday, the team led by S Karthikeyan, who is the president of Tamil Nadu Forest Staff Association met the deceased's wife R Valliand, and handed over the cash to their son R Dinesh Kumar (8) and daughter R Bhuvana (3). "We have also sought the senior forest department official's help to issue funds. However, nothing has



been done so far. The government should immediately release the solatium," he said. "Likewise, the state has not provided solatium to C Chandru, who died on duty at

the Pollachi forest range in Anamalai Tiger Reserve (ATR) in May 2020. The family of Ramasamy is destitute and his wife has to take care of their two children," said Karthikeyan. He added, "Chief Minister MK Stalin announced Rs 25 lakh solatium to the kin of constable K Paranthaman (39) who died in a road accident. Likewise, 25 lakh was given to the kin of Head Constable A Sridhar (45) who used to work at Ariyamangalam traffic police station. However, no solatium is being given to the kin of forest department staff."

When tried to reach out to Principal Secretary to Government, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Forests P Senthil Kumar, he was unavailable for comment.

They protested by consuming eggs in front of the Deputy Commissioner's office, and have even threatened to serve it at the venue.

Odisha Universities Bill stall; delays vice-chancellor, faculty appointment

The Supreme Court has since put a stay on the Act which was against the UGC guidelines for the appointments.

BHUBANESWAR. The hopes of appointment of vice-chancellors and faculty in state-run universities, which have been stalled for nearly four and half years, have been dashed with the Odisha Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2024 hanging fire. The Bill, which would have allowed appointments to the top and key positions in the universities, was introduced in the House by the present BJP government but the Assembly was adjourned sine die before it could be discussed and passed. Appointment of faculty members and vice-chancellors in public universities have been put on hold owing to the contentious Odisha Universities (Amendment) Act, 2020 which was brought into effect by the previous BJD government. The University Grants Commission (UGC) had challenged the new amendments over many violations. The Supreme Court has since put a stay on the Act which was against the UGC guidelines for the appointments. To end the impasse, the new government had last month decided to amend the parent act -

Odisha Universities Act, 1989 - to grant more autonomy to universities for making the appointments. It was approved by the state cabinet too and the government on December 3 had introduced it in the Assembly. The Bill could neither be discussed nor passed.

At a time when universities have reached a situation where vice-chancellors' tenures are being extended and many departments forced to manage with just one or two faculty members, academicians said students in higher education have been the worst-hit because of the conflict with law.

"For the last over four years, there have been no new recruitments which is a cause of great concern for not just the students but also the government. Many faculty members have already retired and the vacancies arising out of it are affecting not just academics but also



research," said Berhampur University vice-chancellor Geetanjali Dash. According to the Higher Education department reports, of the total sanctioned posts of 1,911, only 724 teachers are in position. Of the 1,187 vacant positions, some are being managed by guest faculty. Besides, seven universities in the state.

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Editor-in-Chief
Gurcharan Singh Babbar
Mob : 9654077232, 9971359517
Website : www.thesikhimes.in
Email : sikhimesindia@gmail.com

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Legal Advisors:

Advocate Mohd. Sajid
Advocate Dr. A.P. Singh
Advocate Manish Sharma
Advocate Pooja Bhaskar Sharma

How AI skills will drive economic growth in 2025

With artificial intelligence poised to reshape industries worldwide, a paradox is emerging. Despite a growing demand for people with the knowledge to leverage the technology's potential, AI-related skills remain in short supply. The scarcity of AI-related skills — from proficiency in machine learning, prompt engineering and data science to an understanding of AI's ethical implications — is becoming a major obstacle in deploying the technology effectively. In one recent report, 47 per cent of executives say their employees lack the necessary skills. This will affect companies' ability to move AI projects from conception to implementation. A 2023 report from the World Economic Forum finds that "six in 10 workers will require training before 2027, but only half of workers are seen to have access to adequate training opportunities today." This gap in skills bodes ill not only for individual career growth, but also for economic growth more broadly. Capitalising on the opportunities that AI presents will require updated approaches to education and training. In the coming year, educational and vocational institutions will likely place a much greater emphasis on teaching AI ethics skills, offer flexible lifelong learning and infuse AI into their offerings to be more competitive.

AI ethics skills will become a core concern — and for good reason. In the space of just a few years, generative AI has become available to anyone with a computer and an internet connection. For employers and their information technology (IT) departments, this raises the problem of "shadow AI," or unsanctioned use of generative AI by employees. It could expose companies to a wide range of security, compliance, and reputational risks. In addition, the workforce will need AI ethics skills to manage new AI agents: tools that can automate complex tasks that would otherwise require human resources.

Shadow and agentic AI both demand new guardrails to help users protect AI applications based on responsible AI practices. To this end, education providers will begin to emphasise training on the fundamentals of AI explainability, fairness, robustness, transparency and privacy. Without a basic understanding of how AI models generate their output, for example, those responsible for protecting data or controlling autonomous systems will be ill-equipped for the task.

With AI and other new technologies evolving rapidly, lifelong learning will become the new normal. The process can be divided into developing skills that meet immediate needs, anticipate future needs and furnish always-in-demand expertise. Many traditional roles within an organisation will soon change. For example, some employees who currently work independently (who don't manage other people) may join new types of teams in which humans manage AI agents. And to prepare them for this fundamental change, demand for online courses and digital credentials in AI-related fields like natural language processing and machine learning will likely increase. Moreover, the future use of quantum computing will continue to drive the need for new skills. And the steady rise in the number and variety of cyberattacks — such as "harvest now and decrypt later" (HNDL) hacks — underscores the importance of up-to-date cybersecurity skills. That is why our own organisation is working with community colleges across four US states to offer a new cybersecurity certificate that will prepare students for in-demand roles across the workforce. Similarly, our collaborations with Singapore Polytechnic and historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the US provide free training in AI to young learners. And while this process may begin in the classroom, we can also expect to see more opportunities for upskilling as the relevant technologies evolve. For anyone who wants to stay competitive in the job market, lifelong learning has become indispensable.

India learning to play it both ways

THE GREAT GAME: In Afghanistan and Bangladesh, India's hyper-realist foreign policy is the mantra for our times

FOREIGN Secretary Vikram Misri's measured remarks on his visit to Bangladesh with the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs in Delhi this week is a welcome return to the realistic middle ground for which India's foreign policy has been well known. Most interestingly, Misri addressed the Sheikh Hasina question with full forthrightness. He was speaking to his MPs, but, no doubt, the message was being read and heard in Dhaka equally carefully. The result was a fine balance, an adroit defence of a friend of whom you have not fully approved in the past nor in the present circumstances, but cannot fully wash your hands of.

Misri said Hasina was using "private communication devices" — sometimes called a phone or an iPad or a computer, via any number of service providers — to make the highly critical comments that she had recently done on the Bangladesh interim government and its chief adviser Muhammed Yunus as well as Dhaka's lack of protection of the minority Hindu community in Bangladesh. Misri never once said whether India approved of what Hasina was saying. He pointed out that India's ties with Dhaka were not dependent on a "single political party" but focused on the "people of Bangladesh."

So, let's read between the not-so-finely-drawn lines. India, Misri was clearly saying, was ready to move on from its old tie with Hasina and try to restore a measure of normalcy with Naya Bangladesh — after all, it's not as if Delhi has not dealt with not-so-friendly governments in its eastern neighbour before. Ask Ronen Sen, the old ambassador with a penchant for history, about the time when Mujibur Rahman, Hasina's father, was assassinated that late night or early morning, depending on your sleep cycle, back in 1975, and why such a brutal event, if not an assassination, was waiting to happen. Ask the other ageing diplomat with a razor-sharp mind, Deb Mukharji, about his interactions with Hasina and Khaleda Zia and why the two women who ran the country between them for decades detested each other with such full-blown certainty, and why the August 4 "uprising" or "debacle", depending on how you saw it, was inevitable.

Let's move on. Misri was telling Dhaka, even as he spoke to the Indian parliamentarians in Delhi. It's been an ugly episode, ugly for us, too. Misri will

never say this, nor will any serving Indian diplomat, but the fact remains that when India supported Hasina in her last victory this January as well as the last time she won, in January 2019, it had not-so-delicately held its diplomatic nose.

Involve the opposition parties. Delhi had told Hasina repeatedly, talk to Khaleda Zia and to the rest of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, ask them to participate in the elections, this is not a one-party state. Delhi's advice to Mujib's daughter was as much for herself, for the people of Bangladesh, whose loyalties were divided down the middle

years ago; certainly, all sides are waiting for another round of the great game. Certainly, the Russians are obliging by removing the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan from their list of banned entities.

You might wonder about Delhi's hyper-realism, and what exactly is going on. You might ask yourself: is it actually true that India wants to be friends with a regime that has banned women from singing, or girls from studying in schools beyond Class VI and kept most other human rights in abeyance? The fact is that India is taking a leaf out of the book the big powers have read and torn up, chapter by chapter, whenever they felt like it. The simple answer is that India may be finally learning to play it both ways. To support the ghoulish Taliban regime because it helps protect India's northern border once removed — it is Pakistan that has a border, not India, of course — and because India hopes that a friendly Taliban could sometime in the future come to its aid in allowing Indian operatives to put pressure on Pakistan on its northern frontier.

As the year comes to an end, the interesting change in the Modi government's foreign policy in its third term is that it has no special friends or enemies. (The one exception, of course, is Pakistan.) The decision to end the fracas at the Line of Actual Control and strike a deal with the Chinese was taken with the full force of knowledge that a military standoff at high altitude was being undermined by a burgeoning imbalance in bilateral trade. Perhaps, the Russians helped — who knows.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's visit to Moscow this week is as much a part of this hyper-realism as is the decision to cut a deal with the incoming Trump administration, whatever it takes. The last time around when Trump was in power, some arguments — some as small as high tariffs around American chicken's legs, medical equipment and super-expensive Harley Davidson motorcycles — had threatened to overtake the relationship. This time around, Delhi is not about to strike the iron with things so small and silly. The moral of 2024 is also that power is not enough; it is the exercise of that power that is equally important. From Yunus' Bangladesh to the Raj Kapoor dynasts who recently met PM Modi, the message is simple. Only if you stand long enough can you be counted.



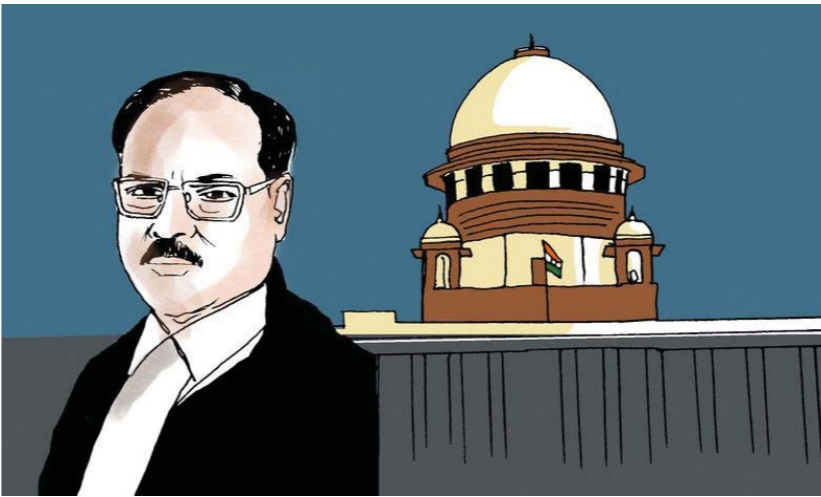
between the Awami League and the BNP, as for the safety and security of its own north-eastern states, several of which share the more than 4,000-km-long boundary between them. India's new tie with Bangladesh is as interesting as the one it is building with the Afghan Taliban. Only a few weeks ago, senior Indian diplomat JP Singh travelled again to Kabul to meet the Taliban Defence Minister, Mullah Yaqoob — who also happens to be Mullah Omar's son. The meeting set off alarm bells in several parts of the neighbourhood, notably Pakistan.

Some Americans wondered if Delhi was making nice with the bad guys — although it is more than likely that the Deep States in India as well as in the US were fully on board with the move. Remember that the Taliban have not touched one brick of the US embassy in Kabul since the Americans fled two

Dishonourable

Allahabad HC judge has done a big disservice

ONLY a strong institutional response will serve the cause of justice following the communally charged remarks by a judge of the Allahabad High Court. Demands have been put forth for an inquiry against Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav, suspension of his judicial work and even impeachment. The Supreme Court has sought details of the controversial speech amid protests that this brazen violation of the code of conduct casts doubts on the judiciary's independence and neutrality. Addressing an event organised by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad on the Uniform Civil Code, Justice Yadav said the country would function as per the wishes of the majority. Replete with communal slurs, his speech also alluded to the media attention it would generate. A line has been crossed, and what's worse, all too knowingly. Impartiality is the cornerstone of the Constitution and the rule of law. An individual who has



taken oath to uphold these principles making an exhibition

fair justice. Hear, hear, Justice Yadav.

Why a pandemic treaty is still hanging fire

National capacity for an early detection and comprehensive swift responses to novel diseases are the keys to minimising the impact of future pandemics.

THE havoc caused, the deaths and the social chaos witnessed during the Covid-19 pandemic are gradually fading from public memory. This ought not be. That pandemic was neither the first such health emergency nor will it be the last one that has the potential to engulf the entire world. Any extraordinary event which constitutes a public health risk through the international spread of disease and requires a coordinated international response, implies a situation that is serious, sudden, unusual or unexpected. Since 2007, WHO has officially declared seven such public health emergencies of international concern. These were the influenza pandemic (2009), Ebola (2013-2015, and 2018-2020), poliomyelitis (2014 to present), Zika (2016), Covid-19 pandemic (2020) and mpox (2022 and 2024). Given their frequency and regularity of occurrence, it can be logically surmised that the next pandemic is knocking at our doors. The question is when it will appear with a potential to repeat or exceed the magnitude of previous pandemics. What causes a pandemic? Most pandemics during the current millennium are caused by viruses of animal origin which have originated from wildlife where millions of viruses continue to circulate. Most of these viruses are transported by bats from wildlife into nearby animal and human habitation thus kicking an epidemiological cascade from local outbreak to massive epidemics and a possible pandemic. The degradation of the environment, especially deforestation, enhances the proximity of wildlife to domestic animals and human habitation thus enhancing the risk of emergence and transmission of novel viruses. Recognising that these emergencies cannot be prevented but, with appropriate preparedness, can result in low-risk events for communities, WHO coordinated the development and promulgation of an instrument-based framework. The International Health Regulation of 2005 is a legally

binding treaty between 193 member countries, and calls upon countries to share information on public health events in a transparent manner and build their national core capacity for the prevention, detection, and response to health emergencies. What progress has been made to strengthen national core capacities? According to self-assessment in 2022, India scored 85 per cent against the global average of 66 per cent. However, the Global Health Security Index puts India at No 66 amongst 195 countries with a score of 42.8 against a global average of 28.4. According to this Global Health Security Index all countries remain dangerously unprepared for future epidemic and pandemic threats, including threats potentially more devastating than Covid-19, and no country is fully prepared for future pandemic or epidemic threats. There is unquestionable need for an urgent and comprehensive enhancement of India's capacity in alignment with international health regulations. Learning from the Covid-19 pandemic, the need for a comprehensive national public health law has been acutely felt. A recent NITI Aayog document on future pandemics has recommended the enactment of the Public Health Emergency Management Act to facilitate the response to any public health crisis including a holistic approach to health management, prevention, control and response. At the global level, a pandemic treaty is hanging fire and being negotiated for last two years among 194 WHO member countries, but consensus remains elusive. The idea is to increase collaboration before and during pandemics after acknowledged failures during Covid-19. Given the importance of multisectoral approach, the



establishment of One Health Mission at the highest technical level in India augurs well. Implementation of this ambitious Mission has the potential to bring together all sectors and catalyse convergence for meeting common national objectives. India has started strengthening its infrastructure. Major challenges include strengthening of microbiological laboratories which are critical for early diagnosis and surveillance. Progress has been made in surveillance through a web-based Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme that detects an average of 40-50 outbreaks every week. This is indicative of the national burden of infectious diseases. A strong and battle-ready epidemiological capacity

especially trained workforce through the India epidemic intelligence service and field epidemiology training programme need to be expanded to cater to the urgent need for conducting effective outbreak investigation and taking action locally. We also need to build capacity for national surveillance and detection of novel pathogens from animals and wildlife. The national surveillance programme should facilitate community and hospital data to flow seamlessly into a unified data portal for data access and sharing across all relevant sectors for mounting appropriate interventions. An efficient integrated surveillance at human-animal-wildlife interface is critical for early detection of such unusual events. There is a need to develop a country-specific forecasting and prediction modelling system by harnessing expertise available in non-health institutions of excellence. Vaccines are the most cost-effective public health interventions. It was incredible how Indian scientists, industry and regulators rose to the occasion and developed and manufactured efficacious Covid-19 vaccines in a short period. Administering 2.2 billion doses to more than 1 billion people is indeed commendable. For new vaccines, diagnostics and medicines to combat future health emergencies, a focused National Mission on therapeutics and novel drug development should be established with a 100-day target to develop, produce and make these fit for use in the communities through networking of pharmaceutical industry, research institutes and regulatory authorities



- Add the grated paneer, cucumber and garam masala powder.
- Cook for a minute or two on low-medium flame.
- Garnish with coriander leaves and switch off the flame.
- Heat a tawa over medium flame.
- Warm the chapati (or tortillas).
- Add some of the paneer vegetable mixture.
- Roll the chapati tightly.
- Serve at once.

Spinach Cheese Pizza

A simple and delicious pizza that can be served for lunch or dinner.

Ingredients

Pizza Base - 1 (available readymade or use this pizza dough recipe), Onion - 1, big, finely chopped, Spinach - 1/2 bunch (or 1 small bunch), cleaned, washed, chopped, Parsley - 1/2 cup, finely chopped + extra to garnish, Cheddar Cheese - 1/4 cup, grated, Red Chilli Flakes - as per taste + extra to garnish, Cumin Seeds - 1 tsp, Olive Oil - 3 tsp, Pepper Powder as per taste, Salt - a small pinch (optional), Tomato Sauce or Pizza Sauce to spread

Optional Ingredients

5 Healthy Lunch box recipes for Kids

Try out from our list of quick and healthy breakfast/tiffin box options that are quick to make and easy to carry.

Egg Salad Sandwich

A healthy and delicious breakfast dish for kids and adults alike. These sandwiches are simple and easy to make too.

Ingredients

Bread Slices - 4, Eggs - 2, hard-boiled, finely chopped, Mayonnaise (or Butter) - 4 tsp, Red Chilli Flakes - 1/2 tsp, Salt as per taste, Pepper Powder as per taste, Ghee as required

Optional

Tomato - 1, sliced
Spring Onions - 1/4 cup, finely chopped
Red Onion - 1, sliced
Lettuce Leaves - few, chopped

Method

Mix the eggs, mayonnaise, red chilli flakes, salt and pepper powder in a bowl. Spread this on 2 bread slices. Top up with the tomato, spring onions, red onion and lettuce leaves. Cover with the remaining slices. Heat a tawa over low flame. Place the sandwiches and apply little ghee around the edges. Cook for 30 seconds on each side and remove. Serve with french fries. Chicken Noodle Stir-Fry
A simple and delicious meal, this easy to make stir-fry with chicken, noodles and vegetables is ideal for lunch or dinner.
Ingredients
Chicken Fillets - 200 gms, finely sliced, fat trimmed, Plain Noodles - 200 gms, Oil - 1 1/2 tsp Onion - 1, small, finely sliced, Garlic - 1 clove, finely sliced, Ginger - 1 cm piece,

grated, Sweet Chilli Sauce - 2 tblsp (recipe here), Fish Sauce - 3 tsp, Coriander Leaves - 1/4 cup, chopped, Green Peas - 2 to 3 tblsp, shelled, boiled

Optional

Spring Onions - 2, chopped, Button Mushrooms - 1, chopped, Carrots - 2 tblsp, chopped, Capsicum - 2 tblsp, chopped, Red Chilli Flakes - 1/2 tsp, Peanuts - 3 tsp, crushed, Lettuce - few, shredded

Method

- Cook the noodles as per packet instructions (or in a pan of slightly salted water for 4 to 5 minutes).
- Stir once and drain well.
- Keep aside.
- Heat oil in a pan over medium flame.
- Saute the onions for a minute or until soft.
- Add the ginger, garlic and cook for 20 seconds.
- Add the chicken and cook for 5 minutes or until cooked.
- Add the peas, carrots, spring onions, mushrooms, capsicum, red chilli flakes, lettuce, chilli sauce, fish sauce, noodles and stir well.
- Stir-fry for 2 to 3 minutes.
- Add the coriander leaves and peanuts. Stir again.
- Serve warm.

Egg Noodles

Ingredients

Plain Noodles - 1 packet, boiled as per packet instructions, Eggs - 4, Cabbage - 1 cup, finely chopped, Carrot - 1/2 cup, grated, Beans - 1/2 cup, finely chopped, Onions - 1 cup, finely sliced, Green Chillies - 2, sliced lengthwise, Black Pepper Powder - 1/2 tsp, Ajinomoto - as required, Ginger Garlic Paste - 1 tsp, Coriander Leaves - handful, chopped, Salt as per taste, Oil - 2 tsp

Method

- Heat oil in a pan over medium flame.
- Add the ginger garlic paste and fry for 20 to 30 seconds.
- Saute the onions, beans and green chillies for a minute or two.
- Add the cabbage, salt, pepper powder and ajinomoto.
- Stir-fry for a minute.
- Add the boiled noodles and break the eggs into the pan.
- Mix well and cook for 2 minutes.
- Garnish with coriander leaves.
- Serve hot.

Veg Paneer Roll

This easy to make and delicious Veg Paneer Roll makes for a perfect lunch, evening snack or a light dinner. Made with grated paneer and vegetables cooked in spices and then wrapped in a chapati (or a tortilla), they are a popular street food item these days.

Ingredients

Chapati (or Tortilla) - 3 to 4, Paneer - 3 tblsp, grated, Carrot - 2 tblsp, finely chopped or sliced, Capsicum - 1, small, chopped, Cucumber - 2 tblsp, chopped (optional), Onion - 1, small, chopped, Green Chilli - 1, small, finely chopped, Ginger Garlic Paste - 1 tsp, Tomato - 1, small, finely chopped, Red Chilli Powder - 1/2 tsp, Garam Masala Powder - 1/2 tsp, Cumin Seeds - 1/4 tsp, Saunf - a pinch Curry Powder - 1/4 tsp, Coriander Leaves - handful, chopped, Salt as

per taste, Oil - 2 tsp

Method

- Heat oil in a pan over medium flame.
- Fry the saunf and cumin seeds for 30 seconds.
- Add the onions and green chillies.
- Saute for a minute or until onions turn light golden.
- Add the ginger garlic paste and stir well for 30 to 40 seconds.
- Add the capsicum, carrots and saute for another minute.
- Add the tomatoes and cook for one more minute.
- Add red chilli powder, curry powder and salt.
- Stir well.

Tomatoes - 1/2 cup, chopped (or use sun-dried tomatoes), Mushrooms - 1/4 cup, chopped

Method

- Heat oil in a nonstick pan over medium flame.
- Saute the onions until golden.
- Add the spinach and cook for 3 to 4 minutes or until all moisture has evaporated and the leaves are wilted.
- Remove and transfer to a bowl.
- Add parsley and mix well.
- Sprinkle pepper powder, cumin seeds, salt and red chilli flakes
- Add 2 to 3 tsp of the tomato sauce on the pizza base and spread evenly.
- Place 2 to 3 tblsp of the spinach mixture and spread well.

Sweet Potatoes More than superfood!

X-man: Apocalypse star Olivia Munn recently revealed on social media the secret behind the radical change in her appearance. She said having one roasted Japanese potato (sweet potato) everyday is the reason behind her youthful skin. Originally grown in the Americas, sweet potato is known to have been domesticated more than 8000 years ago. Sweet potatoes, because of their fibre dense composition have widely been used throughout the Indian subcontinent as a fasting food that satiates hunger for long periods. Precisely this is the reason why dieticians recommend it in the weight loss diet. According to celebrity nutritionist Sandhya Gugnani, "Sweet potatoes are nutrition dense food. If you think because of its sweet taste, it should be shunned by people who avoid sugar; one must know that they actually help in lowering blood sugar because of their



Anti-ageing and anti-cancer: Carotenoids present in sweet potatoes are said to have important anti-oxidant and anti-cancer properties. When passing through digestive tract, this fibrous tuber absorbs dangerous free radicals and heavy metals that might cause cancer. Studies at Harvard University have proved that there is a reduction of more than 30 percent chance of having lung cancer in people eating foods rich in beta carotenoid.

Prevent stress; control blood pressure, heart-healthy: Rich in Vitamin B6, they have been proved to reduce the risk of cardiovascular ailments. They are rich in magnesium which is necessary for healthy artery, blood, bone, heart, muscle, and nerve function. Potassium found in sweet potatoes helps in regulating heartbeat and nerve signals and also in relaxing muscle contractions, reducing swelling, and protecting and controlling the function of kidneys.

Energy rich: As the sugar found in sweet potatoes

- **Originally grown in the Americas, sweet potato is known to have been domesticated more than 8000 years ago.**
- **Sweet potatoes, because of their fibre dense composition have widely been used throughout the Indian subcontinent as a fasting food that satiates hunger for long periods.**

is slowly released in the blood stream, they are often recommended in diet of athletes and players and those who suffer from low blood pressure.

Healthiest cooking method

It is important to 'cook' sweet potatoes before consuming them for better absorption of nutrition.

Boiling: It is a recommended method as consuming boiled and mashed sweet potatoes helps in better assimilation of beta-carotene (vitamin A). In boiled form they have a lower glycemic index and hence is helpful in slow release of sugar in body.

Stir frying: Frying it with 3-4 gm of fat is actually helpful because the nutrients become more active and are easily absorbed by body. But ensure that you do not over do it.

Steaming and roasting: Steaming for 7-8 minutes is sufficient in making nutrients available.

The commonest way of having sweet potatoes is in roasted form because it tastes the best like this. Do not over roast it, and also avoid pouring too much vegetable oil as it may destroy nutrient composition.

When one must avoid it
While diabetics and weight watchers can have it in measured quantities, individuals

with already existing and untreated kidney or gallbladder problems should eat it only after consulting the physician.

Sweet Potato Biscuits

Ingredients

Sweet Potatoes - 1 cup, cooked and mashed, Buttermilk - 1/4 cup, Maida (Plain Flour) - 1 1/2 cups, Light Brown Sugar - 3 tsp, Baking Powder - 1 1/2 tsp, Baking Soda - 1/4 tsp, Butter - 1/4 cup, unsalted Salt - 3/4 tsp

Method

- Combine the maida, brown sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Whisk well.
- Add the butter and mix until the mixture is crumbly.
- Whisk the mashed sweet potatoes and buttermilk in another bowl.
- Add this to the flour mixture and mix well until the dough is sticky.
- Sprinkle some flour on a flat surface and knead the dough 4 to 5 times.
- Roll it out to 1/2 to 3/4 inch thickness and cut the dough into 2 inch rounds.
- Place them on a baking tray lined with parchment paper.
- Place the tray into a preheated oven at 225C/450F and bake for 10 to 12 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove and cool.
- Store it in airtight container and serve as needed.

Techie Atul Subhash's estranged wife, in-laws arrested in suicide abetment case

► **Techie Atul Subhash's wife, Nikita Singhania, was arrested in Gurugram, while her mother and brother were detained in Prayagraj. The arrests come after the Bengaluru City Police filed a case of abetment to suicide against them.**

New Delhi. Bengaluru Police on Sunday arrested the estranged wife of techie Atul Subhash, along with her mother and brother, in connection with his suicide. Subhash, a

34-year-old software engineer, died by suicide on Monday, leaving behind a 24-page note and video accusing his wife and her family of harassment. Subhash's wife, Nikita Singhania, was arrested in Gurugram, while her mother, Nisha Singhania, and brother, Anurag Singhania, were detained in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj.

The arrests come after the Bengaluru City Police filed a case of abetment to suicide against Nikita and her family members. The accused had earlier sought anticipatory bail from the Allahabad High Court. The applications were filed by Nikita, her mother, brother, and uncle, Sushil Singhania, following police summons issued on Friday, which required Nikita to appear before them within three days. Nisha Singhania and her son Anurag had fled their home in UP's Jaunpur on Thursday amid the investigation into



Subhash's suicide, PTI had reported, citing police officials. In his suicide note, Atul Subhash, who was from Bihar but worked for a private firm in Bengaluru, detailed what he alleged was years of emotional distress because of marital disputes and multiple cases filed by his wife and her family. Subhash claimed that his wife had filed false cases against him and demanded Rs 2 lakh per month in maintenance for

herself and their four-year-old son. He said his wife, mother-in-law and his brother-in-law kept pressuring him to give them money and lavish gifts since early 2020.

He also levelled serious allegations against a family court judge in Uttar Pradesh, and said he was under severe stress due to frequent travel to Uttar Pradesh for court trials. Amid nationwide outrage over the incident, details have emerged of Nikita's 2022 police complaint alleging harassment and assault for dowry by her husband. In the complaint, Nikita alleged that after her marriage, Subhash and her in-laws demanded Rs 10 lakh more as dowry. She also alleged that Subhash used to beat her up and started treating the husband-wife relationship "like a beast", PTI reported. Nikita and Subhash got married in 2019. While Subhash was based in Bengaluru, Nikita lived with their son in Delhi, where she worked for a multinational IT firm.

"Felt Like Double Period Of Maths": Priyanka Gandhi On PM Modi's Lok Sabha Speech

New Delhi. The Congress on Saturday termed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 11 resolutions he articulated in his speech in the Lok Sabha as "hollow" and called him a "distorian" par excellence who "puts WhatsApp University to shame." The opposition party also questioned why Prime Minister Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh were not present in the House when Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi spoke while participating in a two-day debate on the "Glorious Journey of 75 Years of the Constitution of India." PM Modi on Saturday said the Congress, having "tasted blood," repeatedly wounded the Constitution while his government's policies and decisions since it took office in 2014 have been aimed at boosting India's strength and unity in line with the Constitution.

Asked about the PM's remarks, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra likened his over 110-minute speech in the Lok Sabha to a "double period of mathematics" from school that "bored us." She also slammed his 11 resolutions as "hollow." "PM has not spoken one thing which is new, he has bored us. It took me decades back, I felt like I'm sitting in that double period of Mathematics," she said. "(JP) Nadda ji was also rubbing hands but as soon as Modi ji looked at him, he started acting as if he is listening attentively. Amit Shah also had his hand on head, (Piyush) Goyal ji was going off to sleep. It was a new experience for me. I had thought that the PM will say something new, something nice," she said. Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said, "Mr. Narendra Modi has an MA in Entire Political Science -- whatever that means. Today in the Lok Sabha he showed that he is also a Distorian par excellence."

Some people lie in their self-interest, but our self-styled non-biological PM does so because it is in his very nature. He puts WhatsApp University to shame," Mr Ramesh said. Congress general secretary in-charge organisation K C Venugopal on X termed PM Modi's speech a hackneyed rant against his party. "On a debate about India's Constitution, the PM once again decided to bring out his tired old speech about the Congress instead. While the people were expecting an answer from him on the injustice and inequality facing Indian society, he chose to bring up stale narratives against the Congress, which have lost all resonance among the public," he said. "An insincere PM whose political gurus rejected the Constitution since day one will never be accepted by the people as being loyal to the Constitution. No matter how many speeches he gives, his hypocrisy will be exposed," Mr Venugopal said. He also told reporters there was nothing new in what the PM said in the Parliament on Saturday. "It was only blame game against the Congress." "Whenever we talk of the Constitution they did not respect Parliament. When LoP spoke, the prime minister, home minister and defence minister were absent, either they are scared of Rahul Gandhi or they don't believe in opposition politics," he said.

Lok Sabha to delay One Nation, One Election bills; focus on financial business

NEW DELHI. The government has decided to delay the introduction of bills related to 'One Nation, One Election' in the Lok Sabha, according to the revised list of business issued on Sunday. The two bills -- Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill were earlier scheduled for introduction on Monday (December 16), as per the initial list of business released on Friday. However, the bills have now been removed from the agenda for the day. The reason behind the government's decision to delay the introduction of these bills remains unclear.



Government sources indicate that the bills may be introduced later this week, following the completion of financial business, including the passage of the first batch of supplementary demands for grants, which are listed for discussion on Monday. Despite their removal from Monday's schedule, the government retains the option of bringing in legislative proposals through 'Supplementary List of Business' with the Speaker's permission. The two bills, aimed at facilitating simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies, were circulated among Members of Parliament last week in accordance with parliamentary procedures. The Winter Session of Parliament, which began on December 4, is set to conclude on December 20.

Delhi Sees Highest 'Good' And 'Moderate' Air Quality Days Since 2018

New Delhi. Delhi recorded the highest number of 'good' to 'moderate' air quality days in 2024 since the past six years, data shared by monitoring agencies said. According to the data, a total of 207 days saw 'good' to 'moderate' air quality, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) remaining below 200. The month of December recorded six 'moderate' air quality days so far - surpassing the previous records since 2018. The data showed that so far, December witnessed a total of eight 'poor' to 'severe' air quality days. An AQI between 0 and 50 is considered good, 51 and 100 satisfactory, 101 and 200 moderate, 201 and 300 poor, 301 and 400 very poor, 401 and 450 severe, and above 450 severe-



plus. On December 5, the Supreme Court allowed the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) to relax GRAP stage IV restrictions as the air quality improved. Since then, the AQI in the national capital has been reeling between 'poor' to 'moderate'. According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data, Delhi's air quality was recorded in the 'poor' category today, with the AQI at 246 in the morning. On Saturday, it was measured at 212.

Decks cleared for rail link to connect Jammu & Kashmir

NEW DELHI. Soon, the interior Kashmir is all set to be connected to the rest of India through a rail line, with the first track work of the Centre's ambitious Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link project being completed. The construction of one of the tunnels that are part of the project, T-33, located at the foothills of Mata Vaishno Devi shrine, have also been completed. The 3,209-metre T-33 is designed in a modified horseshoe format. "The track work for the 3.2-km T-33, located at the foothills of Vaishno Devi and connecting Katra to Reasi, was successfully completed on Friday," said Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. Safety remained a top priority during the excavation and construction of the tunnel between Katra and Reasi, as the process posed significant challenges, officials

said. Since parts of the tunnel are located within the challenging 'main boundary thrust' zone of the Himalayas, it has been reinforced with



a minimum 600mm M35 grade concrete lining, Railway ministry's executive director Dileep Kumar said. The main boundary thrust zone is a series of seismic faultlines that separate the outer Himalayas from the lower ranges. The completion of T-33, a key part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link project, will

facilitate the construction of a broad-gauge line through the challenging Himalayan terrain. When completed, the project promises an all-weather, comfortable, cost-effective and efficient mass transportation system, Kumar said. The Commissioner of Railway Safety is expected to conduct an inspection of the T-33 on December 16-17. After this, the technical safety formalities will be completed and a report will be submitted to the Railway ministry. Further work, including electrification, signalling, and other safety-related tasks, will be undertaken after completion of the track inside the tunnel. Sources suggest that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to inaugurate the final 17-km stretch between Katra and Reasi, which includes Tunnel T-33, potentially allowing the first direct train operation from Kashmir.

'Nehru Model Failed, We're Trying To Correct It Since 2014': S Jaishankar

New Delhi. A 'Nehru development model', inevitably produced a 'Nehru foreign policy' and "we seek to correct that abroad", just as efforts being made to "reform" the consequences of the model at home, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar said on Saturday. In a virtual address at the launch of the book 'The Nehru Development Model' by former NITI Aayog vice chairman Arvind Panagariya, he also said the author suggests that former prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru's choices set India on a "deterministic path". "The model and its accompanying narrative permeated our politics, the bureaucracy, of course, the planning system, the judiciary, the public space, including the media, and most of all teaching," the Union minister said. Mr Jaishankar said both Russia and China today "unambiguously reject" the economic assumptions of that period,

which they did more than anyone else to propagate. Yet, these very beliefs "appear to live on" in influential sections of our country even today. "Certainly after 2014, there has been a vigorous effort towards course correction, but the author does assert with good reasons that it still remains an uphill task," he added. In his address, the minister further said "A Nehru development model inevitably produced a Nehru foreign policy. We seek to correct that abroad, just as we try to reform the consequences of the model at home." In fact, the "resistance" to one is based on an "attachment" to the other, Jaishankar argued and said the two need to be tackled as an "integral whole". He began his address by quoting a famous line by an American policymaker on India's independence. "In 1947, John Foster Dulles famously declared, I quote, 'In India, Soviet Communism exercises

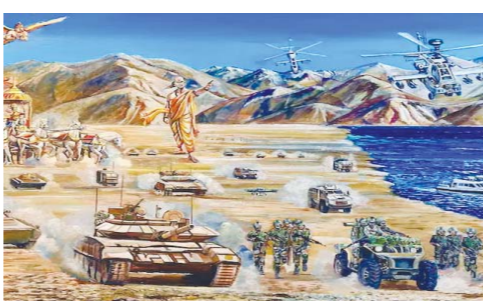


a strong influence through the interim Hindu government'. He of course, could not have been more wrong about ascribing that adjective to the then government. But, more relevant, this was an assertion that for decades was treated as a geopolitical over-reaction of American policy makers to an independent India," he said. The EAM said that over these years, he has often asked himself whether Dulles was altogether wrong on this matter. "And, in

Prof Panagariya's book, I found a substantial answer to that concern." "We all know that there was a strong ideological drive to advance a particular economic model for an India that has just gained freedom. The belief that was propagated was modulated from time to time, but never fundamentally changed," Mr Jaishankar argued. It's root cause was an analysis that the only counter to imperialism lay in socialism, he said. Not just in general terms, but one particular paradigm that was centred around heavy industries. For that reason, the author actually characterised it as a 'Nehru Development Model', the minister said in his address. The paradox, however, is that for more than three decades now, there's actually been a "national consensus that this development model eventually failed the country", he said.

Why iconic 1971 surrender painting was replaced in Army chief's lounge

New Delhi. A painting in the Army Chief's lounge depicting the surrender during the 1971 Bangladesh War has been replaced with a new artwork titled Karam Kshetra (Field of Deeds). The new painting showcases Pangong Lake along the India-China border and the Army's offensive capabilities. In addition to the Pangong Lake, the artwork features modern military assets such as boats, all-terrain vehicles, tanks, and Apache helicopters. It also incorporates mythological figures like Chanakya and Lord Krishna guiding Arjuna's chariot in the Mahabharata. Many argue that this strategic symbolism reflects a significant shift in the Army's focus and delivers a clear message to China.



General AAK Niazi signed the surrender document, leading 90,000 Pakistani soldiers to lay down their arms. This iconic image symbolised India's victory and its military supremacy over Pakistan. The new painting, however, tells a different story. It highlights the Indian Army's modern warfare capabilities and its evolving focus on countering China's growing influence. Defence experts, including Major General Ashok Kumar, suggest this change underscores the Army's transition from conventional

warfare with Pakistan to addressing the complex challenges posed by China. **ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY MEETS MODERN WARFARE** The artwork blends India's advanced military prowess with its ancient philosophical heritage. It showcases cutting-edge weaponry like tanks, boats, helicopters, and all-terrain vehicles alongside depictions of Chanakya, the master strategist of the Mauryan Empire, and Lord Krishna, symbolising leadership and dharma from the Mahabharata. Defence insiders believe the painting aligns the Army's mission with Indian philosophical traditions, emphasising its commitment to justice and duty. Drawing inspiration from the teachings of the Mahabharata, the artwork portrays the Army as both a protector of the nation and an upholder of justice. Chanakya's wisdom, rooted in strategy and diplomacy, serves as a guiding principle for leadership and

military preparedness. Experts argue that these ancient principles inspired India's strategies which successfully brought Chinese forces to the negotiating table after the 2020 standoff. **SYMBOL OF INTEGRATION AND FUTURE READINESS** The painting highlights the synergy between the Army, Navy, and Air Force, reflecting their integrated approach to modern warfare. The inclusion of Apache helicopters, advanced tanks, and indigenous weaponry underscores India's commitment to self-reliance and technological evolution. It portrays a future-ready force capable of swift, decisive action across land, sea, and air. **ASUBTLE MESSAGE TO CHINA** The artwork conveys a nuanced message: while China may rely on Sun Tzu's Art of War, India has its own rich military philosophy, exemplified by Chanakya's strategies and the teachings of the Gita, now bolstered by advanced technology.

5 herbs that can add flavour to any juice



herbs can lend a refreshing taste to mocktails as well as fresh fruit juices

Mint: Mint leaves have a pungent but pleasant menthol flavour, with a sweetish aftertaste. Mint goes well with most fruits, so add this to your guava, peach, apple and sweet lime or pomegranate juice. Always serve chilled.

Basil: Fresh green and aromatic basil also offers several benefits. For one, it is an anti-oxidant. It also helps with respiratory problems and indigestion. To use it, simply tear a few basil leaves and add them to your juice. A great morning pick-me-up is chilled orange or watermelon juice with some cinnamon and basil leaves.

Lavender: You may not know this, but the herb lavender has a sweet floral aroma and pairs well with mint. The leaves can be used with strawberries, peaches and lemonade gets a nice burst of flavour when you add a few sprigs of fresh lavender to a glass.

Lemongrass: This one can be bought at any local market. Aromatic lemongrass not only adds flavour to a soup or hot tea but it's a nice addition to a fresh orange or pear juice. Remember, when you buy lemongrass, ensure its base is intact.

Kaffir lime leaves: Tangy kaffir lime leaves can be used to liven up any citrus juice. Just add the leaves on their own or them into smaller pieces.

How to reuse cooking oil?



Are you wary of using your cooking oil after frying a batch of nachos, because of the health implications? Here are some tips to reuse them.

Choose the oil

If your frying technique is off, your oil won't be reusable. Every oil has a specific smoking point, - the temperature where the oil starts breaking down. Use oils like canola, peanut or vegetable oils with a high smoking point that won't break down easily. Avoid reusing olive oil as it has a low smoking point and a dominant flavour, which makes it a bad choice for deep-frying in the first place.

Filter the oil

After the first (and each subsequent) fry, drain the oil and filter it. Any impurities and unwanted extras like loose crumbs or bits of batter are going to spoil the oil's integrity, making it burn the next time you heat it. Put a few layers of cheesecloth in a metal strainer to filter out the crumbs.

Refrigerate it

Let the oil cool down till it's at room temperature, and then refrigerate it in an air-tight container.

Use separate oils according to flavour

The oil is going to take on the flavour of the food you cooked in it, which makes fried fish oil ideal for shrimp, but not good for onion rings. Separate the oils to prevent bad flavour overlaps.

6 foods that are dangerous for your teeth

Who doesn't want healthy teeth which translate into a bright smile? While there are many healthy options to get a glowing batch of teeth there are also some foods that mean disaster to your teeth. Here's what you should avoid -

Sweet candy

Candy sweets, especially hard candies have tons of sugar which is bad for tooth health since the sweet can cause cavities and get stuck in the crevices causing more bacteria.

Tea and coffee

The tannic acids in coffee and even in some teas can wear down enamel and stain your teeth brown. While you cannot give up tea or coffee completely, try to keep it to the minimum and opt for green tea too.

Pickles

We all find pickles tasty and great as



accompaniments to our meal, but the combination of super-acidic vinegar and sugar is a recipe for enamel erosion.

Citrus fruits

Lime, Lemons, Oranges, and Grapefruit, they all are loaded with citric acid which can cause enamel erosion and tooth decay. If you cannot completely avoid them, try to minimize it by avoiding too much of acidic foods and drinks through the day. The best way to find out an acidic food is to see if any

food or drink easily stains the teeth.

Soda
Top 5 real estate destinations to invest in 2016

Prop Tiger
Beat the heat this summer with a trip in Australia
Tourism Australia

Recommended By Colombia
Soda has a combination of sugar, acids, and carbonation which is too bad for teeth since it leads to tooth erosion and decay. While studies show a glass of red wine every once in a while can be good for the heart and cholesterol levels, the beverage can stain teeth quite easily. The acids in red as well as white wine wear down the surface of teeth, which is why stains are so common.



Guilt-free Bakes take over

Cakes, breads and cookies -the most calorie-laden, sinful delights -can be anything but healthy. Right?

However, some city bakers are all set to change the mindset. They are using wholesome and organic ingredients to add health and taste to your bakes! Think cakes like olive jalapeno, American corn, lemon pomegranate, almond tea-crunch, desi kaju katli, meetha paan, apple oats, red-velvet (with beetroot), pumpkin walnut bread and zucchini choco-chip cookies among others. There is something for everybody -fitness enthusiasts, lactoseintolerants, nut-intolerants, lactating mothers, vegans and even those suffering from diabetes or celiac. Gluten-free, sugar-free and vegan cakes among other healthy bakes, which use alternative ingredients like moong dal, wholewheat, oats, ragi, jowar, bajra, sooji and almond flour, are a reality now. Most of the healthy bakes are sweetened with natural ingredients like honey, jaggery, figs, nuts, dates, carrots and bananas. Instead of vegetable oil, rice bran or olive oil is used.

Fresh fruits, beetroot, zucchini and amaranth seeds are added for colour and flavour, while puffed bajra, dry fruits, muesli, soya cream, butter of dry fruits are used to decorate the cake, instead of calorie laden milk cream or the unhealthy fondant. "Staples, like millets ensure that the cakes are also rich in fibre," says baker Arun Kaulige. Durga Menon adds, "Vegetables and fruits add a different character to the bakes, which you will not find with artificial flavours or regular bakes." Before you turn up your nose at the organic ingredients,

you should know what you are eating in the name of sweet treats. Meeta Wala valkar says, "When I was learning how to bake, I was appalled by the unhealthy ingredients that went into it. After baking, we would bring our creations home, which was then served at dinner. In a month's time, my family started suffering from many health issues."



And that is not startling if you consider the fact that apart from copious amounts of flour, sugar, butter, oil and cream, seven types of chemicals go into any regular bread or bake. "It is a vicious cycle -to balance the sourness of preservatives, you add acidity regulator, which makes the bread hard. So you add dough softener. Then, to balance the sourness, you decrease the percentage of fruit and add sugar. So we decided to break out of it and just make healthy bakes. Our cakes use no decoration at all. Not even names on birthday cakes," Meeta added.

The healthy revolution started about five years ago, but is gaining prominence now. When Chaitali Raizada started healthy baking five years ago, it was an uphill task for her to reach out to others. The fact that atta cakes tend to be dense, and not fluffy, led to speculation about the taste and texture. "Earlier, people were skeptical about the taste of healthy cakes. But now, the city has become much more fitness conscious, and most people who have tasted this have lost the palate for regular stuff." Chaitali believes her bakery is not about desserts. It's a way of life that is free from the clutches of white flour, sugar, artificial colours, additives, preservatives, chemicals, pesticides and even microwaves or non-stick ware.

A surgery and a strict diet that followed is what got Nikita Sanjay Narang to look at healthy baking seriously. "A dietician told me that I was to have no food with preservatives, flour, sugar, etc. But I had a sweet tooth and a passion to bake. So, after six months of experimenting, I finally started coming up with healthy recipes. However, when I market my cakes as no flour, no butter and no sugar and no egg, people think it will have no taste. Though I struggled earlier, the demand is definitely on the rise now."

Karen Lobo Dutta's sweet cravings during her pregnancy prompted her to look up healthy options. Today, she aims to train the next generation to eat healthy even when they are indulging. Simran Oberoi Multani shares those views. "I started healthy baking for my son, who is a toddler now. Even if he snacks on my cakes on a daily basis, I wouldn't worry. The passion to bake healthy also led me to devise an oats and almond biscuit containing flaxseeds and jaggery, which helps young mothers in lactating better."

However, for Jeeva Anna George, it was a question of survival. "In 2010, I was diagnosed with celiac -a disease in which the small intestine is hypersensitive to gluten, leading to difficulty in digesting food. I was put off most food items as gluten is in almost every product with a shelf life. So I started baking my own stuff," she says, adding that schools for children with special needs are part of her clientele.

Clever ways to use your ice Cube tray

How to use your ice cube tray
Use fruit cubes for your party: Fruit-infused ice cubes are a great idea for a party. Choose fruit like watermelon, strawberries and cherries (de-seed them). Put some fruit into each tray and cover with water. Freeze. You can also do this with different shaped cubes. With this, bid goodbye to artificial drinks and say hello to an enticing, flavourful treat.



Use herbs for cooking: Don't fret over herbs going stale anymore. Just store your thyme, oregano and rosemary in ice trays. Select fresh herbs. Chop them up neatly and place them in the different compartments. Add a little olive oil in each till it fills to the top. Cover with a plastic wrap and freeze. Remove the cubes and use them whenever needed.

Store edible flowers: Using edible flowers in cooking is a top trend for the year and now you can

freeze your roses and lavender in ice cube trays to add to your chilled drinks. Simply toss a few cubes into your glass of water and enjoy the refreshing change. You can also store zucchini flowers for your ricotta, drumstick flowers for pungent chutneys and lavender for desserts, biscuits and other bakes.

Make coffee ice cubes: Here's something to add to your chilled coffee. Just pour warm coffee into the ice cube tray and let it freeze. Use these for enhanced flavour to your glass.

'Indulge' fest to treat capital's whisky, cigar lovers

Indulge, a whisky and cigar festival to be held here next month, will feature an array of the greatest whiskies paired with a selection of cigars.

Dramz Whiskey Bar and Lounge will host the fest February 6-7. In its maiden edition, Indulge will feature 46 labels, 20 distilleries and eight experts around the world who will talk about cigars and whiskies.

Some of the prominent whiskies that the patrons could relish include the likes of Glenfiddich (21, 18, 15 and 12 years), Balvenie, Glenlivet (25, 21, 18, 15, Founders Reserve and 12), Royal Salute 21, range of Chivas Regal, Old Pulteney,

Balblair, Cardhu, Oban, Tomatin, Mackmyra Preludium 06 from Sweden and more.

These whiskies will be paired along with some cigars that boast of names like Beenacudo, Padron, Bespoke, Campessino, Costa, to name a few, from The Smoke Company.

"Being an ardent lover and collector of fine whiskies and single malts, I have been working on the concept for more than a year. A festival like this creates a platform where I could share the same with all those who love great whiskies." Sunil Aggarwal, owner of Dramz and director of Indulge, said in a statement.



Section of Akasa Air pilots allege mismanagement, favouritism; airline rejects accusations

New Delhi A section of the pilots of the fledgling Akasa Air has approached the civil aviation ministry alleging mismanagement, favouritism, harassment, and compromised safety standards in the airline's pilot training and evaluation processes. Reacting to the development, Akasa Air dismissed the allegations and termed them as "baseless and untrue".

The pilots wrote to Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu on December 11, listing their grievances and concerns, and requested an immediate independent investigation into the carrier's management practices, training methods, and safety standards, it is learnt. A copy of the letter was also marked to the aviation safety regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), which had fined Akasa Air in October for certain lapses in crew training. Akasa Air, while having been operational for just over two years, has had problems related to pilots earlier as well. Last year in September, the carrier even took some pilots to court for breach of contract, alleging that they quit the airline without serving the regulation six-month notice period. Around that time, Akasa Air was forced to cancel a number of its flights due to such resignations. The airline claims high job satisfaction levels and low attrition among its pilots, even as the unhappy pilots claimed in their letter to Naidu that 84 of Akasa Air pilots resigned on a day's notice. "We categorically deny these allegations as baseless and untrue. Nor do they represent the views of Akasa pilots. At Akasa Air, our commitment to employee centricity is at the heart of everything we do. Our monthly employee survey reveals that pilots, amongst all employee groups have consistently reported the highest levels of job satisfaction, highlighting the effectiveness of our supportive culture. This dedication is further evidenced by the minimal number of pilots seeking opportunities outside of Akasa Air throughout 2024," an Akasa Air spokesperson said.

"For context, 324 pilots have joined Akasa since October 2023. During this same period, we have recorded an annualised attrition of less than 1 per cent for this employee group," the airline's spokesperson added.

Coal imports up 4% at 162 million tonnes in April-October period

NEW DELHI. The country's coal import rose by 4.2 per cent to 162.45 million tonnes (MT) in the April-October period of the current financial year compared to 155.87 MT in the year-ago period. Coal imports in October dropped by 14.4 per cent to 21.84 MT compared to 25.54 MT in the corresponding month of the previous fiscal, according to data compiled by mjunction services, a



B2B e-commerce platform.

Of the total imports in October, non-coking coal imports stood at 13.49 MT against 18.82 MT imported in October last fiscal. Coking coal imports stood at 4.45 MT, against 4.31 MT imported in October last financial year.

In September, non-coking coal imports were 13.24 MT and coking coal at 3.39 MT.

"There was a modest increase (month-on-month) in non-coking coal volumes in October as buyers took fresh positions during the festive month, and ahead of the winter season. Going forward, demand is likely to be moderate due to the anticipated growth in domestic supply during the fourth quarter (Q4)," mjunction MD & CEO Vinaya Varma said.

Switzerland revokes MFN status to India over SC Nestle order

NEW DELHI. Retaliating against a 2023 Supreme Court ruling related to Nestle, Switzerland has withdrawn the most-favoured-nation clause to India under the double tax avoidance agreement, a move that will hit Indian companies invested in the European nation.

"For dividends due from and including Jan 1, 2025, the residual tax rate in the source State is limited to 10%," the Swiss federal department of finance said in a statement issued Wednesday. Earlier they had to pay 5% tax.

India and Switzerland had originally signed the agreement in 1994 and the protocols were amended in 2000 and 2010. Subsequently, India signed tax treaties with Colombia and Lithuania that provided tax rates on certain types of income that were lower than the rates it provided to OECD member nations. Three years ago, Switzerland interpreted that Colombia and Lithuania joining the OECD meant a 5% rate for dividends would apply under the DTAA to India, too, under the MFN clause.

More nations may follow Switzerland, say experts. Supreme Court last year ruled that the MFN clause doesn't automatically trigger when a country joins the OECD if the Indian govt signed a tax treaty with that country before it joined the organisation.

"On the basis of the Indian SC ruling, the Swiss competent authority acknowledges that its interpretation of para 5 of the protocol to the IN-CH (India-Switzerland) DTA is not shared by the Indian side. In the absence of reciprocity, it therefore waives its unilateral application with effect from 1 January 2025," the Swiss govt said on Wednesday

Nestlé judgment fallout: Switzerland suspends Most-Favoured-Nation clause in tax avoidance pact with India, could impact \$100 billion investment plan

The Swiss move poses risk to the \$100 billion investment commitment in India over a 15-year period by the four-nation European Free Trade Association signed in March this year.

NEW DELHI In what could potentially impact Swiss investments in India and higher taxes on Indian companies operating in Switzerland starting January 1, 2025, Bern has suspended the Most-Favoured-Nation (MFN) clause in the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) that India and Switzerland entered originally in 1994 and amended in 2010, a statement released by the Swiss government dated December 11 showed. This decision follows a ruling by the Indian

Supreme Court last year, which determined that the DTAA cannot be enforced unless it is notified under the Income Tax Act. As a result, Swiss companies such as Nestlé face higher taxes on dividends. The Supreme Court ruling effectively overturned a Delhi High Court order that had ensured companies and individuals were not subject to double taxation while working in or for foreign entities. Tax experts said that the move by the Swiss could "impact investments" in India as dividends would be subject to "higher withholding tax". Notably, India and four-nation European Free Trade Association (EFTA), an intergovernmental grouping of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland signed a free trade agreement where the EFTA countries committed investment worth \$100 billion investment in India over a 15-year. However, the Swiss embassy said that there is no direct impact on the EFTA-India TEPA. In particular this week's decision does not negatively affect investment from Switzerland to India. The question of the interpretation by Switzerland and India of the most-



favoured-nation clause concerns the residual tax rate applicable to dividends based on the double taxation agreement paid by a company of one contracting state to a resident of the other contracting state. However, the change in this residual rate has no impact on the validity of the double taxation agreement as such, or on any other treaties under international law concluded between Switzerland (independently or under the EFTA framework) and India," the embassy said in response to a query. The Swiss authorities said that the suspension was enforced due to a lack of "reciprocity" in the DTAA with the Indian government. They added that for dividends due on or

after January 1, 2025, the residual tax rate in the source state would be limited to 10 per cent. "Based on the Indian Supreme Court ruling, the Swiss competent authority acknowledges that its interpretation of paragraph 5 of the Protocol to the IN-CH DTA is not shared by the Indian side. In the absence of reciprocity, it therefore waives its unilateral application with effect from January 1, 2025. Accordingly, income accruing on or after this date may be taxed in the source state at the rates provided in the DTA IN-CH, regardless of paragraph 5 of the Protocol," the Swiss government statement said. Amit Maheshwari, Tax Partner, AKM Global said that Switzerland has announced this in direct response to the Nestle ruling pronounced by the Indian apex court in 2023 where the court held that MFN application is not automatic and it requires a separate notification from India to grant lower tax rates under the MFN clause. He said that Switzerland is of the view that it is not receiving the same treatment that India grants.

ED hands over BPSL's assets worth Rs 4k crore to JSW



NEW DELHI: The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) handed over Bhushan Power and Steel Ltd (BPSL's) assets worth Rs 4,025 crore to JSW, which successfully bid for BPSL under the insolvency resolution process. The restitution of the assets to JSW is result of a Supreme Court order on 11th December 2024. The enforcement directorate had attached the properties of Bhushan Power and Steel Ltd after it found the company

and its promoters diverted bank funds to private investments in the form of shares and properties. ED investigation also revealed that the books of accounts were fudged to show fake expenses/purchases/capital assets and thereby bank funds were taken out in the form of cash. The diversion of funds resulted in financial distress of the BPSL, which ultimately landed in the corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP)

The resolution plan of JSW had the provision of making a payment of Rs 19,350 crore against the outstanding loans of Rs 47,204 crore.

in 2017. The company was bought by JSW through insolvency process which lasted over two years, and JSW's resolution plan was approved by the NCLT in September 2019. The resolution plan of JSW had the provision of making a payment of Rs 19,350 crore against the outstanding loans of Rs 47,204 crore. Despite the approval of the resolution plan, the enforcement directorate attached properties of BPSL, forcing the lenders as well as JSW to move the Supreme Court against the attachment.

JSW gets back Rs 4k cr assets in Rs 47k cr Bhushan Steel case

NEW DELHI. In another significant action, Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Saturday said it restituted properties worth Rs 4,025 crore to JSW, a successful resolution applicant of the erstwhile Bhushan Power and Steel Ltd, under corporate insolvency resolution process of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.

The assets were attached by ED in 2019 after a money laundering probe revealed that the erstwhile promoters of Bhushan Power and Steel Ltd (BPSL) cheated banks and siphoned off funds to the tune of Rs 47,204 crore for private investments. A PMLA case was based on an FIR registered by CBI. "The accounts were fudged to show fake expenses/purchases/capital assets, and thereby, bank funds were taken out in the form of cash. The cash

was brought into the books of various beneficially owned companies (held through employees/dummy directors), and the same, was utilised for investments in the form of shares and immovable properties," ED said.

The agency said after establishing money trail of the laundered proceeds of crime, it attached properties, including land, building and machinery, worth Rs 4,025 crore. Promoter Sanjay Singal was arrested on Nov 22, 2019, and a chargesheet was filed against him and the company in Jan 2020. A special court had taken cognisance of the case immediately, but trial is still pending for more than four years due to repeated adjournments sought by the accused. Further, ED attached assets

worth Rs 427 crore held by various shell companies linked to the accused. A supplementary chargesheet is likely to be filed by the agency soon to begin the process of restitution of the remaining assets.

The creditor banks had initiated corporate resolution under Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, and JSW was the applicant seeking assets for an amount of about Rs 19,350 crore, as against the outstanding loans of Rs 47,204 crore. Through an affidavit filed before Supreme Court, ED urged the apex court that it may direct handing over the attached assets to JSW and consider the same as restitution under PMLA. SC accepted the ED affidavit, and on Dec 11, ordered restitution of assets to JSW.

Can't let big biz into banking yet,' says banker Kundapur Vaman Kamath

MUMBAI. Kundapur Vaman Kamath, the veteran banker who led the rapid growth of ICICI Bank and helmed it for nearly two decades from its inception and make the largest private sector lender within few years, has spoken against allowing corporate houses into banking space, saying the regulator has to be satisfied that they will not misuse public deposits through the backdoor. Kamath, who also headed New Development Bank, the developmental bank floated by the BRICS groups as its first chairman, said the Reserve Bank needs to take extra care when it comes to digital lenders, saying there are more than enough signs of rash behaviour by them. "The primary regulatory purpose of banking is to ensure the safety of depositors' money. So, a little more time is still needed for corporates to be allowed into the banking sector. Because before letting corporates into the banking space, the RBI has to ensure that they will not use the deposits they collect from the public for their (corporates') own funding needs. The regulator must first feel comfort in their presence and behaviours," Kamath, the chairman of Jio Financial Services, the yet-to-be-operational financial services arm of

Reliance Industries, said while talking at the Lalit Doshi memorial lecture here over the weekend. On a question on fintech turning themselves as banks, he warned that there are signs of rash behaviour by some of them. "I am seeing some signs of rash behaviour by some digital lenders. I'm being very frank about it...on the part of digitally-driven enterprises, I think, the RBI will have to manage with great care," he said.

He also spoke against the calls for privatisation of more state-run banks.

"If the state-run banks have return 15-20% on their equity (RoE) why should they be noted allowed to thrive? Where is the room for privatisation with such good return? But of course he said they need to be given more operational freedom.

Kamath said most public sector banks are self-sufficient now when it comes to capital and can match their private peers on technological capabilities. Early in the year, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said privatisation of public sector undertakings was very much on the table and the government was committed to do it but the timing will be decided later by the Cabinet. But he batted for more banks and more so



more large banks which could happen either through amalgamation or rapid growth, which is a must if the economy has to double from what it is today.

"The first step to reach the target of an \$8 trillion economy (over the next decade or so) would be to have a lot of large banks. Our banks need to bulk up and the size of banks that we have today will have to expand dramatically. The good news is that our banks are having an RoE upwards of 15 percent and this is good enough to grow at a healthy rate and meet the size of bulking up," he said. It can be noted that while for the public sector banks the RoE

chart over their private sector peers, with SBI leading it with 20.8%. But private sector banks lead in return on assets (RoAs) with 1.70-2.40%, which for public sector ones is only 0.70-1.13%. Return on equity (RoE) of private players is much lower than their public counterparts. The RoE of state-owned banks was in the range of 13.50-21% in Q1FY25 compared to 13.50-17.70% range for private banks.

Among state-owned banks, Indian Bank had the highest RoA of 1.20% in the first quarter, followed by State Bank of India at 1.10%. Bank of Baroda, Union Bank of India and Canara Bank reported RoAs of over 1 percent.

Like RoA, RoE is also a measure of a bank's ability to churn profits. While RoA weighs profits against the assets of a bank, RoE indicates how a bank or company has utilised shareholders' funds to generate profits. State Bank of India reported the highest RoE of 20.98% in Q1FY25, followed by 20.88% by Canara Bank, 19.76% by Indian Bank, and 17.45% by Bank of Baroda. In the private bank space, ICICI Bank reported an RoE of 17.70% in the April-June quarter, and Axis Bank, 16.68%.

Rashmika Mandanna

Reveals Why She Said Yes To Vicky Kaushal's Chhaava



Rashmika Mandanna, riding high on the success of Pushpa 2, is gearing up for her next big project, Chhaava, in which she stars alongside Vicky Kaushal. In a recent interview, Rashmika shared her initial reaction when she was offered the role. Rashmika, who is predominantly known for her work in South Indian cinema, admitted that she was initially taken aback when the filmmakers approached her to play a Maharashtrian queen. In conversation with Pinkvilla, Rashmika Mandanna revealed what she promptly said after hearing the script for Chhaava the first time. She recalled, "The first narration of Chhaava I heard, the film team were in touch with the managers and they called me into their office. They told me who it is about and that is something... Its huge. And for me in my head I am thinking I am from South, how can you think about me playing a Maharashtrian queen. Let me just ask you this basic question- Me! How? What is going on? But the second I heard the script for the first time in my life I didn't take a second to say yes."

Rashmika Mandanna spoke fondly of her transformation for Chhaava, describing how surprised she was during her look test. Not only did she look the part of a Maharashtrian queen, but her facial features, body language, and overall style also seemed to align with the role in a way she hadn't anticipated. She remarked, "Suddenly, my features, my body language, and everything changed." In addition, the actress praised her co-star, Vicky Kaushal, and director Laxman Utekar for their incredible contributions to the film. She gushed about Vicky's performance, saying, "He has killed it," and expressed admiration for Laxman Utekar's craft. She couldn't help but be in awe of their work, commenting, "My God, I can't. I'm all gushing all over like their craft like it's amazing."

Vicky Kaushal, Rashmika Mandanna, and Akshaye Khanna, among others, feature in Chhaava, which tells the narrative of a brave historical figure, the Maratha king Sambhaji. The film was expected to compete with Pushpa 2 at the box office. However, the producers eventually moved the release date to February 14, 2024.



Kajol Drops Throwback Pics From K3G Sets: 'They Just Don't Make Them Like They Used To'



Karan Johar's Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham... is undoubtedly one of the classic films of all time. The movie, released on December 14, 2001, with an ensemble cast featuring Kajol, Shah Rukh Khan, Jaya Bachchan, Amitabh Bachchan, Kareena Kapoor, Hrithik Roshan and others, has etched a special place in millions of hearts. Today, as the movie completed 23 years since its release, Kajol dropped some mesmerising photos from the sets of the musical romance drama, leaving her fans in complete nostalgia.

On Instagram, Kajol walked down memory lane and posted a couple of photos clicked while filming Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham... The first photo featured Big B with his wife, portrayed by Jaya Bachchan in the film, alongside their on-screen sons and their loved counterparts. All six of them were seemingly grooving to the beats of the song, Bole Chudiyaa, sung by Jatin-Lalit, while the candid moment was captured. The following two photos showed Kajol cuddled up with SRK in romantic poses while looking gorgeous as ever in a red saree. The superstar, on the other hand, looked handsome in an all-black outfit.

Alongside it, Kajol revealed her honest opinions about cinema and penned in the caption, "Life, love and laughter. They just don't make them like they used to anymore. 23 years and some fabulous memories later..." And we simply can't deny it. Such movies are for a lifetime. She even hashtagged the post with words like "23 years of K3G", "K3G" and "memories".

Within no time after Kajol made the post, her fans were left in nostalgia. Social media users started rooting for a Kajol and SRK reunion on-screen under the banner of Karan Johar's Dharma Productions. One user commented, "A movie that never gets tired of watching," while another said, "Fav movie since childhood!!!" A social media user wrote a meaningful note mentioning, "Absolutely... 23 years of this masterpiece K3G... @kajol You're too good there... Just watched it yesterday with the whole family... And coincidentally, you happened to be in Nagpur yesterday."

Sandeep Reddy Vanga's Spirit: Kareena, Saif And Mrunal Thakur May Join Prabhas in Cop Thriller



After the massive success of Kabir Singh and Animal, Sandeep Reddy Vanga is gearing up for his next ambitious project in Hindi cinema. Earlier this year, Pinkvilla had reported that Vanga is set to begin shooting for the Prabhas-led Spirit in the first quarter of 2025, aiming for a 2026 release. The pre-production work for this high-octane cop thriller is currently underway, including casting, and Pinkvilla has learned that Sandeep Reddy Vanga and producer Bhushan Kumar are in talks with Mrunal Thakur for the female lead. According to a source close to the development, discussions are ongoing with Mrunal Thakur to play the female lead opposite Prabhas in Spirit. The source revealed, "Spirit is the most ambitious and awaited films of Indian Cinema, and the makers are going all out to have the best and most talented actors of world cinema on board the film. While Prabhas is locked to play the role of a cop, the conversations are in progress with Mrunal Thakur, Saif Ali Khan, and Kareena Kapoor with the latter two for the negative turn."

The insider further shared that Spirit is set to redefine the cop-action genre in Indian cinema, promising a unique narrative. "It's a story like never before, in the template of a commercial Indian Film. There are good people and bad people in the tale, but with a lot of elements of grey that Vanga is known for. Every character has a purpose, and it's among the most ambitious films for Sandeep Reddy Vanga. The writing work and prep is going on in full swing, and the ones who have heard the narration inform that Vanga is going to reintroduce Prabhas like never before in Spirit," the source added. Bhushan Kumar is reportedly fully backing Vanga's vision for the project.

Additionally, fans can look forward to a unique dynamic between Saif Ali Khan and Kareena Kapoor, as the real-life couple will be playing a pair of antagonists in Spirit. The source added, "It's the first time that a real-life couple will be playing a negative role as a couple in a feature film. The two will also have a lot of action to do alongside Prabhas and other members. The paperwork for all the talents is yet to be done, as the discussions for monetary terms are underway." Produced by Bhushan Kumar and Sandeep Reddy Vanga, Spirit is set to hit the big screen in 2026. Once the project wraps, Vanga will shift his focus to his next venture, Animal Park with Ranbir Kapoor, scheduled to

Kangana Ranaut

Critiques Bollywood, Praises South Films: 'They Are Obsessed With Abs, Bikes And Babes'



Kangana Ranaut has shared her views on the rising success of South Indian films compared to Bollywood at the box office. According to the actor, one of the main reasons behind this trend is that Hindi films have increasingly lost touch with reality. Speaking at Agenda Aaj Tak, Kangana was asked about the massive popularity of Allu Arjun's Pushpa franchise and how it compares to the current situation in Bollywood. She remarked, "Pehle toh mujhe nahi lagta ke Bollywood or Hindi cinema ne mainstream hone ka theka liya hua hai (I don't think Bollywood can be dubbed as mainstream). They are not mainstream by any standard. Our films should be defined as the Indian film industry, one industry in which every type of audience is addressed."

Kangana attributed the success of Pushpa 2 to the relatable character Allu Arjun portrays, a daily wage worker. She pointed out Bollywood's detachment from reality as a major issue. "People in Bollywood live in a bubble. And that is one of the biggest reasons I have a problem with them. Kyunki yeh log bubble se nikalna nahi chahte han (They don't want to come out of the bubble). All they need is to go to the gym, take protein shakes, take injections. They don't have any connection with reality," she said. The actor further emphasized that such roles would rarely attract Bollywood stars. "Inko chahiye six pack abs, hot babe, beach, bike, item number bas bahut hai (They want six pack abs, hot babe, beaches, bike and item numbers. That's enough for them)... It is important to have a reality check," she concluded. Pushpa: The Rise became a pan-India phenomenon upon its release in 2021, grossing over ₹136 crore in Telugu and ₹106 crore in its Hindi-dubbed version, making it Allu Arjun's highest-grossing film. Its songs and dialogues resonated with audiences across the Hindi-speaking regions. Now, the sequel, Pushpa 2: The Rule, continues Pushpa Raj's journey, showing his rise from a daily wage earner to the leader of a red sanders smuggling syndicate. Rashmika Mandanna reprises her role as Srivalli, Pushpa's wife, standing by him against his estranged family. Fahadh Faasil returns as police officer Bhanwar Singh Shekawat, still grappling with the humiliation he faced in the first film. The sequel ends with a setup for the next installment, Pushpa 3: The Rampage.

