

Israeli forces detain hundreds of Hamas and Islamic Jihad fighters in Al Shifa hospital

Israeli forces have detained hundreds of Hamas and Islamic Jihad fighters including a number of security officials and military commanders during its extended raid into Gaza's main hospital, the military's main spokesperson said. Israeli troops entered the Al Shifa hospital in Gaza City on Monday morning and have been

combing through the sprawling complex, which the military says is connected to a tunnel network used as a base for Palestinian fighters. It says troops have killed hundreds of fighters in the operation and also detained over 500 suspects, including 358 members of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, the largest number captured at the same

time since the beginning of the war nearly six months ago. Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said special forces units had used "deception tactics" to surprise the fighters and had severely damaged Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Among the detainees were 3 senior Islamic Jihad military commanders and two Hamas officials responsible for op-



erations in the occupied West Bank.

Potential setback to PM Modi's '400-paar' pledge as BJP, BJD tie-up bid falls through

New Delhi: The suspense over the possibility of an alliance between the BJD and the BJP in Odisha ended on Friday with the parties deciding to fight the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in the state independently. "BJP will fight this election alone in all 21 Lok Sabha and 147 Assembly seats with the aim of creating a developed India and a developed Odisha under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of four and a half crore Odias," BJP state president Manmohan Samal posted on X on Friday. BJD general secretary (organisation) Pranab Prakash Das said in a post on X: "BJD will contest in all 147 Assembly constituencies and all 21 Lok Sabha constituencies with the support of the people of Odisha and win more than three



fourth seats under the leadership of Naveen Patnaik. BJD will continue to take decisions keeping the people of Odisha in the forefront always and their welfare in true spirit of cooperative federalism and statesmanship required for nation building. "The breakdown of talks comes as a double whammy for the BJP. It will not only hurt Prime Minister Narendra Modi's cry of "Abki baar 400 paar" but also

weaken the party's effort to challenge the ruling BJD in the state, BJP insiders said. "Naveen Babu has proved to be a shrewder political strategist than our top leadership," a senior BJP leader said, recalling the day in 2009 when the BJD boss had similarly snapped ties with the BJP just ahead of the simultaneous Lok Sabha and Assembly polls in the state. "The BJP is the principal Opposition in Odisha. With what conviction will the state BJP leaders now challenge the ruling BJD in the Assembly polls?" the leader said. BJP's Odisha in-charge Vijay Pal Singh Tomar, however, denied the party had reached out to the BJD for an alliance. "Our party in Odisha has always maintained that we will go alone and contest all the seats. All this alliance talk was only in the media," Tomar said. Prime Min-

ister Narendra Modi's March 5 visit to Odisha during which he described Naveen as a "popular" chief minister had fuelled speculation about the revival of the BJD-BJP alliance. The bonhomie between the two leaders, who shook hands and exchanged pleasantries, set the stage for talks. In the wake of Modi's visit, state BJP leaders were called to Delhi while BJD leaders went into a huddle at Naveen Niwas. Soon Naveen's Man Friday and chairman of Nabin Odisha, V.K. Pandian, and Das also visited Delhi. However, there was no formal announcement from any side about an alliance. Later, Samal and Tomar asserted that the party would go solo in the elections. Samal later clarified that these were his personal views and suspense over the alliance continued.

Narendra Modi Is Kaam Chalau PM', Says Subramanian Swamy; Netizens Ask Him Why So Much Hate?

New Delhi: BJP leader and former cabinet minister Subramanian Swamy on Saturday once again lashed out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi and called him 'Kaam Chalau Prime Minister'. Swamy attacked Modi for his Bhutan visit even as schedule for Lok Sabha elections is announced. Modi is on a two day visit to Bhutan from March 22. The visit was rescheduled following inclement weather in the region. Swamy in a post on X (formerly Twitter) said, "It is silly that a Prime Minister wants to go to a foreign country when the formalities of General Elections have been set. Modi is not Prime Minister

but an ad hoc PM. Such Kaam Chalau PMs should not go abroad and represent Bharat." Modi was presented with the highest Bhutanese civilian honour Order of the Druk Gyalpo becoming the first foreign head of state to be given this award. Modi said he was grateful to the King of Bhutan for presenting the Order of the Druk Gyalpo. "I am grateful to HM the King of Bhutan for presenting the Award. I dedicate it to the 140 crore people of India. I am also confident that India-Bhutan relations will keep growing and benefit our citizens." Reacting to Swamy's post, user Dr Madan Mohan said the visit



must have been planned in advance, before the announcement of elections. One user Su Mitwa said the visit would be related to thwart Chi-

nese plans in the region. He said, "Sir must be something related to thwarting some planned hanky-panky by China. Politically, it makes sense for Modiji to concentrate completely on elections, but he is still traveling, kyonki vyakti se badi party, aur party se bada? Desh! Kartavya sarvapratnam. Another user Shubham Dwivedi asked "Why so much hate Swamy Ji". This is not the first time Subramanian Swamy has attacked Modi. A known Modi critic, he regularly shares his thoughts on the social media platform on variety of topics, majority of them related to Narendra Modi government.

Bank privatisation should be on agenda of Modi 3.0: Arvind Panagariya

NEW DELHI (ROYAL JOURNALISM): Dr Arvind Panagariya, Chairman, 16th Finance Commission of India and former vice chairman of the country's apex economic think tank NITI Aayog batted for privatisation of public sector banks once the general elections are over. Dr. Panagariya, who was talking at the Business Today Banking & Economy Summit, said that once the current dispensation returns to office post the general elections, it should be on their agenda. "In my opinion, this is in fact a good opportunity, when the banks are now in good health, right now they are flourishing, they have solid value.



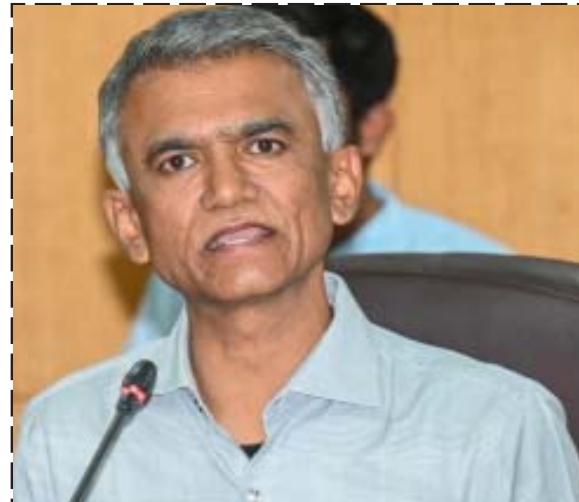
This is a good time to privatise. I think this is good time, when the government comes back in its next term, to start seriously privatising some of the [public sector undertaking] banks," he said at the summit held at GIFT City,

Gandhinagar. According to Dr. Panagariya, who headed the NITI Aayog earlier for two and half years as its first vice chairman, while earlier the PSU banks were in dire straits due heightened levels of non-performing assets (NPAs), the crises has been tackled by the government by rescuing them through funding. This has removed the risk of them being undervalued, which could have postponed the decision of selling the government's stake in them. Currently, the PSU banks are performing well and have healthy asset books, which makes it an ideal time for privatising them. "This is going

to be long drawn process and not all [PSU] banks would be privatised together. But the process should begin. Because, I still think that the commercial pressure is required to be the banking to be efficient like manufacturing or other kind of activity. As privatisation progresses, we can judge whether the privatised banks are doing better than those who had not privatised. And then take a call on the other banks at that stage. But the process does need to begin [soon]," he added. In the past the NPAs were massive and Dr. Panagariya was greatly worried about it. While the episode

Karnataka passes new Bill to prevent illegal layouts in urban areas

Bengaluru: Aiming to prevent illegal registration of properties in urban areas in the state, the Karnataka Assembly on Wednesday passed a Bill which will replace the present system of 'paper or handwritten khata' with electronic documents. Piloting the Registration (Karnataka Amendment) Bill in the House, Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda said the legislation also aims to simplify the registration of documents such as mortgage deeds and pledge deeds without the physical presence of both parties at sub-registrar offices. "Presenting documents electronically will first be tried with scheduled and nationalised banks besides with state government agencies and public sector undertakings to enable e-registration and remote registration of some compulsory registrable documents without the physical presence of either party in the sub-registrar's offices," he explained. He added that the state



government has taken cue from Maharashtra's successful model to simplify the registration of select documents. "Once it is successfully implemented by banks, the state may perhaps even think of extending the same facility to the Real Estate Regulatory Authority-Karnataka approved projects as well," Gowda claimed. Karnataka Assembly passes bill prohibiting hookah bars, use of tobacco products in public places. Underlining that property software will be integrated to prevent illegal registration of properties in urban areas,

the minister conceded that the state had been facing the menace of unauthorised layouts for a long and the finance department had written to the revenue department on December 22, 2023, citing in detail about how the paper khatas were being misused to register properties illegally. "In our previous tenure, Chief Minister, Siddaramaiah had ordered an inquiry on 28 sub-registrar officers for registering properties illegally which resulted in losses of Rs 400 crore to state exchequer but they were acquitted when (Leader of the Opposition) R Ashoka was Revenue minister. As revenue minister I had to close the inquiry file recently. The system needs to be rectified from the within and this Bill exactly aims to do just that," he said. He added that E-Asti registration would be mandatory and the department was also planning to do away with the option of "Other" in the property registration software in order to prevent misuse. "Whether paper khata

is issued from agencies like Bengaluru Development Authority, Karnataka Housing Board, Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board or any such agencies, they will not be accepted to register the properties across urban areas in the state," he explained. He further said the state government had taken up the scanning of deeds as old 100 years in a war-footing and planned to accomplish the project in a year. "Once all old deeds are converted into electronic format, the state government will completely stop accepting any paper document," he explained. In a related development, the Assembly also passed the Karnataka Stamp (Amendment) Bill, which prohibits the stamps and registration department from collecting stamp duty charges through demand draft or pay order to prevent pilferage of collection. "The state government will now permit the department to collect the stamp duty through UPI payment system," he said.

Centre Clears Biggest BrahMos Supersonic Missiles Deal For Indian Navy Warships

NEW DELHI (ROYAL JOURNALISM): The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) on Wednesday night cleared the biggest purchase order of BrahMos missiles to date as the Centre approved the purchase order for the Indian Navy worth more than Rs 20,000 crore. The procurement of the BrahMos will be done in phases till 2030. As part of the order cleared by the CCS, BrahMos Aerospace will supply 200 BrahMos-ER supersonic cruise missiles to be deployed on the Navy's warships. The BrahMos Aerospace and the Ministry of Defence are likely to sign the contract for the purchase order in March. BrahMos Aerospace is a joint venture between the Indian Defence Research and Development Organisation and the Russia's NPO Mashinostroyeniya.

India To Begin Exporting Ground Systems For BrahMos Missiles In Next 10 Days

The BrahMos missile has also gained global attention, with the Philippines being the first customer. The Atul Rane-led BrahMos Aerospace is aiming for the \$5 billion export target by 2025. This is in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of becoming a net exporter of defence equipment.

Deadly & Accurate — All About BrahMos Ship-Based Missile System

The BrahMos, recognised as the most lethal supersonic cruise missile globally, has showcased its remarkable capabilities in accurately striking targets on both sea and land, surpassing radar horizons. Specifically designed for naval deployment, this

weapon can be launched in a vertical or inclined mode from a stationary or moving maritime platform, engaging targets at stand-off ranges on sea or land. Integrated into the forefront of the Indian Navy's surface combat platforms, including destroyers and frigates, the BrahMos stands as the primary offensive weapon. Through a series of successful test firings conducted from naval warships, the missile has demonstrated unparalleled speed, precision, and formidable fire-power, swiftly obliterating enemy targets in various scenarios, be it sea-to-sea or sea-to-land configurations. The missile's 'salvo' launch capability is a much sought-after feature as exemplified in a successful test from the guided missile frigate, INS Trikand. According to the BrahMos



Aerospace, in 'salvo' mode, the BrahMos can be launched at intervals of 2-2.5 seconds, following different trajectories. This capability allows a salvo of eight BrahMos missiles to effectively penetrate and destroy a group of targets equipped with modern anti-missile defences, showcasing its versatility and strategic impact.

Maratha Community Cannot Be Considered Economically Backward

Mumbai: The Maratha reservation law was made based on social and educational backwardness. In contrast, the law was enacted to provide 10 percent reservation for economically backward classes (EWS) based on family income and other economic backwardness. As a result, the High Court has ruled that the Maratha community cannot be declared economically backward as there is a difference between the two laws. It also refused to grant relief to the four petitioners from the Maratha community who had sought appointment in the judicial service from the EWS category after the Supreme Court decided to scrap the Maratha reservation. The petitioners had applied under the SEBC Act. A division bench of Justice Anil Chandurkar and Justice Jitendra Jain, while dismissing the petitioners' pleas, said the government's decision to deny ap-



pointment to the petitioners from the EWS category was correct. The petitioners had challenged the state government's decision to deny appointment as a junior divisional civil judge and first class magistrate. On the date on which the advertisement for these posts was issued, the applicants could not seek exemption on the ground that their age was more than the qualifying age and they belonged to economically backward classes. Therefore, the petitioners were in-

formed by the state government that they could not be considered for these posts. The petitioners had moved the High Court against it. The Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC) released the advertisement for the above posts on February 1, 2019. The age limit for lawyers was 35 years with three years of practice, and for those who had just entered the legal field after completing law school, the age limit was 25 years. Similarly, as per the rules, if the candidate is from a backward class, the age limit will be relaxed by another five years, the advertisement said. On November 30, 2018, the state government enacted a law to provide 16 percent reservation to the Maratha community in government jobs and education. The High Court upheld the government's decision. However, it suggested bringing the reservation percentage down to 13 percent. The

decision was challenged in the Supreme Court. Initially passing an interim order in the matter, reservation should not be implemented for public services and posts under the government after September 9, 2020. But the Supreme Court had made it clear that previous appointments were protected. Therefore, the petitioners appeared for the examination for the above posts and they were also qualified. Later, on May 21, 2021, the Supreme Court declared the Maratha reservation unconstitutional and struck it down. The appointment of qualified petitioners was delayed due to the covid-19. The petitioners, therefore, had sought appointment from the economically backward classes. The state government had announced a 10 percent reservation for economically backward classes in government jobs and education. The Supreme Court struck down

