

# The Democratic News

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## Hamas rejects US-Israeli 'threats' on captive exchange

The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas says it will not bow down to threats from Israel and the United States on the issue of captives.



Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem said on Wednesday that Israel was "evading the implementation of several provisions of the ceasefire agreement," warning that captives would not be released without Israel complying with the deal. "Our position is clear, and we will not accept the language of American and Israeli threats," said Qassem, after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu threatened to "resume intense fighting" if captives were not released by Saturday.

On Wednesday, the regime's military affairs minister warned Israel will restart its war on Gaza if Hamas fails to release Israeli captives and that this time it will be more devastating. "The new Gaza war will be different in intensity from the one before the ceasefire, and it will not end without the defeat of Hamas and the release of all the hostages," Israeli Katz said in a statement. "It will also allow the realization of US President [Donald] Trump's vision for Gaza," Katz said, referring

to the American leader's plan for the United States to take over the Palestinian territory. Those threats echoed Trump, who said on Monday that "hell" would break loose if Hamas failed to release "all" Israeli captives by then. Hamas negotiators in Egypt Hamas earlier said in a statement that a delegation headed by its top negotiator and Gaza chief Khalil al-Hayya "arrived in Cairo and began meetings with Egyptian officials" and was monitoring "the implementation of the ceasefire agreement." A diplomat familiar with the talks told AFP that mediators from Qatar and Egypt were engaged with both Israel and Hamas to resolve the dispute and ensure the implementation of the agreement. A captive exchange scheduled for Saturday, citing Israeli violations.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has commended the Iranian nation for relaying its "message of unity" to the international community on the 46th anniversary of the country's historic 1979 Islamic Revolution. Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in Tehran on Wednesday, addressing a gathering of Defense Ministry officials, defense industry elites, the ministry's experts and staff, and families of the martyrs hailing from the country's defense industry. The Leader described the day marking the Revolution's victory as one of the most significant national events, showcasing the unity and strength of the Iranian people despite relentless external pressures. Ayatollah Khamenei emphasized that the celebrations on this year's anniversary were not just a

## LEADER: IRANIANS SENT 'MESSAGE OF UNITY' TO WORLD ON REVOLUTION ANNIV. AMID ENEMY'S STUPID THREATS



commemoration, but a powerful act of resistance and national unity. "This was a message of unity from the Iranian people. Despite the constant, idiotic threats against us, the people of Iran showed the world their identity, their strength, and

their unwavering resolve." Iranians mark 46th anniversary of Islamic Revolution with nationwide marches, celebrations. Iranians mark 46th anniversary of Islamic Revolution with nationwide marches, celebrations. Millions of Iranians take to

streets to commemorate the 46th anniversary of the victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution. "This year's February 22nd was one of the most outstanding celebrations of the Revolution," the Leader stated. "It was a popular uprising, a grand

national movement. People took to the streets, raised their voices, and shared their views across the media, all over the country. This was a true popular uprising, a major national movement." Ayatollah Khamenei noted that, "Despite ongoing media bombardments, psychological warfare, and unfounded threats from adversaries against the historic development, the Iranian people stood strong in their commitment to the values of the Revolution with their indication of strong support for the event during this year's marches and jubiliations." Ayatollah Khamenei also made special reference to the presence of young people in the celebrations, their vibrant energy, which was visible across the country's various cities, not just in Tehran and major urban centers, but in remote towns and villages.

## Hate speech against religious minorities in India surges 74 pc in 2024

Several Hindutva organizations biased Indian media outlets, amplified misinformation to inflate incidents of Hindu oppression in Bangladesh while simultaneously fueling anti-Muslim rhetoric in India.



United States-based think tank India Hate Lab (IHL) published research that revealed extremely elevated levels of hate speech against Indian religious minorities especially Muslims and Christians in 2024. The report published on Monday, February 10, with the title Hate Speech Events in India, describes

the staggering escalation of hate speeches and crimes, attributing it to the ideological ambitions of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and a disturbing wave of right-wing Hindutva movement across the country. An alarming rise in hate speech events The thorough research re-

vealed that incidents of hate speech increased dramatically by 74.4 percent, jumping from 668 cases in 2023 to 1,165 in 2024. Additionally, statistics demonstrated three hate speech events occurring daily on average. The hate speeches, mainly targeting the Muslim community, reached a total of 1145 cases which made up 98.5 percent of all recorded incidents. This included both explicit anti-Muslim hate speech and rhetoric targeting both Muslims and Christians. The analysis shows 115 incidents (9.9 percent) while 18 of these targeted Christian communities exclusively and 97 targeted both Muslim and Christian communities. The report examines verified instances of hate speech at public gatherings throughout India during 2024, which usually occurred at political rallies, electoral campaign events of the Saffron party, Hin-

du religious processions, protest marches and gathering events of Hindutva outfits. Some gatherings specifically aimed to target minority groups through their stated goals. Anti-Muslim rhetoric campaign during the 2024 general elections The study identifies the Indian 2024 general elections as a significant driver of rising hate speech cases. National electoral polls sparked criticism from human rights groups and social activists who held Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the other BJP senior leaders including Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath, Minister of Home Affairs of India, Amit Shah, Member of the Telangana Legislative Assembly, T Raja Singh, Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma and Nitish Rane responsible for heightening anti-Muslim rhetoric to achieve support from the Hindu majority electorate.

## Telangana govt accepted its failure in conducting caste census: KTR

Hyderabad: Responding to deputy chief minister Bhatti Vikramarka's announcement of conducting a comprehensive survey to cover the remaining people who missed-out on the caste survey, BRS working president KT Rama Rao (KTR) said that by doing so, the state government has accepted that its caste census was incomplete and ridden with mistakes. Demanding the state government to conduct the local body elections only after declaring 42% reservation for BCs, he said that it would not be tolerated if it tried to push the blame on the Centre by saying

its in their purview. He demanded Chief minister A Revanth Reddy's apology for causing mental agony in the BCs, and the state government to accept that it has made a mistake by passing a resolution in the assembly with an incomplete survey. He urged the state government to at least conduct the caste survey for the second time properly and transparently. The Telangana government on Wednesday, February 12 announced plans to re-conduct the caste census survey for those who missed furnishing their details earlier. Deputy chief minister of Telangana Mallu



Bhatti Vikramarka urged eligible citizens to provide their details to enumerators between February 16 and 28. KTR demanded the state government to conduct the local body elections only after declaring 42% reservation for BCs. He urged the state government to at least conduct the caste survey for the second time properly and transparently.

## Adani Group benefitted from Centre relaxing border security rules: Report

Indian conglomerate Adani Group has benefitted from the Union government overriding senior army officials and relaxing the country's border security norms, alongside the Indo-Pakistan border in Gujarat, reports The Guardian.

According to the report, the Adani Group is building its flagship solar and wind energy park alongside the Pakistan border in Rann of Kutch, on lands leased from the Gujarat state government.

The reports say Adani Group's Khavda plant, which is supposed to be the largest solar plant on the planet, is laying solar panels and wind turbines one kilometre away from the border. Until recently, no major construction was allowed up to a 10-kilometre distance from the Indo-Pakistan border, according to the military safety protocols. Gujarat gov't lobbied for policy change. The Guardian report claims that according to confidential meeting minutes it viewed, the Gujarat state government lobbied "at the highest levels" to reduce the no-construction buffer zone, which would benefit the Adani group. Senior Indian army officers overseeing operations in the area were reportedly not consulted about the decision, raising surprise and concern among army ranks.

## 1984 anti-Sikh riots: Delhi court convicts ex-Congress MP Sajjan Kumar in murder case

Kumar was produced before court from Tihar jail for the pronouncement.

In a landmark judgment, a Delhi court on Wednesday convicted former Congress Member of Parliament (MP) Sajjan Kumar in connection with the brutal killings of two individuals, Jaswant Singh and his son Tarundeep Singh, during the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. This conviction marks a major step in delivering justice for the victims of one of the most harrowing chapters in modern Indian history. Special Judge Kaveri Baweja passed the conviction order, after a long and contentious legal battle spanning decades. The court has scheduled the arguments on the sentence for February 18, 2025, bringing a



long-awaited closure to the case. Kumar, who had been in Tihar Jail, was brought to the court for the pronouncement of the verdict, making this moment all the more significant for the survivors and families of the victims. The case pertains to the

tragic deaths of Jaswant Singh and his son, Tarundeep Singh, who were mercilessly murdered on November 1, 1984, in Saraswati Vihar, a locality in Delhi. Their deaths were a part of a wave of violence that swept through the cap-

ital and other parts of the country, as mobs rampaged through Sikh homes and businesses, seeking revenge for the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards. The violence was marked by widespread looting, arson, and the systematic destruction of Sikh properties. The prosecution presented evidence suggesting that Kumar, a prominent Congress leader at the time, was not just an onlooker but actively participated in the attacks. The court found sufficient evidence to establish that he was a leader of the mob responsible for the killings and the widespread carnage.

## 'Political dalali': Maharashtra Shiv Sena (UT) fumes as Pawar felicitates Dy CM Shinde

In a recent event held in New Delhi, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) supremo Sharad Pawar felicitated Maharashtra deputy chief minister and Shiv Sena (Shinde section) chief Eknath Shinde, raising many eyebrows. The gesture drew criticism from the state's main Opposition, Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), particularly members of the Shiv Sena (Thackeray faction). Shinde was facilitated by Sharad Pawar with the Mahadji Shinde Rashtra Gaurav Puraskar in the presence of Union minister for communications and development of North Eastern Region Jyotiraditya Scindia on the occasion of the 98th Akhil Bhartiya Marathi SaTha veteran politician is the president of the Akhil Bhartiya Marathi Sahitya Sammelan reception committee. "Certain things

should be avoided in politics. We don't understand your Delhi politics, but we too understand politics," said Raut. "Pawar saheb felicitated Shinde...who had betrayed and split Shiv Sena...in fact, Pawar did not felicitate Shinde, but he felicitated (union home minister and BJP's chief strategist) Amit Shah. This is our feeling... Giving such an honour to someone we consider an enemy of Maharashtra is a jolt to Maharashtra's pride," Raut said. "You (Pawar) are a senior politician, and we respect you...but this has not gone down well within the people of Maharashtra," Raut added. "Certain things should be avoided in politics. We don't understand your Delhi politics, but we too understand politics," said Sanjay Raut.