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## NEW ERA BEGINS IN INDO-US RELATIONS

Steps initiated for cooperation in emerging tech, AI and space

Trump personalises gift with 'Mr Prime Minister, you are great'

The two countries set \$500-billion bilateral trade target by 2030



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. President Donald Trump shake hands, at The White House in Washington, DC on Thursday. (Reuters/ANI)

AGENCIES WASHINGTON

The summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump on Friday gave a new boost to the bilateral relation as it yielded a slew of benefits. US sale of oil, gas and F-35 fighter aircraft to India, a mega trade deal and the immediate extradition of Mumbai attack accused Tahawwur Rana are counted among the major gains. At his Oval Office in the White House, Trump warmly welcomed Modi with a long handshake and

a bear hug and described the Prime Minister as a "great friend" for a long time and a "terrific" man. "We missed you. We missed you a lot," Trump said as he greeted Modi. Ater talks with PM Modi, Trump said that India will buy more oil, gas and military hardware from America to bring down the trade deficit. He, however, added New Delhi will not be excepted from reciprocal tariffs. The elaborate welcome allayed the trepidation and put to rest the uncertainty that had clouded bilateral relationship after Trump

took office last month and unleashed a series of executive orders that have upended the global economic and diplomatic order. Modi's visit went off without any hiccups and produced rich dividends. The only fly in the ointment was Trump's announcement a day before the summit that he would impose reciprocal tariffs on countries that do the same with American goods. India is among those countries Trump is targeting, and he did not mince his words when talking about reciprocal tariffs against India during a

44-minute joint news conference with Modi. "Whatever India charges, we will charge them," Trump said. "We are being reciprocal with India." He said both sides are looking at striking a major trade deal soon while calling import duties imposed by India on certain US products "very unfair" and "strong". The Modi-Trump meeting with an expansive agenda took place hours after the US President announced a new reciprocal tariff policy for all trading partners of the US, the latest in a series of such actions by his administration. P3

### Trump approves extradition of 26/11 accused Tahawwur Rana

AGENCIES WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump on Thursday announced the extradition of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack accused Tahawwur Rana to India and said he will face justice. He made the announcement during a joint press conference with Prime Minister Narendra Modi following their bilateral meeting. "I am pleased to announce that my administration has approved the extradition of one of the plotters (Tahawwur Rana) and one of the very evil people of the world, having to do with the horrific 2008 Mumbai terrorist attack to face justice in India. He is going back to India to face justice," Trump said. The US State Department had said last month that it is evaluating the next steps regarding Tahawwur Rana's extradition to India. A spokesperson from the State Department said the US has long supported India's efforts to bring to justice the perpetrators of the 26/11



Mumbai attacks case." In view of the recent Supreme Court decision, and consistent with applicable US law, the Department of State is currently evaluating the next steps in this case, the statement said. "We have long supported India's efforts to ensure the perpetrators of the Mumbai terrorist attacks face justice," the statement added. Answering queries at a press conference last week Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri had said that India is in touch with US authorities for Rana's extradition. "On the extradition of Tahawwur Rana, from recent developments, you would be P3

### MAGA+MIGA becomes MEGA partnership: PM

AGENCIES WASHINGTON

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday drew a parallel between India's 'Viksit Bharat' vision and the 'Make America Great Again' (MAGA) slogan in the United States, coining the term 'Make India Great Again' (MIGA). Taking to social media platform X, PM Modi noted that India and the US have formed a "MEGA" partnership to drive prosperity for both nations. "President Trump often talks about MAGA. In India, we are working towards a Viksit Bharat, which in American context translates into MIGA. And together, the India-USA have a MEGA partnership for prosperity!" the Prime Minister posted. In another post, PM Modi highlighted the importance of his meeting with US President Donald Trump at the White House, calling it a significant step P3

### US to give F-35 fighter jets to India

AGENCIES WASHINGTON

In a significant announcement, US President Donald Trump on Thursday said that the United States will be increasing its military sales to India by billions of dollars and his administration is paving the way to provide India with F-35 Stealth fighters. "Starting this year, we will be increasing military sales to India by many billions of dollars. P3

### PM blunts question on Adani

AGENCIES WASHINGTON

Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a sharp retort to a question on whether the Adani Group case featured in the discussions between him and US President Donald Trump and said two prominent leaders of two countries never discuss such individual issues. "India is a democracy and our culture is 'Vasudhaiva Kutum- P3

### Another US flight with deportees may land today, Mann lashes out at Centre for choosing Amritsar

TARUNI GANDHI CHANDIGARH

A special American flight carrying 119 deported Indian nationals is set to arrive at Sri Guru Ram Dass Jee International Airport in Amritsar on Saturday, police officials said. This marks the second flight of deportees following the US government's crackdown on illegal immigration. According to sources, 67 of the returnees are from Punjab, followed by 33 from Haryana. Gujarat has eight deportees, Uttar Pradesh three, while Goa, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan have two each. Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir each have one returnee on board. A senior police officer, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed that security and immigration protocols have been put in place at the airport. Officials from the Ministry of External Affairs, immigration authorities, and police personnel will be present to oversee the arrival. Yet another deportation flight



from the US is expected to land in Amritsar on Sunday, bringing back more Indian nationals. Vehemently opposing the Central government's move to land a plane carrying deported Indians at Amritsar airport, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann termed it a conspiracy of Union government to defame Punjab and Punjabis. Interacting with media persons here, Mann said despite of Punjab being the food bowl and sword arm of India, the BJP-led government has started a tirade to defame the state. He

said the move to land plane carrying deported Indians from the US in Amritsar is just another attempt of the Government of India to tarnish image of Punjab globally. Mann questioned the move of MEA (ministry of external affairs) to choose Amritsar for landing the plane whereas there are hundreds of other airports in the country. Mann said he has already raised this issue with the MEA and MHA (ministry of home affairs), but hasn't received any positive response. One P3

### BJP MP wants Mohalla Clinics shut down, MLA wants them renamed



Manjinder Singh Sirsa TDG NETWORK NEW DELHI

BJP MP Yogender Chandoliya on Friday demanded the immediate closure of Delhi's Mohalla Clinics, accusing them of being a "model of corruption" while BJP MLA Manjinder Singh Sirsa said Mohalla Clinics would be renamed as 'Ayushman Arogya Mandir'



Yogender Chandoliya

Sirsa, MLA from Rajouri Garden, Mohalla Clinics would be renamed as "Ayushman Arogya Mandir" to become actual centres for serving people. He was quoted in reports as saying that "under the AAP government, the Mohalla Clinics were plagued with fake tests and ghost patients, turning them into money-spinning ATMs."

### Talks with farmers end on a positive note

Next round of discussion on Feb 22; protest to continue

NEERAJ MOHAN CHANDIGARH

The much-awaited meeting between farmer leaders and a government delegation led by Union Minister Pralhad Joshi ended on a positive note on Friday. The next round of talks is scheduled for February 22 and will be attended by Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan.



Pralhad Joshi

Farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who has been on a hunger strike for 81 days, said after the meeting, "Today's meeting ended without any final decision. The next round of talks will take place on February 22 at a venue that

will be announced soon. But the protest to continue as it is". Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Pralhad Joshi told reporters that the meeting was positive and all farmer-related issues were discussed. "We listened to the farmers for over two-and-a-half hours. The next meeting will be held under the leadership of Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan," Joshi added. Punjab Agriculture Minister Gurmeet Singh Khuddian, who also attended the meeting, said, P3

### PM Modi, Shah will choose a CM who can execute their grand plans to make Delhi a global city

ABHINANDAN MISHRA NEW DELHI

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi on a two-nation visit to France and the United States, Home Minister Amit Shah has been leading the discussions with various stakeholders to decide who is best suited for the post of the chief minister of Delhi. While electorally, Delhi is relatively a small state with a 70-member Legislative

Assembly and seven Lok Sabha MPs, its significance, politically, lies in the fact that it is the national capital, the seat of power. Being in power in Delhi carries significant symbolic value across the country. It is due to these considerations, and the fact that the BJP has won in Delhi almost after three decades, that Shah, who is the most trusted associate of PM Modi, is meeting various



Amit Shah

people and taking inputs from multiple functionaries

before shortlisting the most suitable among his 48 party MLAs for the post of chief minister. Both Modi and Shah have a clear idea of how they want to transform Delhi and make it a global capital, which will include beautifying the Yamuna riverfront, curbing pollution, handling vehicle traffic, and investing massively in Delhi's infrastructure. For this, they need some-

one who understands Delhi, can bring people together, is grounded and has the ability to execute big projects within set deadlines. What the BJP will achieve in Delhi in the coming next year will define the party's perception in the coming decades. Shah, who, just like Modi, follows a work style of giving a timeline by which he expects the project to P3

# CONGRESS SLAMS MODI'S 'MEGA' REMARK

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Congress MP Jairam Ramesh on Friday took a dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his "MEGA" remark after meeting US President Donald Trump, saying that the only equation that counts is 'Modani', referring to businessman Gautam Adani.

In a post on X, Ramesh said, "This is Prime Minister Modi's first visit to the United States since President Donald Trump's inauguration for his second presidential term last month. Now, he says, in the context of India and the USA, that MAGA + MIGA = MEGA. Actually, the only equation that counts is Modi + Adani = Modani."

Earlier in the day, PM Modi drew a parallel between India's "Viksit Bharat" vision and the "Make America Great Again" (MAGA) slogan in the United States, coining the term "Make India Great Again" (MIGA).

Taking to social media platform X, PM Modi noted that India and the US have formed a "MEGA" partnership to drive prosperity for both nations.

"President Trump often talks about MAGA. In India, we are working towards a Viksit Bharat, which in the American context translates into MIGA. And together, India and the USA have a MEGA partnership for prosperity!" the Prime Minister



said in a post.

This is Prime Minister Modi's first visit to the United States since President Donald Trump's inauguration for his second presidential term last month.

PM Modi is among the first world leaders to visit the United States following the inauguration of President Trump and has been invited to the US within barely three weeks of the new administration.

Following the bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Donald Trump, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri provided a detailed overview of the key initiatives launched during the visit and said that the leaders launched Mission-500 in the sector of trade and investment, aiming to more than double two-way trade to USD 500 billion by 2030.

He added that the leaders unveiled the US-India Compact for the 21st Century, aimed at accelerating military partnerships, commerce, and technological advancements.

## Modi, Trump statements 'encouraging': Tharoor

TDG NETWORK  
BENGALURU

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor on Friday commented on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the United States and said that big concerns were addressed in the meet.

He added that he was encouraged with the details received and was looking forward to the PM and his team coming back.

Speaking to ANI, Tharoor stated that negotiations were made on the trade and tariffs which would conclude by September or October.

"So far, what we have seen from the press statements by the Prime Minister and President Trump are very encouraging. Some of the big concerns we had have been addressed," Tharoor said.

"On the question of trade and tariffs, they have decided to sit down together and do a serious negotiation that will conclude by September-October. I think that's a very good outcome otherwise there would have been made some decisions in Washington which would have affected our exports," Tharoor further stated.

Speaking on the discussions made on the issue of illegal immigration, he commented that the only thing missing in the discussion was questions



on the manner in which the people were treated and sent back.

"The only thing missing in the discussion were questions on the manner in which the people were treated and sent back. Otherwise, his stand was absolutely correct. These are misled youth who have been encouraged and induced to migrate illegally. I hope something was said behind close doors that the manner in which this was done should have been avoided. If the PM has done that, it was amazing," he said.

Commenting on discussions on the defence front, the MP said that the commitment to sell the F-35 stealth aircraft is very valuable. "On the defence front, the commitment to sell the F-35 stealth aircraft is very valuable because that is a state-of-the-art aircraft," he stated.

"It looks to me that we have got everything we had expected.

## 'Rana's extradition will unravel 26/11 plot'

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

After United States approved the extradition of 26/11 Mumbai terror attack accused Tahawwur Rana to India, Congress MP Manish Tewari said that this step will help in "unravelling" the conspiracy behind the attack.

While the Congress MP remained positive about the extradition he said that the "real test" is to get mastermind of the Mumbai attack Hafiz Saeed from Pakistan.

Speaking with ANI, Tewari said, "If Tahawwur Rana eventually comes back to India, that will help in unravelling the conspiracy behind 26/11. But the real test is getting Hafiz Saeed from Pakistan because he is the real linchpin of the 26/11 attacks".

Hafiz Saeed, the founder of the terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) is the mastermind of the deadly 26/11 attacks in Mumbai and is wanted in India in numerous cases.



Pulwama, Dec 22 (ANI): Wreath-laying ceremony held at District Police Lines Awantipora to pay homage to martyr ASI Mohd Ashraf of Awantipora who was killed in a terrorist attack in Bijbihara Anantnag, in Pulwama on Wednesday.

## 'Manipur integrity will be in tact'

TDG NETWORK  
IMPHAL

Following the imposition of President's Rule in Manipur, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Sambit Patra on Friday reiterated that the state's territorial integrity would remain intact and vowed his party's commitment to restoring peace in the region.

Patra, who is in-charge of BJP's North East unit, emphasized the party's dedication to maintaining stability in the conflict-hit state. He also stressed that illegal infiltration into Manipur would be dealt with a severe hand, as security was heightened in the state capital Imphal on Friday, amid political instability and ethnic tensions.

"After the report by the Governor of Manipur, the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, has put the state assembly under suspended animation, meaning it can be revived as and when the President of India deems fit, depending on circumstances," Patra told ANI.

"As far as the BJP is concerned, we are committed to the continuing efforts of peace in the state and to maintaining the territorial integrity of Manipur," he added.

Reiterating the BJP's stance on national security, Patra said, "There will be no compromise on the territorial integrity of Manipur. Any kind of illegal infiltration will not be allowed and will be dealt

with a severe hand." President Droupadi Murmu imposed President's Rule in Manipur on Thursday under Article 356 of the Constitution, following a report from the state governor.

The decision effectively suspends the state assembly's authority, transferring its powers to Parliament. The state's administration will now be directly controlled by the President through the Governor. The proclamation, published in the Gazette of India issued by the Union Home Ministry, states that the powers of the Manipur Legislative Assembly will be transferred to Parliament, effectively suspending the state government's authority.

## Himachal govt created 42,000 jobs in two years: Vikramaditya Singh

TDG NETWORK  
SHIMLA

The Public Works Department (PWD) Minister of Himachal Pradesh government, Vikramaditya Singh, said that the state government had provided 42,000 jobs during the two years in the State and it includes over 20,000 jobs in the government sector.

He said that 25,000 jobs would be created during the year 2025.

In a press conference held on Friday, the Himachal Minister highlighted the employment initiatives undertaken by the Himachal Pradesh government. He stated that in the last two years, more

than 42,000 jobs have been created in both government and private sectors.

Comparing the Congress-led government's achievements with the previous BJP government he said that the present Congress government also filled the approved posts by the previous government.

"In two years, we have provided over 42,000 jobs, of which 20,255 are in the government sector. In contrast, during the BJP's five-year tenure, only 55,000 jobs were created." He further added that the state government aims to provide 25,000 more government jobs in the coming year while also ex-

panding employment opportunities in the private sector.

Singh shared department-wise employment data, stating: Education: 3,202 posts filled in elementary education, with 8,000 more positions to be filled in 2025. Additionally, 2,095 positions for TGTs, Shastris, and JBT teachers were filled, along with 245 special educators and 6,292 language teachers. Higher education saw 1,097 appointments.

Police & Forest Services: 1,088 police personnel have been recruited, with 1,000 more positions planned. Additionally, 2,061 forest guards (Van Mitras) are being recruited.

## Manik Saha holds talks with Nadda to boost Tripura's healthcare infrastructure

TDG NETWORK  
AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha met Union Health Minister and BJP National President JP Nadda in New Delhi on Friday to discuss key healthcare initiatives and organisational strategies aimed at strengthening the state's medical infrastructure and party framework.

The meeting, held at Nadda's official residence, focused on improving healthcare services in Tripura and encouraging closer coordination between the state and central leadership.

Taking to social media post on X, CM Saha wrote, "We



had a fruitful discussion on health welfare & organisational development in Tripura, paving the way for #EkTripuraShresthaTripura."

Recently, during the oath-taking ceremony of Agartala's Government Nursing College at the IGM Hospital Complex, CM Saha stated that the state government is



working on a priority basis to strengthen the healthcare system in Tripura. He highlighted the government's initiative to build a health hub, according to a statement from the CM's office.

"The state government is trying to further strengthen the health system in the state of Tripura, with the initiative

to build a health hub. In order to speed up health services, nurses must establish a good relationship with the patients' families while providing services to the patients," said CM Saha. Additionally, the Chief Minister inaugurated the IT lab at the Nursing College.

Further he added, "Alongside doctors, nurses can enhance the reputation of the institution through their service. There is no substitute for hard work. The students of this nursing institution must move forward, guided by the ideals of Florence Nightingale. One must remember that the work entrusted to me must be done with utmost dedication.

## CPI(M) slams President's rule in Manipur

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) on Friday came down heavily on Bhartiya Janata Party after the President's rule was imposed in Manipur calling it "bankruptcy of the double-engine government."

The Polit Bureau in a statement published on CPI(M)'s official website said, "The imposition of President's Rule in Manipur underlines the utter bankruptcy of the BJP double engine government under whose rule the state has been in violent turmoil for two years."

## HC brushes aside govt's objections, allows Mohan Bhagwat rally in Kolkata

SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE  
KOLKATA

The Mamata Banerjee Government received a jolt from Calcutta High Court today when it brushed aside objections of the State authorities towards holding a rally to be addressed by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat. The Calcutta High Court granted conditional permission to the RSS to hold the rally in Purba Bardhaman district on February 16.

Organisers of the rally, which RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat is scheduled to address, had moved court after

the State authorities denied permission on grounds that the use of loudspeakers during the ongoing Madhyamik Pariksha (secondary exams) would cause disturbance to examinees.

The bench of Justice Amrita Sinha granted permission for the rally, planned on Sunday when no exams are scheduled, provided the organisers kept a check on the strength of the attending crowd as well as on the volume of the sound boxes and ensure that examinees appearing for the ongoing secondary exams and the upcoming Higher Secondary exams are not inconvenienced. "Conduct the



rally peacefully, the sound should be low," the Calcutta HC said in its ruling.

The event, where the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's Sarsanghchalak is supposed to address volunteers and their family members for an hour and fifteen Rashtriya

Swayamsevak Sangh's Sarsanghchalak minutes, from 11 am to 12.15 pm, would be held inside the Sports Authority of India (SAI) complex in the Talit area of the district, the petitioner submitted.

Appearing on behalf of the RSS, Centre's Deputy Solicitor-General Dhiraj Trivedi argued that the organisation has already secured permission from SAI authorities to host the event which would be held over a plot of 5,000 square feet, a mere fraction of the 72 lakh square feet area of the said complex.

The petitioner's counsel further submitted that the organisers, faced with objection from district authorities, have decided to replace loudspeakers with sound boxes and held that sound would remain limited to within the event surroundings. "The only two schools, which are close to the venue, are about one and two kilometres away,

respectively. The venue is uninhabited and we do not come under the purview of the State order that prohibits the use of loudspeakers during examination times," Trivedi argued.

Referring to the February 2022 State Environment Department notification that prohibits the use of loudspeakers and public address systems three days prior to the commencement of secondary and HS exams in areas where educational institutions are located, Advocate-General Kishor Dutta submitted that the organisers have informed that 45 sound boxes would be used to ad-

dress a gathering of about 10,000 people.

"The said notice was issued in compliance with an order passed by this very court in August 1998. The petitioner should have been aware of the imposition of such restrictions during examination periods and ought to have scheduled their event outside the period of the prohibitory order," Dutta submitted. The court observed that the date of the event does fall during the period of the ongoing Secondary Examinations conducted by the State Board.

"However, as the event has been scheduled on a Sunday

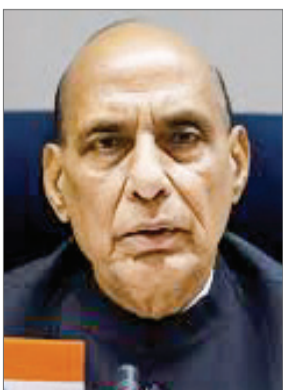
for only one hour and fifteen minutes, and according to the instruction of the State respondent, the nearest school is nearly 500 metres away from the complex, accordingly the court permits the petitioner to conduct the event in such a manner that it does not cause any inconvenience to any of the examinees who may be busy with their examination preparation," the court stated in its order. "The petitioner should try to behave in a responsible manner and ensure that the sound is kept to the minimum level so as not to cause any difficulty to any person," the order added.

## Rajnath, Gadkari inaugurate 114 infra projects in Lucknow

TDG NETWORK  
LUCKNOW

Union Ministers Rajnath Singh and Nitin Gadkari inaugurated 114 infrastructure projects here in the presence of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Deputy CMs Brajesh Pathak and Keshav Prasad Maurya were also present during the inauguration.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh heaped praise on Nitin Gadkari and stated that he has



brought up an infrastructure revolution in the country. Rajnath added that in the urban

infrastructure, around INR 1,78,000 crore were spent from 2004 to 2014, which increased to INR 28,52,000 crore during the 2014 to 2024 period.

He said, "Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari has brought an infrastructure revolution in the country. If I talk about urban infrastructure, Rs 1,78,000 crore were spent between 2004 and 2014, while Rs 28,52,000 crore were invested in infrastruc-

ture development between 2014 and 2024."

UP CM Yogi Adityanath spoke about the success of the Mahakumbh 2025. Addressing the event, Yogi stated that the state economy will get a boost of INR 3 lakh crore against a certain expenditure.

CM Yogi said, "We get the opportunity to host Kumbh every six years and Mahakumbh every 12 years. All the activities we do boost our tourism. The economy of UP will get a boost of Rs 3

lakh crore because of Mahakumbh. People point fingers and ask why Rs 5000-6000 are spent. This amount is not just spent on Kumbh but also on the renovation of Prayagraj city. A total of Rs 1500 crore is spent on organising Kumbh, and, in return, our economy gets a benefit of Rs 3 lakh crore. "Over 480 million people have taken dip at the Triveni Sangam in the Mahakumbh 2025, and people from all over the world have visited the grand fair.

## ED attaches properties worth Rs 34 cr

NEERAJ MOHAN  
CHANDIGARH

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) has provisionally attached properties worth Rs 33.65 crore in connection with a money laundering case linked to illegal mining. As per the ED, the properties include residential and industrial plots in Panchkula, a flat in Gurugram, two shops in Mohali and Gurugram, residential and business premises in Dhanbad, and

two flats in Kolkata and Ranchi.

The assets belong to Gurbpreet Singh Sabharwal, proprietor of M/s Tirupati Roadways, along with his wife Raveet Sabharwal and daughter Tripta Sabharwal.

The action was taken under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, following an investigation based on an FIR registered by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (formerly State Vigilance

Bureau), Panchkula.

The case was filed against M/s Tirupati Roadways, its proprietor, and officials of the Mining & Geology Department, Panchkula, for alleged involvement in illegal mining and corruption.

According to the ED, Gurbpreet Singh Sabharwal generated illegal income through criminal activities related to illegal mining and routed these funds through multiple bank accounts.

## THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON VALENTINE'S DAY 2025

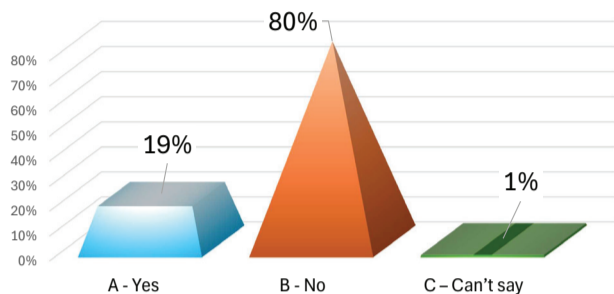
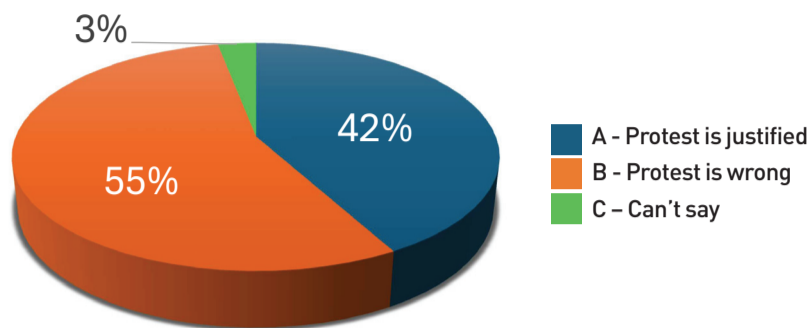
### 42% believe protests are justified against Valentine's Day

Despite growing acceptance, Valentine's Day faces opposition in India, with conservative groups viewing it as a Western imposition conflicting with

traditional beliefs. Right-wing organisations protest, vandalise shops, and threaten couples. Critics argue India has its own rich traditions of love, like

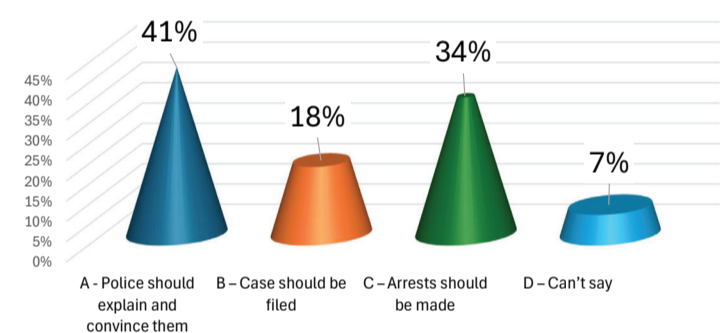
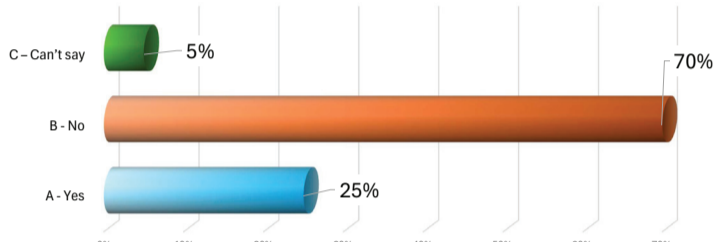
Radha-Krishna's Rasleela and Kalidasa's poetry, seeing Valentine's Day as commercialising love and promoting Western ideals.

**Q1.** Several organisations are protesting against Valentine's Day. What is your opinion?



**Q2.** Is it right to threaten and harass couples in the name of opposing Valentine's Day?

**Q3.** Some clerics have declared celebrating Valentine's Day as forbidden in Islam. Should this be associated with religion?



**Q4.** What action should be taken against those who engage in vandalism and break the law on Valentine's Day?

## THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON MODI-TRUMP MEETING

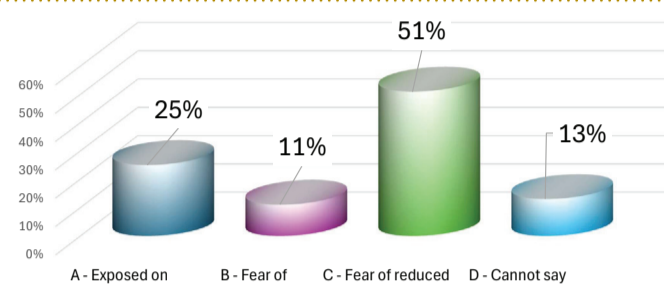
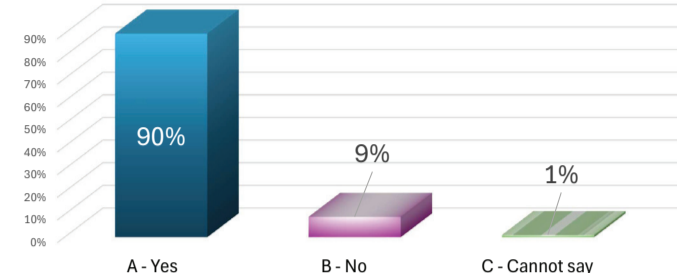
### 80% believe Modi and Trump can together eliminate Pak-sponsored terrorism

In a key meeting strengthening US-India ties, US President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi discussed military

sales, including F-35 jets, energy trade, and a future trade deal. The US will increase arms sales from 2025, while India will import more

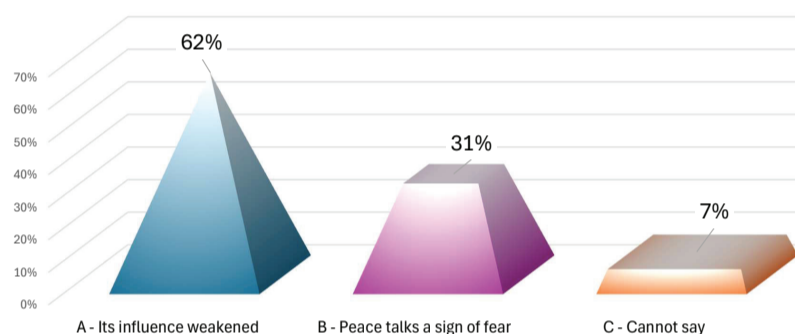
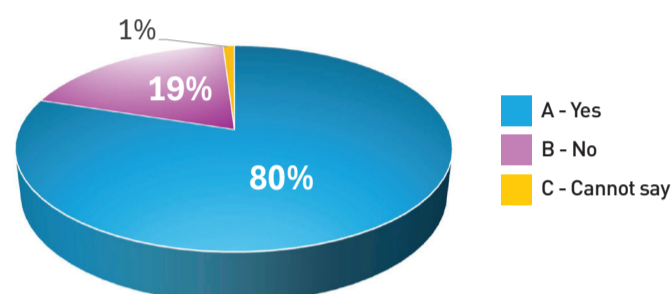
US oil and gas. They also finalised a new defence framework and approved Tahawwur Rana's extradition.

**Q1.** Do you consider Pakistan a terrorist country?



**Q2.** Why did Pakistan get irritated over Modi-Trump's discussion on terrorism?

**Q3.** Can Modi and Trump together eliminate Pakistan-sponsored terrorism?



**Q4.** When America mentioned giving F-35s to India, Pakistan started demanding peace talks. Why do you think this happened?

## Kharge goes for major AICC reshuffle

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON

The Congress effected a major reshuffle of its office-bearers on Friday, appointing former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel as general secretary in charge of Punjab and party MP Syed Naseer Hussain as general secretary in charge of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. The party appointed new incharges in several states. The new appointments were made by Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge. Former general secretary BK Hariprasad has been appointed incharge of Haryana, Krishna Allavaru of Bihar, Rajani Patil of Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh and Harish Chaudhary of Madhya Pradesh. Bihar will go the polls next year. Congress leader Ajay Kumar Lallu will be incharge of Odisha, K Raju of Jharkhand, Meenakshi Natarajan of Telangana and Girish Chodankar of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. Party leader Saptagiri San-



kar Ulaka will be incharge of Manipur, Tripura, Sikkim and Nagaland. The party has relieved Dipak Babaria, Mohan Prakash, Bharatsinh Solanki, Rajeev Shukla, Ajoy Kumar and Devender Yadav of their responsibilities. The other general secretaries will continue to serve in their designated capacities, party release said. Syed Naseer Hussain has been relieved from his role attached to the Congress president. Most of new incharges are senior leaders with organisational experience. The reshuffle has taken place after a string of poor results faced by the Congress.

## Mann lashes out at Centre

CONTINUED FROM P1

American plane landed a few days back and now two more planes are being landed without any proper justification. Mann said Punjabis are being targeted because Prime Minister and his party doesn't like them despite the fact that more than 90 per cent of people martyred, jailed or exiled during Indian freedom struggle were from Punjab. The chief minister said it is the moral responsibility of the MEA to explain why Punjab, especially Amritsar, has been chosen for this landing. Despite the fact that a hostile neighbour is 40 kilometres away from Amritsar, an Army plane of US is landing here, he said. Mann further noted that when the state government demands starting of international flights from here

then the demand is declined by citing several frivolous reasons.

If the plane carrying former Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasena can land at Hindon Airport and Rafale jet can land in Ambala, then why can't be this plane taken to any other part of country, Mann asked. Illegal immigration is not only the problem of Punjab but it is a national problem whereas projection is being made that Punjab is severely affected by this so only Punjabis are being deported from United States, he said.

Training his guns against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Chief Minister quipped that the "self-proclaimed global leader" has failed to secure rights of Indians. He said that it is the failure of foreign policy of the country as when Modi

was shaking hand with his friend Donald Trump, at the same time the chained Indians were being deported through an Army plane.

Mann said except his "self-glorification", Modi has gained nothing for the country in his trip and the "chained Indians deported to their native land are a return gift by Trump to Modi".

The Chief Minister regretted that it is unfortunate that the Government of India has not been able to ensure dignified return of hapless Indians. He said that these children of our country are a victim of the system that has prevailed in the country in last seven decades where illegal migration has flexed its muscles.

The CM said these brothers and sisters should have been received gracefully and the Government of India should have sent its own plane to bring them back.

## Trump approves extradition of 26/11 accused Tahawwur Rana

CONTINUED FROM P1

aware that he has exhausted all legal avenues in the United States with the US Supreme Court also dismissing his appeal and therefore we are now in touch with US authorities to work on the logistics of his surrender to Indian authorities," Misri had said. Pakistani-origin businessman Tahawwur Hussain Rana was convicted for his

## Talks with farmers

CONTINUED FROM P1

"The minister gave a patient hearing to the farmers. It was commendable that Dallewala attended the meeting despite the personal tragedy of losing his granddaughter."

The farmers announced that their protest at the Shambhu and Khanauri borders will continue until their demands are met. Their primary demand is a law guaranteeing Minimum Support Price (MSP) for crops. The union minister urged Dallewala to end his hunger strike immediately, but Dallewala refused, saying he would only end the strike after a concrete assurance from the government. Jagjit

## Modi, Shah will choose a CM who can execute their plans

CONTINUED FROM P1

Eastern state where elections were about to begin, a few top leaders raised the issues and problems they were facing. Shah told them that being from the state, they should have been aware of the solution to the problem rather than asking him for suggestions on how to resolve it. After this, Shah went on to tell them how the problem can be resolved. The fact that Shah enjoys the complete confidence of PM Modi allows him to move ahead

with confidence and even take decisions that are often considered bold and unexpected.

role in the 26/11 attacks on Mumbai.

Rana's co-conspirators included David Headley, who pleaded guilty and cooperated against Rana.

On January 21, the US Supreme Court denied a petition for a writ of certiorari filed by Rana, seeking to prevent his extradition to India. The petition, filed in November 2024, was against an earlier order of a lower

## New era begins

CONTINUED FROM P1

In a post on X, the prime minister said the "excellent" meeting will add "significant momentum to the India-USA friendship". Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said it was a "very substantive and very productive" visit.

In his remarks, Trump said he and PM Modi have reached an agreement that could potentially make the US the "number one supplier" of oil and gas to India, suggesting it was part of measures to bring down the US trade deficit with India that stands at around USD 50 billion.

The US president also said that both sides have decided to expand the overall defence partnership. "Starting this year, we

court that had ruled in favour of his extradition. A writ of certiorari is a legal document that allows a higher court to review a case from a lower court. The 26/11 attacks resulted in the death of 174 people, including 20 security personnel and 26 foreigners, and over 300 others were injured in the horrific attacks that took place at Mumbai's Taj Hotel on November 26, 2008.

will be increasing military sales to India by many billions of dollars," Trump said.

Trump also announced that India and the US will work together like "never before" to confront the threat of radical Islamic terrorism across the world.

The US president also noted positive momentum in India-US cooperation in the civil-nuclear energy sector.

"In the ground-breaking development for the US nuclear industry, India is also reforming laws to welcome US nuclear technology to the Indian market," he said.

In his remarks, Prime Minister Modi said cooperation between India and the US can shape a better world.

## MAGA+ MIGA becomes MEGA

CONTINUED FROM P1

in strengthening the ties between the two nations.

"An excellent meeting with POTUS Donald Trump at the White House. Our talks will add significant momentum to the India-USA friendship," he wrote.

Earlier, at a joint press conference, PM Modi said that the people of the US

are aware of Trump's motto, MAGA, while the people of India are moving towards the goal of Viksit Bharat 2047. He said that India and the US will strengthen the oil and gas trade to ensure India's energy security.

"The people of America are well aware of President Trump's motto, 'MAGA - Make America Great Again.' The people of India

## F-35 fighter jets

CONTINUED FROM P1

We are also paving the way to ultimately provide India with the F35, Stealth fighters," Trump said in a joint press conference with Prime Minister Narendra Modi after their bilateral talks.

The Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II, the most widely-deployed fifth-generation

fighter, took part in the 15th edition of Aero India, Asia's biggest aerospace and defence exhibition, at the Yelahanka Air Force Station in Bengaluru earlier this month. The fighter jet integrates advanced stealth, unparalleled situational awareness and networked combat capabilities.

## PM blunts question

CONTINUED FROM P1

bakam', we consider the whole world as one family. I believe every Indian is mine. Two prominent leaders of two countries never discuss such individual issues," he said. He was asked if the "Gautam Adani case" was discussed in the meeting with Donald Trump.

PM Modi had bilateral discussions with President Trump during "a very sub-

stantive and productive visit" to the United States. It was the Prime Minister's first visit to the United States after the inauguration of President Trump for a second term. The discussions at the White House went on for four hours. The discussions covered a lot of ground, and the entire gamut of the relationship, apart from regional and global issues of concern, were discussed.

## Modi, Shah will choose a CM who can execute their plans

fluent by lobbying or pressure from prospective candidates and always prioritises the long-term benefit that the decision will bring for the party. This quality was recognised by Modi very early in his political career.

Ever since the party came to power by winning the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, Shah has been at the centre of all decisions, alongside PM Modi. The selection for Delhi's CM is no different.

# 'WE KEPT KASAB, WE CAN KEEP HIM TOO': MAHARASHTRA CM ON RANA'S EXTRADITION

Devendra Fadnavis on Friday expressed confidence in the security of jails in the state following the extradition approval of Tahawwur Rana

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

**M**aharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Friday expressed confidence in the security of jails in the state following the extradition approval of Tahawwur Rana, an accused in the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, and said, "We kept Kasab. We can keep him (Tahawwur Rana) too."

Fadnavis referred to the security measures implemented for Ajmal Kasab, one of the terrorists involved in the 2008 Mumbai attacks.

Speaking to reporters after a review meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah at the North Block, Fadnavis thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his efforts in securing Rana's extradition. He noted that the US had previously been reluctant to extradite Rana despite evidence linking him to the planning of the 26/11 attacks.

"The US has agreed to the extradition of the mastermind behind the 26/11

## MAHARASHTRA CM FADNAVIS THANKS PM MODI FOR SECURING RANA'S EXTRADITION

- US agrees to extradite 26/11 mastermind Tahawwur Rana to India.
- Maharashtra CM credits PM Modi for securing extradition despite US reluctance.
- US President Trump announces Rana's extradition during joint press conference with PM Modi.



attacks, Tahawwur Rana. I thank PM Modi for this... Previously, we conducted an online investigation that proved Pakistan's involvement in the attack. He was under America's protection, and they were not ready to extradite him. After PM Modi's efforts, President Trump has agreed to it. I consider this a very important development," the Maharashtra CM said.

"The US has agreed to the extradition of the mastermind behind planning the 26/11 attacks. Tahawwur Rana. I thank PM Modi for this... Previously, we did an online investigation, which proved Pakistan's hand behind the attack. He was under America's protection, and they were not ready to extradite him... After PM Modi's efforts, President Trump has agreed to it... I

consider this a very important event," he added.

Earlier on Thursday, US President Donald Trump announced the extradition of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack accused, Tahawwur Rana, to India and said he will face justice.

He made the announcement during a joint press conference with PM Narendra Modi following their bilateral meeting at the White

House in Washington DC.

"I am pleased to announce that my administration has approved the extradition of one of the plotters (Tahawwur Rana) and one of the very evil people of the world, having to do with the horrific 2008 Mumbai terrorist attack, to face justice in India. He is going back to India to face justice," the US President said.

The US State Department said last month that it is evaluating the next steps regarding Tahawwur Rana's extradition to India.

Pakistani-origin businessman Tahawwur Hussain Rana was convicted for his role in the 26/11 attacks on Mumbai. Rana's co-conspirators included David Headley, who pleaded guilty and cooperated against Rana.

The 26/11 attacks resulted in the death of 174 people, including 20 security personnel and 26 foreigners, and over 300 others were injured in the horrific attacks that took place at Mumbai's Taj Hotel on November 26, 2008.

## Pending court cases rise by 33 lakh to 5.20 crore

NEERAJ MOHAN  
CHANDIGARH

The number of pending cases in courts across the country increased by nearly 33 lakh in the past two years and reached over 5.20 lakh years.

As per the figures revealed by the Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha, the number of pending cases rose from 4.87 crore at the end of 2022 to 5.20 crore by February 7 this year.

The minister said while the timely disposal of these cases falls under the exclusive domain of the judiciary, the government remains committed to fostering an environment conducive to the expeditious resolution of cases. This commitment is in line with Article 21 of the Constitution, which mandates the right to a speedy

trial.

As per the reply the number of pending cases in the Supreme Court rose from 78,797 in December 2022 to 81,573 in February 2025, the number of pending cases in the various high courts increased to from 53,92,031 to 62,35,242 over the same period. Whereas, the number of cases in the district and subordinate courts, witnessed the most significant rise of 24.48 lakh cases and increased from 4,32,93,727 to 4,57,42,040 during this period.

In the reply, Meghwal highlighted the role of the National Mission for Justice in enhancing the justice delivery system, aiming at a coordinated approach for the phased reduction of case backlog.

The mission's strategies include Improved Infrastructure, Enhancing court facilities with a focus on

computerization, Judicial Strength by Increasing the number of judges in subordinate courts.

It is worth mentioning here that India's lower judiciary is facing a serious shortage of judicial officers, with nearly 20% of the sanctioned posts lying vacant. In a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Union Minister of State for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal revealed that out of the total sanctioned strength of 25,771 judicial officers, only 20,478 are in place, leaving 5,293 posts unfilled. Whereas,

The minister informed Parliament in December last year that the situation in the country's high courts is equally concerning. Nearly one-third or 31 per cent of high court judge posts are vacant. Out of a sanctioned strength of 1,114 judges across 25 High Courts, 350 positions remain unfilled.

| S. No. | Name of court                   | No. of pending cases as on 31.12.2022 | No. of pending cases as on 31.12.2023 | No. of pending cases as on 31.12.2024 | No. of pending cases as on 07.02.2025 |
|--------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1.     | Supreme Court of India          | 78,797                                | 80,674                                | 82,496                                | 81,573                                |
| 2.     | High Courts                     | 53,92,031                             | 54,42,547                             | 55,40,682                             | 62,35,242                             |
| 3.     | District and Subordinate Courts | 4,32,93,727                           | 4,39,70,061                           | 4,54,54,003                           | 4,57,42,040                           |

## Legislative training key to strengthening democracy: LS Speaker Om Birla

TDG NETWORK  
CHANDIGARH

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla emphasized the importance of legislative training for public representatives to strengthen democracy and enhance governance. Addressing the inaugural session of a two-day orientation program organized in collaboration with the Parliamentary Research and Training Institute for Democracies (PRIDE) at the Haryana Vidhan Sabha, Birla said that proficiency in legislative work ensures informed discussions and better lawmaking, ultimately benefiting the public.

"Harnessing the power of legislative expertise is crucial for improving governance. Democracy flourishes when public repre-

sentatives are well-versed in legislative procedures," Birla remarked. He noted that since independence, India's Parliament and state assemblies have abolished outdated colonial laws and enacted new ones to meet the nation's evolving needs.

He highlighted that planned deadlocks in legislative work are inappropriate, urging legislators to engage in meaningful debates rather than disrupt legislative proceedings. Birla added that parliamentary committees function as mini-parliaments, ensuring transparency and accountability. He also revealed that PRIDE has conducted training programs in 15 states, focusing on legislative drafting and capacity building.

Praising Haryana Vidhan

Sabha, Birla said the state has taken innovative steps to enhance the efficiency of its MLAs, including moving toward a paperless assembly and improving discussions on the budget.

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, who participated in the event, called the legislature one of the most important pillars of democracy. "Elected representatives must raise the concerns of their constituents and work towards their resolution," he said. Saini urged the House to function with a spirit of unity, putting public interest above personal agendas.

The two-day program aims to equip Haryana MLAs with essential legislative skills and promote meaningful debates on public welfare.

## Rajasthan's innovative 'Cash Plus' model tackles malnutrition with financial aid

TIKAM SHARMA  
NEW DELHI

Rajasthan has launched a pioneering initiative to combat malnutrition through its innovative "Cash Plus" model, which integrates direct cash transfers with social and behavioral change interventions. This groundbreaking approach ensures that financial assistance reaches vulnerable mothers while simultaneously fostering essential health and nutrition practices to combat under-nutrition.

The "Cash Plus" strategy pairs financial support with an intensive Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) model. This dual approach utilizes interper-



sonal counseling, community engagement, and digital outreach to equip families with essential knowledge on improved health and nutrition practices.

The first phase of this initiative was launched in five high-burden tribal districts—Baran, Banswara, Dungarpur, Pratapgarh, and Udaipur—where financial

incentives were linked to key health-seeking behaviors, including antenatal care, institutional deliveries, and early childhood immunization. The results have been promising: Nearly two lakh second-time pregnant women received financial support, enabling better nutritional investments during pregnancy. Exposure to at

least four SBCC platforms increased from 50% in 2021 to over 90% in 2024.

There was a 37% increase in antenatal care awareness among Anganwadi workers and a 47% rise in women attending health sessions with Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs). Dietary diversity among pregnant women improved by 49%, aligning with WHO nutritional guidelines. Early breastfeeding initiation saw a 48.7% rise, while 61% of infants aged six months and above received a WHO-recommended diverse diet. The use of cash incentives for nutrition increased by 54%.

Buoyed by these achievements, Rajasthan is now expanding its SBCC interventions across all districts.

## SP MP Afzal Ansari booked for objectionable remarks on Maha Kumbh

TDG NETWORK  
GHAZIPUR

A case has been registered against Samajwadi Party MP Afzal Ansari for allegedly making objectionable remarks on the ongoing Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj, police said on Friday.

The FIR was lodged at Shadiabad police station here under relevant sections of the BNS, they said. According to a police official, Dev Prakash Singh, a resident of Baddhupur village in Birno police station area, submitted a written complaint to the Shadiabad Station House Officer (SHO) on February 13.

## Andhra Pradesh intensifies measures to contain bird flu

TDG NETWORK  
VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government has intensified efforts to curb the spread of bird flu, with strict containment measures in place across three affected districts. Over one lakh hens have been culled so far, while officials have designated red and surveillance zones to prevent further transmission.

Additional Director of Animal Husbandry, Dr Satya Kumari on Friday stated, "The bird flu is currently restricted to three districts and five farms. Approximately one lakh hens have been culled due to the outbreak."

"Wherever we identify

bird flu, we declare a red zone with a radius of one kilometre and a surveillance zone with a radius of ten kilometres. Farmers need not panic, as the number of cases is decreasing, and we are taking appropriate measures to prevent the spread of the disease," she assured.

Yesterday, Andhra Agriculture, Cooperation, Marketing, and Animal Husbandry Minister Kinjarapu Athannaidu reassured the public that there was no cause for concern regarding bird flu, as the government had implemented strict measures to control its spread.

"There is no need for anyone to worry about bird

flu, as the government is constantly vigilant and has taken stringent measures to control its spread", said Athannaidu.

According to a release from the Director of the Information & Public Relations Department, Andhra Pradesh Secretariat, while speaking to the media, the minister stated, "Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu had immediately responded to the issue by consulting with the Joint Secretary of the Central Animal Husbandry Department and scientists from the National Institute of High-Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD) in Bhopal."

Eluru district is currently

experiencing a bird flu outbreak, with approximately one lakh chickens dying at a poultry farm in Badampudi, Unguturu.

Authorities had earlier confirmed the presence of bird flu after laboratory tests, prompting urgent measures, including the establishment of a control room and the deployment of Rapid Response Teams.

Eluru District Collector K Vetriseelvi stated, "Recently, a large number of chickens died at a poultry farm in Badampudi, Unguturu. The Eluru district authorities sent samples for laboratory testing, and the results confirmed that the samples tested positive for bird flu."

## CBSE board exams begin today: Over 44 lakh students set to appear

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) will commence the Class 10 and 12 board examinations on February 15, with over 44 lakh students from 8,000 schools in India and abroad set to appear.

On the first day, Class 10 students will take the English (Communicative) and English (Language and Literature) papers, while Class 12 students will write the Entrepreneurship exam.

The exams will be conducted from 10:30 AM to 1:30 PM across 7,842 centres

in India and 26 locations abroad.

CBSE has issued strict guidelines to maintain the integrity of the exams. Regular students must wear school uniforms, while private candidates should opt for light-coloured clothing. Students must arrive at the exam centre at least 30 minutes before the scheduled time and carefully read the question paper instructions before answering.

The board has also listed items prohibited inside the exam hall, including mobile phones, Bluetooth devices, earphones, smartwatches, cameras, unauthorized

study materials, wallets, handbags, goggles, and pouches. Food and drinks are not allowed, except for diabetic students with prior approval.

Admit cards have been issued via the Pariksha Sangam Portal. Regular students must carry their admit cards and school IDs, while private candidates need a government-issued photo ID.

To ensure smooth conduct, CBSE held a live webcast at 2:30 PM on Friday on its YouTube channel, detailing exam and evaluation guidelines for centre superintendents and other

officials. The Class 10 exams will continue until March 18, while Class 12 exams will conclude on April 4. CBSE has provided sufficient gaps between major subjects this year to ease the examination process.

Given the increased student commute on examination days, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has announced special facilitation measures in partnership with CISF. Students will be given priority during frisking and ticketing at metro stations, with additional staff deployed to assist them during peak hours.

## Vice President questions CJI's role in executive appointments

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Friday wondered how the Chief Justice of India, even by "statutory prescription", participate in the selection of the CBI director, and said it was time to "revisit" the norms.

Such a procedure is not in consonance with democracy, he said, speaking at the

National Judicial Academy, Bhopal.

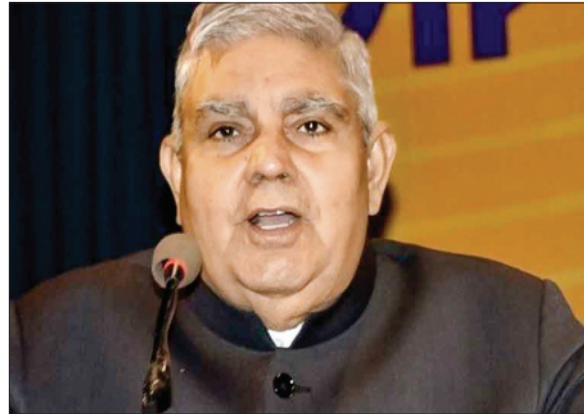
"To stir your minds, how can in a country like ours or in any democracy, by statutory prescription, Chief Justice of India participate in the selection of the CBI director?" Dhankhar said.

"Can there be any legal rationale for it? I can appreciate that the statutory prescription took shape because the Executive of the

day has yielded to a judicial verdict. But time has come to revisit. This surely does not merge with democracy. How can we involve the Chief Justice of India with any executive appointment?" he said.

Referring to his stint as Parliamentary Affairs Minister in 1990, Dhankhar said the Supreme Court then had eight judges.

"More often than not,



all the eight judges sat together (on a bench hearing a case)...When the strength of the Supreme Court was eight judges, under Article 145(3), there was a stipulation that interpretation of the Constitution will be by a bench of five judges or more," he said.

"Please note, when this strength was eight, it (size of constitutional bench) was five. And the Consti-

tution allows the highest court of the land to interpret the Constitution," he added.

But under the guise of interpretation, there can be no "arrogation of authority", and the essence and spirit which the founding fathers had in mind under Article 145(3) must be respected, the vice president further said.

"If I analyze arithmetical-

ly, they were very sure the interpretation will be by majority of judges, because the (total) strength then was eight. That five stands as it is. And the number (of total judges) is more than fourfold," he added.

Article 145(3) of the Constitution of India states that at least five judges are required to sit on a case involving the interpretation of the Constitution.

# BJP GOVT IN DELHI LIKELY TO BE SWORN IN BY FEB 19-20

The new govt will prioritise clean water, improved civic infra, pollution control within the first 100 days.

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The swearing-in ceremony of the BJP government in Delhi is likely to take place on February 19 or 20 and the new dispensation will give priority to clean drinking water supply, improved civic infrastructure, among other things, party leaders said. The prime minister is coming back from his foreign visit and soon the observers for a meeting of the BJP legislature party will be appointed, newly elected BJP MLA and national secretary of the party Manjinder Singh Sirsa said.

"The new government will start working around February 19-20," said the Rajouri Garden MLA who is considered a contender for the post of Chief Minister or a ministerial berth.

Sirsa said that he expected that the BJP legislature party meeting would be

## SWEARING-IN CEREMONY

- There is no official race for the CM post; the BJP legislature party will select the leader in a meeting.
- The government will implement the Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme, which was previously obstructed by the AAP government.
- Addressing Yamuna pollution will be a priority, with plans to set up sewage treatment plants for the river's 28 major drains.
- BJP MLA Mohan Singh Bisht proposes re-naming Mustafabad to "Shiv Vihar" or "Shiv Puri," based on community demographics.



held around February 18-19 and added "The new government will be formed, I think, by February 20, after the swearing-in ceremony."

The newly elected BJP MLAs laughed off any race for the post of Chief Minister of Delhi, saying such talks were merely speculations by the media.

"There is no race for the post of Delhi chief minister.

In our party the CM or the leader of the legislature party is elected in a meeting of the MLAs," said second-time MLA from Laxmi Nagar seat Abhay Verma.

Verma, a Purvanchali, is also talked about as a prospective candidate for the top post of the Delhi government. "We have come to serve the people and now thinking about addressing

issues like development, clean water supply and clean air for the people as well as how to free the Yamuna from pollution," he said.

The BJP MLAs asserted that as per the prime minister's promise, the Ayushman Bharat health scheme obstructed by the AAP government, will be implemented in Delhi in the first meeting of the new Cabinet.

The prime minister has already announced that the Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme will be implemented through the first meeting of the new Cabinet. Sirsa said that providing clean drinking water, ensuring sanitation in the city and starting work to deal with air and Yamuna pollution, will be priorities of the new government within 100 days in power.

Sixth-time MLA Mohan Singh Bisht said the new chief minister of Delhi will be elected from the 48 BJP legislators.

The Mustafabad MLA, also reiterated his proposal for changing the name of the minority dominated constituency to "Shiv Vihar" or "Shiv Puri". "There are around 42 per cent people of one community (minorities) and on the other hand are 58 per cent people (Hindus)... So, the public sentiment must be respected," said the senior BJP MLA.

# BJP MP demands closure of Mohalla Clinics

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

BJP MP Yogender Chandoliya on Friday demanded the immediate closure of Delhi's Mohalla Clinics, accusing them of being a "model of corruption" linked to former Chief Ministers Arvind Kejriwal and Atishi.

"Arvind Kejriwal and Atishi have looted Delhi as Chief Ministers. These are the culprits and are out on the bail," Chandoliya claimed.

"Mohalla Clinics should be shut down immediately. When we have built up dispensaries of the Delhi government in Nagar Nigam. We have competent doctors and staff. These shops of Mohalla clinics were (opened) for their loved ones to indulge in corruption and black marketing," the BJP MP further alleged.

"It was a model of their corruption," he said, referring to the Mohalla clinics.

Meanwhile, the Union Health Ministry is set to



*"Arvind Kejriwal and Atishi have looted Delhi as Chief Ministers. These are the culprits and are out on the bail," Chandoliya claimed.*

Minister.

According to official sources, "The Union Health Ministry will discuss the plans and explore the best possible makeover of Mohalla Clinics as Arogya Mandirs in Delhi and will also seek a report from the new Health Minister on the allegations of corruption charges in Mohalla Clinics."

The BJP won 48 seats in a historic mandate, marking its return to power in Delhi after 27 years. Several AAP leaders, including former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, lost in their strongholds, while outgoing Chief Minister Atishi managed to retain her seat.

The party secured a landslide victory in the Delhi Assembly election results which was declared on February 8. The party is yet to announce its chief ministerial candidate to lead the Delhi assembly, as the party emerged victorious in the national capital. The last BJP government in Delhi was from 1993 to 1998.

review the status of Delhi's Mohalla clinics once the government is formed, with plans to potentially convert them into 'Arogya Mandirs.' This decision comes amid allegations of corruption within the clinics, prompting the ministry to seek a report from the new Health

# BSES denies power cuts, hits back at Atishi's allegations

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Amid outgoing Chief Minister Atishi's claims of outages after AAP's departure from power in Delhi, BSES discoms said on Friday that they are ensuring "reliable, seamless" supply in their areas. The BSES discoms -- BYPL and BRPL -- are committed to ensuring reliable and quality power supply and have set up dedicated war rooms for real-time monitoring of power supply situation, said a statement of the company. "To maintain a sustainable

and eco-friendly power supply, up to 2000 MW of renewable energy is significantly contributing to meeting BSES' winter power demand," it said.

Atishi alleged on Thursday that several parts of the city were experiencing power cuts and hit out at the BJP that has now come to power in Delhi, saying it would turn the city into Uttar Pradesh experiencing hours-long outages. The BJP has accused Atishi of "spreading lies" to "mislead" the people after her party was ousted from power in Delhi.

# 'Tussle for portfolio in BJP as everyone wants their share'

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Outgoing Delhi Chief Minister Atishi on Friday claimed "internal conflicts" are happening among BJP MLAs over portfolio allocation as its leaders "are more focused on maximizing their share of loot". The BJP is making excuses to avoid fulfilling its poll promises, she said while addressing a press conference here. In response to the AAP leader's claims, Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva asserted that the party, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's directive, would ensure strict action against those responsible



for financial irregularities in the past decade. Atishi alleged that BJP leaders were engaged in a tussle over portfolio allocation, delaying governance in Delhi. "Right now, BJP leaders are embroiled in internal fights over ministerial positions, each vying for control over departments to exploit public funds.

Their strategy is to shift the blame for their unfulfilled promises onto the AAP, claiming that they couldn't deliver due to an alleged financial crisis in the Delhi government," she said. They will use this excuse to cover up their own failures and justify breaking their promises, she said. Targeting the BJP over its election promise of providing Rs 2,500 per month to women, Atishi accused the party of deceiving the public. "During the election campaign, BJP distributed a leaflet under Modi Ji Ki Guarantee,' promising Rs 2,500 per month for every woman in Delhi.

AJIT MAINDOLA  
NEW DELHI

The capital is waiting for its new Chief Minister. The process of forming a government in Delhi will begin as soon as Prime Minister Narendra Modi returns to the country. Meanwhile, a meeting of senior party leaders was held on Friday to discuss the meeting of the legislative party. The meeting was led by Organization General Secretary B.L. Santosh.

During the meeting, there was a discussion on the deployment of observers and setting a date for the legislative party meeting. According to sources, the date for the meeting will be decided after consulting with Prime Minister Modi once he returns from the

United States.

The legislative party meeting in Delhi is expected to take place either on Sunday or Tuesday, where the name of the new Chief Minister will be announced. Along with selecting the new Chief Minister, the formation of the cabinet remains a significant challenge for the BJP leadership. The high command aims to form a government in Delhi that sends a strong message across the country. There is also speculation about the appointment of two Deputy Chief Ministers, but confusion remains due to the large number of claims for ministerial positions.

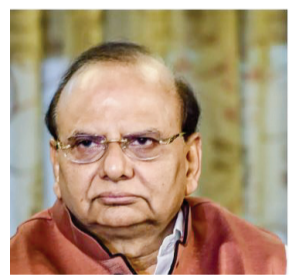
The BJP is considering appointing seven more ministers, who will take the oath alongside the new Chief Minister. Union Home Min-

ister Amit Shah and BJP National President J.P. Nadda have drafted a blueprint for the formation of the government, which will be put into action once Prime Minister Modi gives his approval. Several senior leaders are in the running for the Chief Minister's post. Some of the names being considered include current state president Subhash Sachdeva, former state president Vijender Gupta, Rekha Gupta, Umesh Upadhyay, Mohan Singh Bisht, Ravindra Singh Negi, Pravesh Verma, and Manjinder Singh Sirsa. Once a Chief Minister is selected from among these candidates, the challenge of finalizing the remaining cabinet members will arise, as there are more than seven claimants for ministerial roles.

# Delhiites chose new leadership for change: LG Saxena

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena Friday said the MCD areas of Delhi would be made as clean and beautiful as NDMC zones while asserting that the transformation in Delhi's leadership will positively impact both the city and its people. Speaking at the Samvaad with Swachhta Sainiks event here, he said some areas of Delhi, particularly those under the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), are well-maintained while others require significant improvement. "We will ensure that MCD areas also become as clean and beautiful as NDMC



zones," Saxena said.

The LG emphasised that maintaining cleanliness in Delhi is primarily the responsibility of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) which has 50,000 sanitation workers.

Praising them for their efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Yamuna floods and the G20 beautification drive, he described the sanitation workers as

the "backbone of Delhi". A clean city would be impossible without their dedication, Saxena said.

Referring to the changes in Delhi's political landscape, he urged sanitation workers to see the transition both as a challenge and an opportunity.

"The change brought by the public will be visible only when Delhi becomes completely clean and green," he said, adding that while progress has been made, more work is needed to ensure a garbage-free city.

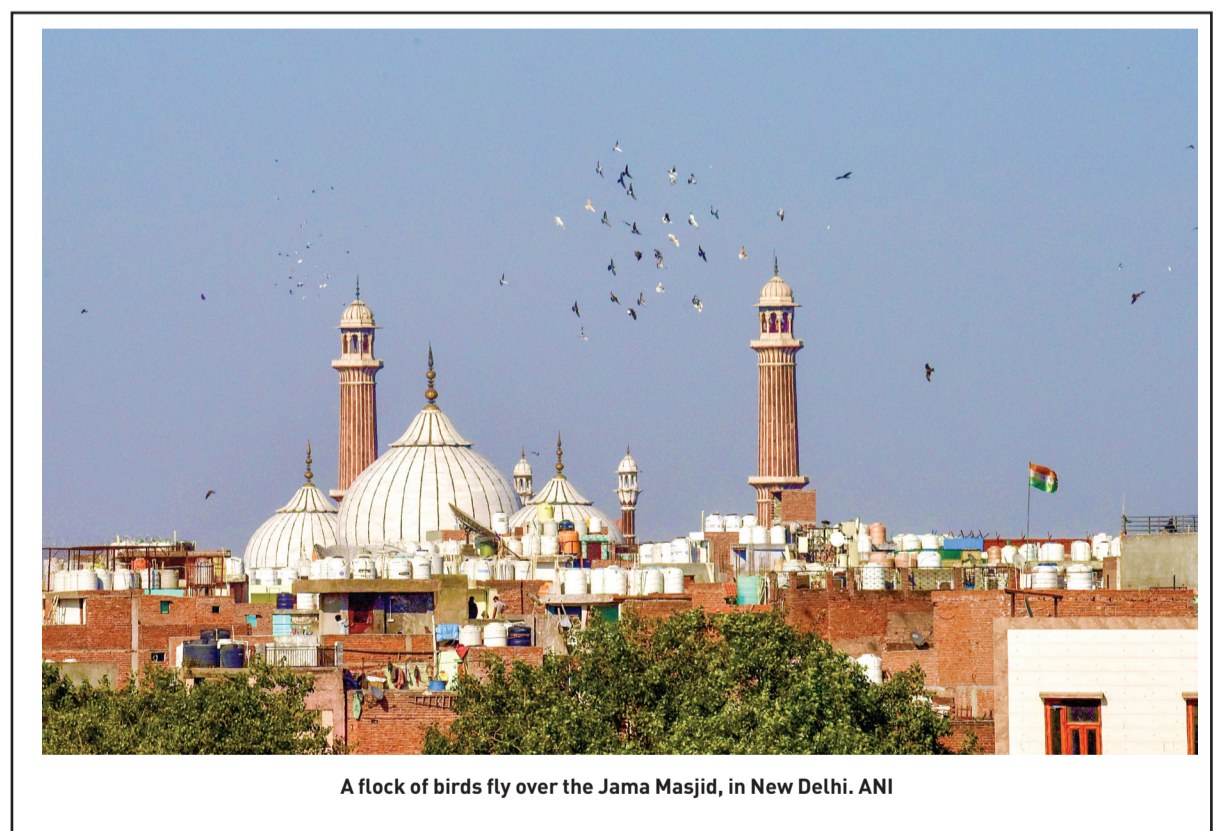
"Delhiites have chosen a new leadership for change and this transformation will positively impact both the city and its people.

# Delhi to face water disruption on Feb 20-21

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Parts of Delhi will face water supply disruption from the evening of February 20 to the morning of February 21 due to maintenance work, the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) announced. Affected areas include Bakhtawarpur, Jhangola, Alipur, Narela, Burari, Badli, Sant Nagar, and several others.

The disruption is due to interconnection work of newly laid 900 mm and 1500 mm diameter inlet water mains at Palla. Water supply will either be unavailable or at low pressure during this period. DJB will provide water tankers.



A flock of birds fly over the Jama Masjid, in New Delhi. ANI

# BJP seeks legal action against Kejriwal over 'CMO Delhi' handle

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The BJP has sought Lt Governor VK Saxena's direction to the Delhi government to initiate legal action against former chief minister and AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal for allegedly "hijacking" the official "CMO Delhi" handle on social media platform X. Earlier in the day, the Chief Minister's Office wrote to X, seeking the restoration of the "CMO Delhi" handle allegedly renamed to "Kejri-



walAtWork".

In a letter to Saxena on Friday, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said legal action should be taken against the former chief minister for renam-

ing "CMO Delhi" handle on X to "Arvind Kejriwal At Work" and using it for his personal posts.

"I have requested the LG that the IT department should take legal action

against Kejriwal for hijacking the official CMO account on X and to ensure steps to prevent such incidents to recur," Sachdeva told reporters.

Outgoing Delhi Chief Minister Atishi, speaking over the issue in a press conference, said X has a clear cut policy and legal guidelines of account ownership.

"According to those legal guidelines, action, whatever needed, will be taken," she said.

The AAP has accused the

BJP of making "baseless allegations" and advised the party to stop doing so and instead focus on governing Delhi.

The BJP has returned to power in Delhi after 26 years, defeating the AAP in the February 5 assembly polls. The party's government is yet to be formed.

The Delhi BJP president said he has also written to the Delhi LG that the power discoms should come forward to dispel the "misleading claims" of Atishi on power cuts in the city.

# BJP govt will fulfil poll promises to slum dwellers: Sachdeva

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said his party will fulfil its poll promises to slum dwellers after forming the government in the national capital. Sachdeva also thanked the BJP workers who were part of the 'Jhuggi Vistarak' campaign for the Delhi assembly polls. The campaign was launched in July 2019, months ahead of the polls this February as part of its outreach to the slum dwellers.

The BJP secured a comfortable victory in the assembly polls held earlier this month by winning 48 seats. Expressing his gratitude to all 'Jhuggi Basti

Palaks and Vistaraks', the Delhi BJP chief acknowledged the crucial role the trust of slum dwellers played in the party's victory in the elections, according to an official statement. Sachdeva emphasised that the BJP has remained in constant touch with slum dwellers, understanding their problems, and working toward solutions, it stated.

"The BJP has consistently been the voice of slum dwellers, raised their issues on the streets, and as a result, Delhi has been freed from a deceitful and deeply corrupt party," he said. The BJP leader assured the party was "committed to fulfilling its promises to slum dwellers" and will work towards them after forming the government, the statement said.

# MHA SEEKS PRESIDENT'S SANCTION TO PROSECUTE AAP'S SATYENDAR JAIN

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Union home ministry has requested the president for grant of sanction to prosecute AAP leader and former Delhi minister Satyendar Jain in a money-laundering case being investigated by the ED, sources said on Friday. The sanction against the 60-year-old politician has been sought under Section 218 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, they said.

The ministry requested the sanction from the president of India on the basis of an Enforcement Directorate (ED) investigation and the presence of "adequate proof", they added.

The federal agency

## SANCTION REQUEST

- Jain was arrested in May 2022 in a case linked to alleged hawala dealings.
- The case follows a CBI FIR accusing Jain of owning disproportionate assets of Rs 1.47 crore.
- ED found Jain used hawala to transfer Rs 4.81 crore for land purchases and loan repayments.
- Arvind Kejriwal defended Jain, calling him honest and claiming he's being framed.



booked Jain in a money-laundering case linked to alleged hawala dealings and arrested him in May 2022.

Jain held the health, power and a few other portfolios when he was taken into ED custody.

He is currently out on

bail and has been charge-sheeted by the ED.

The money-laundering case stems from an August 2017 FIR filed against Jain and others by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on charges of alleged possession of disproportionate assets.

The CBI filed a chargesheet in December 2018, stating that the alleged disproportionate assets were to the tune of Rs 1.47 crore, about 217 per cent more than Jain's known sources of income during 2015-17.

The ED had earlier said

its probe found that "during 2015-16, Satyendar Jain was a public servant and four companies (beneficially owned and controlled by him) received accommodation entries (hawala) to the tune of Rs 4.81 crore from shell (bogus) companies against cash transferred to Kolkata-based entry operators through the hawala route".

"These amounts were utilised for direct purchase of agricultural land or for the repayment of loan taken for purchase of agricultural land in and around Delhi," the agency had said. Former Delhi chief minister and AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal had earlier defended Jain, saying he was a "hardcore honest and patriot" person who was being framed in a "false case".

# Admin divulged personal info: Jamia students

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Jamia Millia Islamia students Friday accused the university administration of violating their right to privacy by publicly displaying the personal details of alleged protesters on campus gates, including their names, photographs, addresses, and phone numbers. The university administration, however, is yet to comment on the allegations.

Students claim that the administration's move endangers their safety and is an attempt to intimidate those participating in demonstrations against recent disciplinary actions initiated by Jamia Millia Islamia.

"The Jamia administration has crossed all limits by pasting the personal details of protesting students outside the university gates. This is not just a privacy violation, it is an open call for harass-



ment and violence, especially targeting young women," alleged AISA-affiliated student leader Sonakshi Gupta.

Seeking to link the crackdown to broader political developments, she said, "With a BJP government about to take over in Delhi, this isn't just a coincidence. We saw how Jamia students were attacked during the anti-CAA protests. Now, the administration itself is making us vulnerable. Who will take responsibility if something happens to us?"

The controversy began after the university suspended two PhD scholars for allegedly leading an un-

authorised protest. Several students claimed that they received suspension notices, citing their alleged involvement in "acts of vandalism, unauthorized protests, and defamation of the university". The administration defended its actions, stating that protests disrupted academic activities and resulted in property damage, including vandalizing the central canteen and breaking the gate of the security advisor's office. However, student activists argue that the administration was attempting to stifle dissent and using disciplinary measures as a tool for suppression.

# DDA partners with Andaman & Nicobar for major projects

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) on Friday signed an MoU with Andaman and Nicobar administration to act as knowledge partners and share technical expertise for development of various key projects in the islands, officials said. According to the DDA, this initiative is in line with the vision of cooperative and competitive federalism articulated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"The scope of this MoU includes the revitalisation of Swaraj Dweep Island Jetty Area and the development of a precinct around the Cellular Jail and Marina in Port Blair with an aim to transform these sites into world-class tourist destinations," the DDA said.



A bilateral meeting and MoU signing ceremony took place at Asita here in the presence of Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena and Lieutenant Governor of Andaman and Nicobar Admiral D K Joshi.

The DDA in a statement said this event marks a pivotal step towards enhancing governance and fostering intellectual exchange for the sustainable growth of this remote yet strategically important part of the country. Speaking on the occasion,

Saxena shared a vision focused on enhancing the environmental and economic prospects of the islands. He emphasised the importance of knowledge exchange and collaboration in driving the region's development forward.

The DDA and Andaman and Nicobar administration officers have already undertaken a series of brainstorming sessions, site visits and consultations with various stakeholders in the islands, the statement said.

# 90 drug peddlers held, 784 sites raided

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Crime Branch, in collaboration with all districts and special units, conducted simultaneous raids at over 700 locations across the city and arrested 90 narco-offenders, officials said on Friday. The operation, 'Kavach' 7.0, began on Wednesday and continued till Thursday, they said.

The operation resulted in the arrest of 90 narco-offenders in 87 Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances cases, with the seizure of 553 grams of heroin, 43 kilograms of marijuana, 199 grams of cocaine and over 2 lakh habit-forming tablets, Special Commissioner of Police (Crime Branch) Devesh Chandra Srivastava said.

A total of 784 locations



were raided during this operation, police said.

The officer further said that as part of the operation, the police also took action against illegal arms and illicit liquor trade.

A total of 157 cases under the Delhi Excise Act led to 161 arrests, with the recovery of over 33,000 liquor bottles.

Additionally, 29 individuals were apprehended in 27 Arms Act cases, leading to the seizure of one revolver, six country-made pistols, 11 live cartridges, 18 knives, a surgical blade and Rs 24,000 in cash.

# NGT rejects blanket inquiry on Ghaziabad parks concretisation

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal has refused to conduct "any roving and fishing inquiry" over the concretisation of parks in Ghaziabad, UP, and sought details on any such violation. A bench of NGT Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava, judicial member Justice Arun Kumar Tyagi and expert member Afroz Ahmad was hearing a plea claiming parks in the area were concretised, lowering the green cover.

The plea sought clearing the concrete from the pavements and parks in the area.

In an order on February 6, the bench said, "We find that unless the applicant places on record details of such parks and details of



*The plea sought clearing the concrete from the pavements and parks in the area.*

violations, it would not be proper to conduct any roving and fishing inquiry."

The bench said such a prayer couldn't be granted and the plea would consider only the names of the parks which have been disclosed.

The tribunal noted the applicant's contention that ac-

ording to a government order on March 2018, no more than 5 per cent of any park could be utilised for non-green purposes and said, "It is not disputed by Ghaziabad Nagar Nigam that only up to 5 per cent of the area of the park can be utilised for non-green purposes."

# DMRC to prioritise students during CBSE exams

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Metro will prioritise students in frisking and ticketing to ensure a smooth journey for the students communicating across the city for the upcoming CBSE board examinations, according to an official statement. According to the statement, with the board examinations for Classes X and XII scheduled from February 15 to April 4, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has introduced a series of measures to ensure smooth and hassle-free travel for students appearing for the exams.

As approximately 3.30 lakh students and thousands of school staff will be commuting across the city, DMRC, in partnership with the Central Industrial Secu-



urity Force (CISF), is implementing special facilitation measures at metro stations to accommodate the increased footfall on examination days.

"Students carrying their CBSE admit cards will be given priority during security checks at metro stations and while purchasing tickets at ticket office machines (TOM) and customer care (CC) centres," the statement read. DMRC staff visited schools, interacted with principals and informed them about the nearest metro stations and the support

available for students, it said. "The DMRC has requested schools to display posters providing details of the nearest metro station along with a QR code for easy ticket booking to assist students in planning their travel," it read. "Special centralised announcements will be made at metro stations. A detailed list of metro stations closest to examination centres has also been uploaded on the DMRC website and official mobile application for easy reference," the statement added.

# Police foils robbery bid in Delhi, 4 suspects held

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Special Cell of the Delhi Police has claimed to have foiled a robbery attempt on a businessman with the arrest of four people, an official said on Friday. According to the police, the suspects have a history of violent crimes and were in the advanced stages of planning the heist when they apprehended them.

"One of the main conspirators, identified as Satender, had previously been involved in the murder of a policeman," Additional Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Pratiksha Godara said in a statement.

The accused were identified as Satender (54), Mo-

hit (28), Rajendra Singh alias doctor (46), residents of Delhi and Monu (28) from Uttar Pradesh.

"Our operation prevented what could have been a high-profile robbery targeting a businessman in the Model Town area after the arrest of Rajendra Singh, an employee of the businessman, who had been leaking information to the gang," Additional CP added.

She said that in November 2024, police received information about Satender, a proclaimed offender in multiple cases. Teams discovered his plans to commit a robbery in Delhi.

Satender, along with his accomplices, had acquired weapons and vehicles for the crime. Police

teams were deployed to track and locate the suspects. All the criminals were arrested on February 7.

With their arrest, police recovered one .32 bore pistol with three live cartridges, one dagger, two motorcycles and six mobile phones.

"The gang had carried out reconnaissance of the target location and planned an escape route. Their capture prevented a violent crime," she said.

Sharing the profile of the accused, she said that Satender, who studied up to 12th grade, has been involved in over 20 criminal cases in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. He started as a farmer. At the age of 20, he was implicated in a murder case.

# Gurugram Police busts fake call centre in Delhi



TDG NETWORK  
GURUGRAM

Police have busted a fake call centre, run in a rented house in Delhi's Badarpur area and have arrested eight people, officials said on Friday. The matter came to light on February 4 after a man filed a complaint of being duped of Rs 18,000 under the pretext of providing a loan, police said.

The complainant told the police, that a man, who posed as an official from Axis Bank, promised to provide loans and took the

amount in the name of filing charges, police said. During the investigation, the police conducted raids and busted a fake call centre in Badarpur on Thursday.

Eight people were arrested, including six women, police said. They also recovered 25 mobile phones and wifi dongles from their possession.

"During interrogation, the accused revealed that they used to commit fraud by calling people and getting them to transfer money to get loans.

# Attack on cops: Amanatullah appears before police

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan appeared before the police for the second day on Friday after receiving summons for allegedly attacking a police team in Delhi's Jamia Nagar on February 10. This comes as a Delhi court earlier on Thursday granted him protection from arrest till February 24.

Khan posted a video on social media platform

where he was seen entering the police station without talking with anyone.

A senior police officer said that Khan was called to join the investigation on Friday. He reached at the police station in the evening.

The AAP MLA told reporters on Thursday that he was not on the run and would join the police investigation.

Granting Khan interim protection from arrest, Special Judge Jitendra



Singh on Thursday ordered him to join the probe whenever directed by the investigating officer.

The Delhi Police registered an FIR against the Okhla MLA for allegedly leading an attack on a po-

lice team in Jamia Nagar on February 10.

Khan had said he went to the CBI court on Wednesday and the Noida court on Tuesday. The AAP leader claimed that police was trying to arrest him in the case.

On Wednesday, he alleged that the Delhi Police was framing him in a false case.

In a letter sent to Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora via email, the Okhla MLA claimed that he was in his constituency and not on the run.

# Court grants bail to DUSIB's legal officer in bribery case

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has granted bail to Vijay Maggo, a legal officer of the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) and a "middleman" arrested for allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs 5 lakh to unseal two shops of a businessman here, saying that the trial was bound to take time. Special Judge

Sudhanshu Kaushik passed the order on February 13, noting that the accused was arrested on November 8, 2024 and said that his custody and interrogation was not required in the case further.

The judge further noted that the chargesheet was already filed and the court had taken cognisance of it. "I am of the considered opinion that in these cir-

cumstances, no purpose is going to be served by keeping the applicant further detained in custody. Keeping in view this fact and taking note of the period of custody, applicant/accused Vijay Kumar Maggo is admitted to bail," the judge said. The judge granted the relief to the accused on a personal bond of Rs 1 lakh with two sureties each of the like amount.

# RBI SUPERSEDES NEW INDIA COOPERATIVE BANK BOARD, IMPOSES RESTRICTIONS

RBI appoints ex-SBI GM Shreekant as Administrator to oversee operations.

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has superseded the Board of Directors of New India Cooperative Bank Ltd, Mumbai, for a period of 12 months, the central bank announced in a statement on Friday. This decision came a day after the RBI imposed several restrictions on the lender.

As a consequence, the RBI has appointed Shreekant, former Chief General Manager of the State Bank of India (SBI), as the 'Administrator' to oversee the bank's operations during this period. Additionally, a 'Committee of Advisors' has been formed to assist the Administrator in his duties. The members of this committee include Ravindra Sapra (former General Manager, SBI) and Abhijeet Deshmukh (Chartered Accountant).

The RBI stated that this action was necessary "due to certain material concerns emanating from poor governance standards observed" in the Mumbai-headquartered bank.

Following the RBI's announcement, hundreds of customers gathered outside branches of New India Cooperative Bank Ltd in Mumbai, seeking to withdraw their savings. Panicked account holders expressed concern

KEY POINTS

- **RBI takes over:** RBI supersedes the bank's board for 12 months, appoints Shreekant as Administrator with an advisory committee.
- **Strict banking curbs imposed:** No loans, investments, or fresh deposits without RBI approval; only essential expenses allowed.
- **Customer panic:** Hundreds rush to withdraw savings; officials assure locker access but withdrawal limits remain.
- **Deposit insurance:** Depositors can claim up to Rs 5 lakh; RBI denies license cancellation and will monitor closely.

over their bank deposits and lockers. Bank officials have reportedly assured customers that they will have access to their lockers.

Late on Thursday, the RBI directed that New India Cooperative Bank Ltd, Mumbai, shall not, without prior written approval from the central bank, grant or renew any loans and advances, make any investment, incur any liability, including borrowing funds and accepting fresh deposits, or disburse any payment, whether in discharge of its liabilities or obligations, or otherwise. Furthermore, the bank is prohibited from entering into any compromise or arrangement and from selling, transferring, or disposing of any of its properties or assets, except as notified by the RBI.

Considering the cooperative bank's liquidity posi-

tion, the RBI has restricted withdrawals from savings and current accounts or any other depositor accounts. However, depositors are allowed to set off loans against deposits, subject to RBI conditions. The bank is permitted to incur expenditures for essential items such as employee salaries, rent, and electricity bills, but only within RBI-specified limits.

These restrictions were imposed due to supervisory concerns arising from recent material developments in the bank and to protect depositors' interests. The RBI clarified that eligible depositors would receive their deposit insurance claim amount of up to Rs 5 lakh from the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) as per the provisions of the DICGC Act, 1961. Depositors have been advised to contact bank of-

ficials for further details, which are also available on the DICGC website.

The RBI also emphasized that the imposition of these restrictions should not be interpreted as the cancellation of the bank's license. The bank will continue to undertake banking activities within the specified restrictions until its financial position improves. The central bank stated that it would monitor the bank's situation closely and take further actions, including modifying these directions, if necessary, in the interest of depositors.

These restrictions on New India Cooperative Bank Ltd, Mumbai, will remain in force for six months from the close of business on February 13, 2025, and are subject to review.

The bank, established over four decades ago, operates 30 branches across Mum-



bai, Thane, Surat, and Pune. It was granted "scheduled bank" status on November 1, 1990, and achieved "multi-state" status on October 22, 1999.

Customers, expressing their distress, said about the financial hardships caused by the restrictions. Account holders, including senior citizens, raised concerns about their ability to access funds for essential expenses such as education fees and medical bills. Several customers lamented the lack of prior communication from the bank about the impending restrictions. Others questioned the credibility of banking institutions, pointing out that small account holders are the most affected.

Some customers reported that bank officials assured them they would receive their money within 90 days, though they remained uncertain about the exact amount. Many account holders demanded clearer communication from the bank and the RBI regarding the withdrawal process and the timeline for relief.

As the crisis unfolds, affected customers are seeking clarity on the future of their deposits while the RBI continues to monitor the bank's financial health and compliance with regulatory measures.

# Tata Group Chairman conferred with UK Knighthood

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Tata Group Chairman Natarajan Chandrasekaran has been felicitated with 'The most excellent order of the British Empire (Civil Division)' in recognition of his contributions, and services to the United Kingdom and India business relations, as per a British Government's official statement.

"I am deeply humbled by this prestigious recognition, for which I am grateful to His Majesty, King Charles. I would like to express how proud we are at the Tata Group to maintain such a strong strategic relationship with the UK across the technology, consumer, hospitality, steel, chemicals, and automotive sectors," Chandrasekaran said on the occasion.

"We are incredibly proud of our iconic British brands like Jaguar Land Rover and Tetley. We employ more than 70,000 people in the UK. We enjoy fruitful and world-class research and academic partnerships with great institutions in this country which include the University of Oxford, the London School of Economics, the University of Warwick and the University of Swansea," he stated.

"I would also like to express, on behalf of the Tata Group, my deep thanks to HM Government for their support for the Group. It



*He joined the Board of Tata Sons in October 2016 and was appointed Chairman in January 2017.*

is a strong and enduring relationship, and I look forward to strengthening our presence in the UK further. Thank you once again for paying me this great honour," the Tata Group Chairman said.

Chandrasekaran is Chairman of the Board of Tata Sons, the holding company and promoter of more than 100 Tata operating companies with aggregate annual revenues of more than USD 100 billion, according to the information provided on the website of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS). He joined the Board of Tata Sons in October 2016 and was appointed Chairman in January 2017.

Chandrasekaran is an active member of India's bi-

lateral business forums including USA, UK, Australia and Japan. He served as the chairman of NASSCOM, the apex trade body for IT services firms in India in 2012-13.

He is Chairman of the Board of Tata Sons, the holding company and promoter of more than 100 Tata operating companies with aggregate annual revenues of more than USD 100 billion. He joined the Board of Tata Sons in October 2016 and was appointed Chairman in January 2017.

He also chairs the Boards of several group operating companies, including Tata Steel, Tata Motors, Tata Power, and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) - of which he was Chief Executive Officer from 2009-17, as per the TCS.

His appointment as Chairman followed a 30-year business career at TCS, which he joined from university. Chandrasekaran rose through the ranks at TCS to become CEO and Managing Director of the leading global IT solution and consulting firm.

# Indian shares log weekly losses over Trump's tariff reciprocity plans

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Failing to maintain the morning session gains, Indian stock indices closed Friday's session and the week in red. This marked eight consecutive sessions of decline in the domestic equity market indices, data showed.

Sensex closed at 75,939.21 points, down 199.76 points

or 0.26 per cent, while Nifty closed at 22,929.25 points, down 102.15 points or 0.44 per cent. Nifty auto, media, metal, pharma, PSU bank, realty, consumer durables, and oil and gas were the top losers among sectoral indices, NSE data showed.

"Relentless FII selling, coupled with mixed earnings, has put bulls on the defensive," said Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare

Broking Ltd.

Domestic stock markets continued to decline over Trump's tariff concerns and continued outflow of foreign portfolios from India for the second month.

US President Donald Trump reiterated his stance on tariff reciprocity in the joint press conference with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, emphasising that the United States will match

tariffs imposed by other countries, including India, to ensure fair trade.

After the Trump-Modi meeting, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said that the two leaders have agreed to start discussing trade and tariff-related issues.

"President Trump's threat of reciprocal tariffs to be levied on trading partners in the months ahead would hit the roughly USD 600

billion worth of goods imported from European Union member states in 2024. In Europe, European stock markets have hit record highs earlier this week. News from Asia, India and the US will work to more than double bilateral trade to USD 500 billion by 2030," said Shrikant Chouhan, Head Equity Research, Kotak Securities.

Vinit Bolinjkar, Head of

Research at Ventura Securities said global macro uncertainties and mixed earnings kept investors wary.

"Going forward, market direction will hinge on global trade developments, earnings outcomes, and sectoral momentum. A selective approach, focusing on fundamentally strong businesses, is advisable amid near-term volatility," Bolinjkar said.

Sensex is now about 10,000 points below its all-time high of 85,978 points. Sensex has so far slumped over 3 per cent this New Year.

Weak domestic economic growth, selling by foreign portfolio investors, have also been reflecting on the stock markets.

The recent RBI repo rate cut failed to cheer markets, amid volatility world over.

In 2024, Sensex and Nifty accumulated a growth of about 9-10 per cent each. In 2023, Sensex and Nifty gained 16-17 per cent, on a cumulative basis. In 2022, they gained a mere 3 per cent each. Weak GDP growth, foreign fund outflows, rising food prices, and slow consumption were some of the hurdles, keeping many investors at bay in 2024.

## INDIA ENERGY WEEK 2025

# Hardeep Puri emphasises commitment to attract investors

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Hardeep Singh Puri, Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, on Friday reiterated India's dedication to fostering a stable, predictable, and growth-oriented business environment in the energy market. Participating in a discussion on the sidelines of India Energy Week 2025 in New Delhi, the Minister highlighted the government's efforts to ensure ease of business in the sector, referring to the Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Amendment Bill, 2024, which was tabled in Parliament.

Puri stated that the government's initiatives are aimed at attracting international investments and strengthening India's standing in the global energy landscape. He stressed that enacting the new law would eliminate unpredictability and boost confidence in the sector.

The Minister also underlined India's rapidly expanding energy demands, driven by the country's ambition to become a developed nation by 2047, which would create significant opportunities in both traditional and green energy sectors. He emphasised that India's approach



Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Hardeep Singh Puri chairs a ministerial meeting on 'Clean Cooking' during 'India Energy Week 2025', in New Delhi on Wednesday. ANI

goes beyond securing its energy future, as the country actively contributes to the global energy market by collaborating with nations such as Italy, the UK, Brazil, and the Middle East in clean energy technologies.

Puri also reaffirmed India's willingness to share its innovative solutions with the world, particularly in clean cooking and energy-efficient products, which have the potential to be scaled internationally to aid the global transition to cleaner energy.

Speaking on India's collaborative efforts, he stated,

"Apart from the discussions taking place in Washington, one of them said that the USIBC (US-India Business Council) wants to set up a small informal working group with us to look at the application of AI. The words which struck me from that conversation were frugality, efficiency, and innovation. So, it's a very positive thing. Today, we've had fantastic meetings with the USIBC. We've had excellent meetings with representatives and ministers from the Gulf, people from Latin America, Petrosbras, and Oil India Ltd."

# Experts stress policy coordination for CGD expansion

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Stakeholders in India's City Gas Distribution (CGD) sector convened for a panel discussion at India Energy Week 2025 to explore strategies for expanding and optimizing the CGD network. The panel, titled "Optimising India's Transformative

## 'Scaling solar-based technologies can transform agricultural productivity'

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NEW DELHI

Experts at India Energy Week 2025 emphasized the importance of scaling solar energy solutions to enhance agricultural productivity, reduce costs, and integrate food and energy security. The panel discussion, titled "Solar-Based Farm Mechanisation for Transforming Agriculture Across the Global South," featured insights from key industry leaders.

Ajay Mathur, Director General of the International Solar Alliance, outlined key solar-based technologies, including solar pumps, solar cold storage, agri-PV systems, and electric tractors. He stressed that financing models must evolve to attract global investors.

Swati Agarwal of OAK Foundation highlighted the need for policies supporting the local workforce and balancing capacity-building efforts with crop selection, ensuring solar energy aligns with agricultural practices.

City Gas Distribution Model to Deliver the Benefits of a Robust and Secure Gas-Based Economy," featured industry leaders who emphasized policy coordination, investment in digital solutions, and innovative financial models.

Goutom Chakraborty, CEO of GAIL Gas Limited, noted that despite its slow

start, the sector has grown by 10% over the past five to six years. Kamal Kishore Chatiwal, MD of Indraprastha Gas Limited, highlighted the sector's evolution, with the number of gas stations increasing from 66 to 307 over the last decade. N Senthil Kumar, Director-Pipelines at Indian Oil Corporation,

stressed the importance of supply security and the need to double storage capacity and expand the gas grid.

Other key discussions focused on infrastructure challenges, including the difficulty in obtaining municipal clearances for pipeline installation and the limited availability of land

for CNG plants.

Digital analytics emerged as a crucial tool for improving efficiency. Chakraborty advocated for prepaid meters to monitor consumption patterns and protect revenues, while Mediratta and Mehrotra emphasized AI-driven demand-supply management and smart metering.

## Future is LNG

Sanjeev Kumar Bhatia, Executive Director of Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL), emphasized the growing importance of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) in India's energy transition at India Energy Week 2025.

Speaking to ANI, Bhatia explained that IGL is leveraging agricultural waste and other free stock to produce Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG), which can be supplied through pipelines or used as vehicle fuel. "CBG is essentially methane, a natural gas. Now, we can directly supply this gas through a pipeline or our outlets for vehicles," he said.

While the current focus is on CBG, Bhatia stated that "the future is LNG," reinforcing the long-term role of natural gas in India's energy mix.

# India cements its position as leader

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

On the final day of the third edition of India Energy Week 2025, Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Puri highlighted the event's success, which exceeded expectations in terms of participation, exhibitor numbers, and technical paper submissions.

The world's second-largest energy event concluded successfully, hosting over 70,000 visitors, 600 exhibitors, and ten international pavilions over four days. With nine dedicated themes, the event

showcased key innovations, strategic collaborations, and policy insights that are shaping the global energy landscape.

Puri noted that in just three years, India Energy Week has established itself as the world's second-largest energy platform, with the fourth edition set to take place in Goa in 2026. Unlike other global energy forums, IEW 2025 facilitated actual business transactions rather than merely serving as a networking platform.

The Minister specifically highlighted practical innovations, such as a cost-effective

conversion kit demonstrated at the HPCL stall, which enables biofuel usage in two and three-wheelers. He also noted the convergence of investors, manufacturers, and consumers, particularly in the display of flex fuel vehicles.

Speaking on India-US energy cooperation, Puri emphasized the substantial progress in bilateral relations, particularly in the natural gas sector. He highlighted India's target of increasing natural gas consumption from its current 6% to 15% in its energy mix, reinforcing the strategic importance of LNG imports from the United States.

# COMMONPLACE INSTITUTIONS OFTEN DO BETTER VALUE ADDITION THAN THE ELITE

OPINION

FURQAN QAMAR



The excellence of higher education institutions, both in India and internationally, is invariably determined by their reputation and prestige within society, the placement and progression of their students, and the research contributions of their researchers and faculty members, which manifest in publications, patents, and the monetisation of intellectual property rights (IPRs).

Above all, their capacity to attract, retain, and nurture talented faculty and the brightest students, as reflected by a high selectivity rate measured by the seat-to-application ratio, plays a pivotal role in shaping the

perception of quality and excellence.

Such indicators of excellence bring exclusivity to higher education institutions, making them suffer from signalling and elitism biases. Such institutions seek to exclusively serve the social and economic elites by resorting to many means.

They restrict the entry of the masses by creating affordability barriers, such as levying superlatively high fees and user charges or devising selection criteria that tend to exclude the commoners, who constitute a dominant section of society.

Such institutions tend to exclude individuals through legacy admissions, favouring students from superior schools with elite upbringing, language fluency, social endowment, and networks.

Favouring faculty with foreign qualifications or hiring leadership, governance, and management teams with urban and elitist biases further perpetuates exclusion. Moreover, allowing pupils with the potential to succeed and excel in life into their portals

further enhances their perception of excellence.

Assessing excellence using metrics such as these may not present much of a challenge in advanced countries, where income distribution is nearly equal and which possesses egalitarian attributes. The majority can afford and access excellence, with only a minuscule number being more equal than the rest.

Extending the idea to a developing economy with substantial income inequality presents a challenge. It may lead to heightened income inequality, increased concentration of wealth, and considerable restrictions on access to opportunities.

Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), the National Institutes of Technology (NITs), the Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIITs), the Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISERs), the Institutions of Eminence (IoE), and the central universities (CUs), the usual claimants of excellence, for example, gobble up ..... percent of the central government funds for higher education, serve no more than ..... percent of the higher education students population and employ only ..... percent of teachers in higher education.

In stark contrast, close to .... percent of students in higher education are served by a

multitude of small, underfunded, disadvantaged, and resource-poor higher education institutions. They are often mocked for mimicking higher education and good-for-nothing institutions.

They encompass the majority of publicly funded state universities, private universities, most deemed universities, higher education colleges, and independent institutions of various types.

The public-funded ones are reeling under resource constraints. They are barely able to maintain their existing infrastructure and are rarely in a position to create new ones. Known for their hand-to-mouth existence, they scrap monthly to pay their pension and salary liabilities.

They survive on self-financed programmes, sections and seats, for which they charge paltry fees from their students compared to elite institutions. They may, for instance, charge no more than five percent for their postgraduate management programme compared to any of the IIMs.

With their limited resources, they can hardly create and maintain a decent infrastructure. They also can't afford the prevailing market salaries for highly qualified faculty and are barred from creating regular faculty positions for their self-financed programmes.

For various reasons, they cannot even fill the existing faculty positions. As a result, nearly sixty percent of teaching in these institutions is done by guest, part-time and visiting faculty.

Except for a few, the country's typical private universities are in a precarious situation. They receive no financial support from funding agencies and must survive on revenue generated internally, mostly from student fees. Few have any endowment or societal contribution to supplement their efforts.

Most are hard-pressed to make their ends meet. They can't charge high fees and must fill all their sanctioned seats and more to break even. With limited resources, they can hire only as many faculty members as are mandatory by the regulatory bodies and are often able to pay only the bare minimum prescribed salaries.

Despite these limitations, non-elite institutions offer higher education opportunities to individuals from the middle and lower tiers of society. They may struggle to attract top faculty and the most talented students. Nevertheless, they dedicate their energy, time, and resources to support these students throughout their studies.

They may not be exemplary in the elitist sense of the term, but they do play a vital role in nation-building.

They transform their raw materials using somewhat antiquated tools through simple processes and are able to produce a product that is polished enough to meet an essential societal need.

When assessing the value added by higher education institutions in the lives of their students, it is likely that non-elite institutions contribute the most. They do real value addition by bettering their academic records over their past performance and making them ready for jobs that may not be the best by the market but at least the average.

In any case, their value addition can be best appreciated because they care for the lower middle class, if not the poor and marginalised. They could have otherwise remained only school graduates. After all, in a country where some sixty-five percent of the population has to be provided free food grains to help them survive, not many can afford elite higher education.

*Furqan Qamar, a former Professor of Management at Jamia Millia Islamia in New Delhi, has served as an Adviser (Education) in the Planning Commission, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Rajasthan and the Central University of Himachal Pradesh, and Secretary-General of the Association of Indian Universities (AIU).*

PERSPECTIVE

## AJAI RAJ SHARMA, AMONGST THE MOST ACCOMPLISHED OFFICERS

Without doubt, Ajai Raj Sharma, who passed away on Monday, was amongst the most distinguished police officers in the country. A former Delhi Police Commissioner and Head of the Border Security Force, he spent more time in the field than anyone else in the IPS. Therefore, it was no wonder that his exploits, in the form of a book he wrote some years ago, demonstrate the kind of cop he was. Often referred to by many of his contemporaries as 'The Dirty Harry', Sharma served in the most difficult districts of Uttar Pradesh such as Agra, Farukhhabad, Banda, Allahabad, Varanasi and Meerut. He had been handpicked by two Chief Ministers while he was in Uttar Pradesh to bring back some semblance in the State. Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna had asked Sharma to eliminate Jarman Singh, a dreaded dacoit, who had even challenged the might of the State in Farukhhabad. He not only accomplished the task but also broke the backbone of the gang which had created a reign of terror. Kalyan Singh had similarly engaged him to take out Siri Prakash Shukla, the young outlaw from Gorakhpur, who during his brief career had accepted a supari to finish off the CM. Shukla was tracked through his mobile phone and killed in an encounter on the Delhi-Ghaziabad border. Sharma used to often speak about the importance of informers, who essentially were the most effective tools of any police department. They helped in gathering local intelligence and often provided tips which were necessary and vital.

It was because of such a tip off that Jarman Singh had been wiped out. He would also tell young officers that there was no short cut to policing which involved extensive ground work and field experience. Without being there themselves, they should not expect that the force would perform. The men had to be led from the front and that is what Ajai Raj Sharma did in his entire life. He had come to Delhi police when there appeared to be a divide amongst the seniors. He was a 1966 batch IPS officer who was brought to Delhi by the then Home Minister Lal Krishna Advani to streamline the functioning of Delhi police. There were many who did not give him much of a chance since they considered him to be 'an outsider' little realizing that he was the finest of the finest and could instill a professional belief in the force. It was with in no time that he asserted his supremacy and brought in the much-needed discipline so work as work ethics goes. He was at the helm of affairs when the Parliament attack took place in 2001 and was also looking after the investigations of the Cricket scandal that broke out during the period when South African skipper Hansie Cronje was named as an accused in the betting and match fixing racket. A man with a deep sonorous voice, Sharma was never reluctant to call a spade a spade and his no nonsense approach earned him the respect of one and all.

He may have not been as celebrated as many of his IPS colleagues, but so far as performance and work was concerned, he was second to none if not better than many. Sharma, had a love for the uniform and also a special respect for the customs and traditions. He would never miss out on the Delhi police raising day and even when he was unable to walk due to a knee surgery which may have been botched, he always showed up at events. My last meeting with him took place by chance some months ago at Khan Market where he was moving around with assistance, but was all the same very much enjoying his outing. He had so many anecdotes to narrate, and each one can serve as a lesson for younger colleagues.

Many of his stories were put together in a book, 'Biting the Bullet', published by Rupa and which was released by former Delhi Lt. Governor Vijai Kapoor at the India International Centre. Kapoor was generous in his praise for Sharma's competence and ability and even after hearing about his passing away, stated there were not many in the police who could match him in any manner. These words coming from an accomplished bureaucrat like Kapoor carry a lot of weight. Sharma's three years in office were also amongst the best the Delhi police had, and the force improved tremendously during his tenure. A proud Brahmin, Sharma would often greet others from his community by invoking the name of Lord Parshuram. It did not mean that he did not care for other castes which were as important to him as his own when it came to a professional approach. In his eyes, law was equal for everybody.

Like every other force, the Delhi police has evolved with the passage of time. Officers have come and gone, with some of them also leaving their distinct imprint. Sharma's tenure was exceptional and for an outsider to come and tame a force which always considered itself to be a cut above the rest, was a no mean achievement. Sharma shall be remembered for his courage, devotion and professionalism. He was admitted to a hospital in Noida where he breathed his last. His police acumen and his book should serve as a guide to young officers of every rank. His life was dedicated to Khaki. Shall miss you Sir. Rest in peace.

PANKAJ VOHRA

# A sweet sonata!: 'Sonny Boy' by Al Pacino

OPINION

HIMANSHU DHULIYA



This is an autobiography of my Hero whom I have followed closely since the time I saw the two Godfather films. Such a subtle and subdued performance! The radiance in his silences made me his admirer forever. I followed his films and whatever was being written about him with a fan's devotion. He gives an honest account of himself and the reader gets to understand the depth of the artist! His parents had married when they were very young and as soon as when Al was born his father had left his mother. She brings up Al on her own, she would take him with her to the movies and on return he would enact those scenes to the delight of his mother and grand parents.

Mother never marries again, suffers from anxiety and depression. The book's title 'Sonny Boy' is the name by which his mother used to call him, which was from a film song she would sing.

His father has also been in touch with him. One of the cherished memories he has is of his mother and father walking back home after cinema with Al in between both holding his hand and then dining together.

He is admired by his classmates for his acting abilities and his teacher insists that he continues with acting. After the school production of 'The King and I' a school student told him 'Hey you are the next Marlon Brando'. His junior High school teacher came home and advised his mother that Al must continue with acting.

He gets selected to the school of performing Arts and does well, is also elected by the students as a 'student who is likely to succeed in life'. Unfortunately he is unable to study till High School because of his financial condition, does various odd jobs but continues to learn himself. There was this deep desire to support his mother who needs good medicines on account of her depression and dies eventually of probable drug overdose. He copes by drinking and walking in the streets of Manhattan alone, often reciting famous monologues in a loud voice! Would sit in the library for warmth and becomes a voracious reader. Early in his life he had seen the play 'Seagull' by Anton Chekov and was

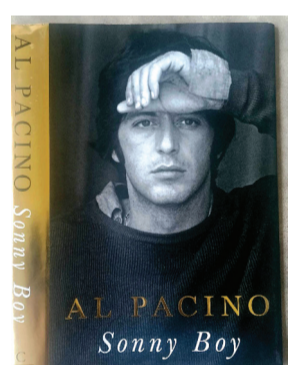
tremendously moved by it. Chekov becomes his Guru.

He finds a friend and acting coach in Charlie Loughton whose literary knowledge and intelligence impress, he predicts his stardom says that he would be a big star one day, though normally he would not say such things. Al replies that he was aware of it! In the city of New York he performs in small theatres and at village cafes. Earning money by passing the hat after the performance and doing plays of - Sartre, Ibsen, Bertold Brecht, Chekov and others.

During the enactment of Strindberg's play 'Creditors' there was a moment of 'self realization' which gives him confidence energy and reassurance, not to look back but to move ahead. The play, 'Indian wants the Bronx' makes him famous. He then performs 'Does a Tiger wear a necktie?' at Broadway and does well, wins Tony Award. His performance is seen by Francis Ford Coppola. Martin Bergman a popular producer and manager identifies him and casts him in a junkie film 'Panic in the needle park'. The film was received well and Pachino makes an impact. Then Godfather happened. He is surprised to be offered Michael's role, after initial reluctance by the studio who were not keen on him but only Francis was adamant, he passes the test. The success of Godfather makes him a star. He is unable to cope with attention and adulation. No body could help him, even Lee Strasberg advised him to adjust! He took to heavy drinking and drugs and becomes a

recluse, not a party man, has very limited friends circle. He is nominated for Oscars and does not attend the ceremony. After the success of Godfather he does 'Serpico', 'Dog Day afternoon' and 'And Justice for all' and all are successful and he is nominated for Oscars in all of them, does attend Academy award function on the insistence of his manager. His cinematic journey thereafter is in public domain. A few failures prompt him to take a four year break during which he does private film, theatre, seminar etc but then he is in financial crisis and returns to films with 'A sea of Love' and continues making good and moderate films, some for money and some for Art. Devotes much time in theatre and making private films. His labour of love is 'Looking for Richards' which is critical success but is not widely seen. At the age of 83 also he is excited about doing 'King Lear' which his admirers await anxiously.

There exists deep belief in



him of God; a spirit which is with him and blesses him which he acknowledges but is not exhibitive. Has no attraction for money and therefore no great interest in making money, wants to be an artist and contribute to Art even after spending his own money which he does by making private movies. States with seriousness that he would have preferred marrying a seamstress and having ten children leading a life in theatre; out of media glare.

He was an artist, could have been a musician; he played piano and carried his classical album collections and books. Admits of having 'avant-garde' influences. At Lee Strasberg's 'Actors' Studio' he satisfied his artistic urges.

Certain ethics he follows. It started as a young boy of six when he returns from his first day of school, tells his grand father that he saw a boy doing something very bad and he reported to the teacher and the boy was punished. His grandfather said 'So you are a rat?'. It hit him hard and since then he never 'ratted' on anyone. Would make a clear distinction between work and personal life and never let his work affect his romance and personal life. Work was first. Seeks Psychiatric help and gradually left drinking. He never touches cocaine and kept away from heroin even when his three childhood friends were addicted and died of overdose.

He has had many partners and relationships in his long career at various junctures and admits that he likes women but he never woos anyone with a boyfriend or husband.

Born in South Bronx, New York was his home. He is unable to adjust in the glamour, gossip and the frothy world of LA. The power of media shocks him.

Among the Actors he admired - Marlon Brando, Richard Burton, Montgomery Clift and James Dean. He admires the courage and genius of Orson Welles. Among his contemporaries he is full of praise for Dustin Hoffman and Robert De Nero and is particularly fond of Robert De Nero with whom he is compared.

Al Pachino states at more than one place in the book about his high energy levels. He admits casually that he makes up for his lack of intelligence with his energy! He also is surprised to reach an age of more than eighty and still not feeling old.

He exonerates his father. However, he looks out for 'father figures' - Charlie, Martin Bregman and Lee Strasberg! He calls them 'surrogates for father'. His father leaving his mother affects him life long - 'suspicion of marriage'. He has numerous relationships, comes close to marrying and yet shies away, calling marriage - 'pain train'. He has children from his relationships, four from three partners, is a doting father and cares for his children, shuttles between work and parent responsibilities dutifully, but never marries!

His mother is central to his life. He ends the book saying: "All I want is the chance to walk up to her, look in her eyes, and simply say - 'Hey, Ma, see what happened to me?'"

A 'masterclass' for Art lovers and 'Stars' of Indian cinema!



# INDIA'S AIR SUPERIORITY GAMBLE



*merica is gearing up to provide India with one of the most advanced fighter jets in the world, the F-35. This isn't just about selling aircraft, it's about deepening U.S.-India defence ties, reshaping military power in South Asia, and sparking reactions from neighbouring Pakistan, which fears the move could tip the regional balance.*

RUCHIRA TALAPATRA  
NEW DELHI

In a significant development, U.S. President Donald Trump announced plans to bolster military sales to India, including the provision of F-35 stealth fighter jets. This move has elicited concerns from Pakistan, which fears potential disruptions to the regional military balance and the undermining of strategic stability in South Asia.

## PAKISTAN'S CONCERNS

Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) expressed deep apprehension regarding the proposed transfer of advanced military technologies to India. A spokesperson from MOFA stated, "Pakistan is deeply concerned over the planned transfer of advanced military technologies to India. Such steps accentuate military imbalances in the region and undermine strategic stability."

The spokesperson further urged international partners to adopt a holistic and objective perspective on South Asian peace and security issues, cautioning against endorsing positions that are one-sided and deviate from ground realities.

## U.S.-INDIA DEFENCE COLLABORATION

During a joint press conference with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, President Trump highlighted the strengthening defense ties between the two nations. He remarked, "Starting this year, we will be increasing military sales to India by many billions of dollars. We are also paving the way to ultimately provide India with the F-35, Stealth fighters."

This announcement underscores the deepening strategic partnership between the U.S. and India, particularly in defense and security domains. In response to inquiries about India's potential acquisition of F-35s, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri clarified that the formal procurement process had not yet commenced. He explained, "On military sales to India, there is a process by which platforms are acquired. There is, in most cases, a request for proposals that is floated. There are responses to those. They are evaluated. I don't think with regard to the acquisition of an advanced aviation platform by India, that process has started yet. So, this is currently something that's at the stage of a proposal. But I don't think the formal process in this regard has started yet."



US F-35A Lightning II fighter aircraft takes off during the airshow at 'Aero India 2025', at Yelahanka Air Force Station in Bengaluru on Thursday. ANI



The J-31 (FC-31) stealth fighter was first unveiled in 2012, and Pakistan's Air Force Chief recently confirmed plans to acquire it in 2024. Chief of Army Staff Qamar Javed Bajwa meeting China's military leadership. Inter-Services Public Relations

## AUTONOMOUS SYSTEMS INDUSTRY ALLIANCE (ASIA)

Furthering their defense cooperation, India and the U.S. have launched the Autonomous Systems Industry Alliance (ASIA). This initiative aims to scale industry partnerships and enhance the production of autonomous systems, with a specific focus on underwater domain awareness. The collaboration seeks to foster next-generation defense and technological advancements, reflecting the evolving nature of modern warfare and the emphasis on cutting-edge technology.

## MILITARY COOPERATION

The two nations have also discussed expanding military cooperation across various domains, including air, land, sea, space, and cyberspace. Emphasis has been placed on enhanced training, exercises, and operations that incorporate the latest technologies. A notable upcoming event is the "Tiger Triumph" tri-service exercise, scheduled to be held in India. This exercise

is anticipated to be larger in scale and complexity than previous editions, underscoring the commitment of both nations to deepening military collaboration.

## INTELLIGENCE SHARING

In support of overseas military deployments, India and the U.S. have committed to improving logistics, intelligence sharing, and force mobility in the Indo-Pacific region. These efforts fall under the "US-India COMPACT for the 21st Century" initiative, launched by PM Modi and President Trump. The initiative aims to drive change in "Military Partnership, Accelerated Commerce and Technology" between the two countries, reflecting a comprehensive approach to strengthening bilateral ties.

## EXTRADITION OF TAHAWWUR RANA

In a move signaling strong bilateral cooperation in counterterrorism, President Trump announced the approval of the extradition of Tahawwur Rana, accused in the 26/11 Mumbai terror

attacks, to India. He stated, "I am pleased to announce that my administration has approved the extradition of one of the plotters (Tahawwur Rana) and one of the very evil people of the world, having to do with the horrific 2008 Mumbai terrorist attack to face justice in India. He is going back to India to face justice."

Pakistani-origin businessman Tahawwur Hussain Rana was convicted for his role in the 26/11 attacks on Mumbai. Rana's co-conspirators included David Headley, who pleaded guilty and cooperated against Rana.

## JSF PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) program is the largest procurement initiative within the Department of Defense (DOD). The aircraft, also known as the Lightning II, is being procured in different versions for the U.S. Air Force, Marine Corps, and Navy.

The U.S. plans to acquire a total of 2,456 F-35s. Hundreds of additional F-35s are expected to be purchased by several U.S. allies, eight of which are cost-sharing partners in the program. The aircraft promises significant advances in mili-



U.S. President Donald Trump listens as Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks during a joint press conference at the White House in Washington, D.C., U.S., February 13, 2025. REUTERS/Nathan Howard



Trump approves Tahawwur Rana's extradition to India for 26/11 Mumbai attacks. rediff.com

tary capability but has faced budget overruns and schedule delays.

## CONGRESSIONAL DEBATES

The administration's proposed FY2010 defense budget requested about \$10.4 billion in research and development and procurement funding for the F-35 JSF program. This budget included funds for the procurement of 10 F-35As for the Air Force, 16 F-35Bs for the Marine Corps, and four F-35Cs for the Navy.

## PROCUREMENT

Past DOD plans have contemplated increasing the procurement rate of F-35As for the Air Force to a sustained rate of 80 aircraft per year by FY2015 and completing the planned procurement of 1,763 F-35As by about FY2034. Plans also called for

increasing the procurement rate of F-35Bs and Cs for the Marine Corps and Navy to a combined sustained rate of 50 aircraft per year by about FY2014, with completion by FY2025.

## STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The proposed sale of F-35 stealth fighter jets to India has significant implications for the regional power dynamics in South Asia. Pakistan has expressed concerns that this move could disrupt the military balance and undermine strategic stability in the region. The introduction of advanced military technologies to India may compel Pakistan to seek similar capabilities, potentially leading to an arms race. Moreover, this development could influence Pakistan's defense strategies and its

reliance on alliances with other nations, such as China, to counterbalance India's enhanced military capabilities.

## INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

The international community is closely monitoring the deepening U.S.-India defense collaboration. While some nations view this partnership as a means to promote stability and counterbalance rising powers in the Indo-Pacific region, others are cautious about the potential for escalating tensions in South Asia. The U.S. has emphasized that its defense cooperation with India aims to enhance regional security and is not directed against any specific country. However, Pakistan and its allies may perceive this move as a shift in the regional power equilibrium, prompting them to reassess their strategic postures.

## THE SKY CHES

The skies above South Asia will now no longer just be a theater of commercial flights and meteorological patterns; they had become the frontline of an emerging power struggle. The world's military superpowers had their pieces in motion, each aiming to gain an edge in the aerial chessboard of the modern world.

As these deals materialize, military analysts predict a major shift in global air combat strategy. Would the Indo-Pacific region see an arms race akin to the Cold War? Would the skies over South Asia become a proving ground for the world's most advanced fighter jets?

One thing is certain—air superiority was no longer just about who had the better aircraft. It was about alliances, technological advancements, and strategic foresight. In this high-stakes game of aerial dominance, nations had to play their cards wisely, for the battle for the skies had just begun.



F-35 fighter aircraft and F-16 fighter jets on display at the Aero India 2023, in Bengaluru on 13 Feb, 2023. ANI

# SUPREME COURT DISMISSES PLEA OF JAYALALITHAA'S NIECE FOR RETURN OF PROPERTIES CONFISCATED IN DISPROPORTIONATE ASSETS CASE

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case *J Deepa vs The Superintendent of Police* observed and has dismissed a petition filed by J Deepa, the niece of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalithaa, wherein seeking the return of the properties confiscated in the disproportionate assets case against Jayalithaa.

The bench comprising of Justice BV Nagarathna and Justice Satish Chandra Sharma was hearing the present matter.

The bench in the case refused to interfere with the Karnataka High Court's order, wherein the court

refused to release Jayalithaa's assets to her heirs.

The argument of the petitioner before the court is that since the criminal case against Jayalithaa got abated following her death in December 2016, her assets seized during the proceedings have to be released.

In September 2014, the Trial Court convicted Jayalithaa for the offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act and she was sentenced to undergo simple imprisonment for a period of four years and pay a fine of Rs.100 crores.

In 2015, the Karnataka High Court set aside the conviction and acquitted her. While the State's petition challenging the High



Court's acquittal was pending in the Supreme Court, the AIADMK supreme passed away in December 2015.

In February 2017, the Supreme Court recorded that the appeal against Jaya-

lithaa stood abated and restored the conviction to the other accused.

The petitioner in the plea contended that, 'In respect of Dr. J. Jayalitha who was arrayed as A 1, the Criminal Appeal stood abated

*The Karnataka High Court in the case rejected the appeal of J Deepa's wherein the court observed that there was a clear finding recorded by the Supreme Court that the order of confiscation and other directions have to be adhered to by all concerned, including the LRs (Legal Representatives) of deceased AI (Jayalalithaa).*

and the direction of the Ld. Special Court towards confiscation/forfeiture of the attached property in SPL C.C No. 208 of 2004 is limited only to A 2 to A 4 and it is not applicable to Dr. J. Jayalitha.'

It has also been pointed out by her before the court that the Madras High Court had recognized her and her brother as the legal heirs of Jayalithaa and granted them letters of administration with respect to the properties of their aunt.

The Karnataka High Court in the case rejected the appeal of J Deepa's wherein the court observed that there was a clear finding recorded by the Supreme Court that the order of confiscation and other directions

have to be adhered to by all concerned, including the LRs (Legal Representatives) of deceased AI (Jayalalithaa).

The High Court in the case observed that, 'The apex court in its order in para no 536 took into consideration the development taken place that is the death of AI was cautious enough in observing that there is peremptory termination of criminal proceedings as regards AI is concerned. Despite considering the said aspect in para 536 of the order and in para 542, it has been specifically held that the trial court order is restored in full including consequential directions.'

Accordingly, the court dismissed the plea.

## Delhi High Court: Misuse of Section 498A of IPC does not mean genuine cases of harassment do not exist

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court in the case *Ajay Versus State And Anr* observed that the misuse of Section 498A of Indian Penal Code, 1860, IPC does not mean that genuine cases of harassment do not exist.

The bench headed by Justice Amit Mahajan stated that, 'This court is not blind to the ground reality of the deeply rooted social evil of greed for dowry, due to which, numerous victims are subjected to unspeakable conduct and harassment.'

The court in the case observed that in matter where vague allegations are made against the husband, that too belatedly, continuation of proceedings would amount to an abuse of the process of law.

The court stated that, 'The courts have taken note of the increasing tendency of implicating the husband and his family in



*The court stated that complaint seems to suggest that the petitioner refused to take dowry at the time of marriage and the rancour was between the petitioner's family and Respondent No.2.*

matrimonial litigation in a number of cases. While the provision of Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code, IPC was introduced with an object to combat harassment meted out to married woman.'

Adding to it, the court stated that it is abysmal to note that the same is now also being misused as a tool to harass the husband and his family members and gain a leverage and such kind of matters

are now filed in the heat of the moment on advice of counsel by exaggerating and misconstruing actual events.

The bench headed by Justice Mahajan quashed an FIR registered in 2017 against a husband for the offences under Section 498A (cruelty) of Indian Penal Code, IPC.

In the present matter, the First Information Report, FIR was registered at the behest of the wife against the husband and his family members alleging harassment on the ground of demand for dowry and for not returning her stridhan. The court in the case noted that the FIR was registered in 2017, more than years after the husband had filed a petition seeking divorce on the ground of cruelty.

The court observed that the allegations were made in the FIR against the husband and his family members in a sweeping manner.

Noting that chargesheet in the case was filed only against the husband and not his family members.

Further, the court stated that the current case as well, sweeping and omnibus allegations have been levelled against the petitioner.

No date or time or particulars of the alleged instances of demand for dowry or harassment have been specified in the FIR.

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case stated that no allegations were levelled in the FIR in relation to any threats, however, it could not be ignored that even in the complaint, no specific incident of harassment by the husband for dowry was spelt out.

The court stated that complaint seems to suggest that the petitioner refused to take dowry at the time of marriage and the rancour was between the petitioner's family and Respondent No.2.

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

Advocate Tejas Dhirenbbhai Karia sworn in as a judge of the Delhi High Court on February 14, 2025.

Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyay administered the oath of office. Advocate Tejas Dhirenbbhai Karia appointment was notified by the Central Government on February 13, 2025.

The Supreme Court Collegium had recommended the elevation of Advocate Tejas Dhirenbbhai Karia in August last year.

The Supreme Court Collegium had noted that Advocate Tejas Dhirenbbhai Karia is a domain expert in the law of arbitration.

The Supreme Court Collegium observed that since the volume of cases on arbitration law requires specialized handling, particularly, in the High Court of Delhi, Tejas Dhirenbbhai Karia will prove to be a valuable addition to the Bench of the High Court of Delhi.

The Supreme Court Collegium stated, while perusing the judgments in the cases which he has argued

that it is apparent that he has conducted issues of substance before the High Courts and other Courts, including the Supreme Court.

Advocate Tejas Dhirenbbhai Karia net professional income of Rs. 709.69 lakhs for the last five years is also indicative of the fact that the candidate has a substantial practice.

The Supreme Court Collegium stated that Advocate Tejas Dhirenbbhai Karia is eminently fit and suitable for appointment as a Judge of the High Court of Delhi.

## Supreme Court: Portion of Section 161 CrPC Statement Used To Contradict Witness Must Be Proved Through Investigating Officer And Marked

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case *Vinod Kumar versus State (Govt. of NCT of Delhi)* observed and has set aside the conviction under section 302 of Indian Penal Code, IPC of a man after noting that the trial court failed to follow the proper procedure for contradicting the prosecution witnesses in their cross-examination with their previously recorded Section 161 of Code of Criminal Procedure, Cr.P.C. statements.

The bench comprising of Justice Abhay S. Oka and Justice Ujjal Bhuyan was hearing the present matter. The bench in the case held that the trial court erred by merely reproducing the contradicted portions of the witness's Section 161 of Code of Criminal Procedure, Cr.P.C. statements in brackets without properly proving the prior statement through the investigating officer.

The court in the case emphasized that when a witness is cross-examined

using their Section 161 of Code of Criminal Procedure, Cr.P.C. statements, the specific portion used for contradiction must first be formally introduced as evidence through the investigating officer before it can be considered.

Further, the court stressed that the portion of the previous Section 161 of Code of Criminal Procedure, Cr.P.C. statement would be considered for contradiction only when they are proved through the investigation officer.

The court observed that, 'This court must refer to a peculiar practice followed by the Trial Court. PW-1 and PW-3 were confronted in the cross-examination with their statements recorded under Section 161 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, Cr.P.C. In the depositions, it is mentioned that the attention of the witness was invited to a particular portion of the prior statement. After recording the answer of the witness, the portion of the prior statement used to contradict

the witness has been reproduced in brackets. The law is well settled. The portion of the prior statement shown to the witness for contradicting the witness must be proved through the investigating officer. Unless the said portion of the prior statement used for contradiction is duly proved, it cannot be reproduced in the deposition of the witnesses. The correct procedure is that the Trial Judge should mark the portions of the prior statements used for contradicting the witness. The said portions can be put in bracket and marked as AA, BB, etc. The marked portions cannot form a part of the deposition unless the same are proved.'

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case observed and has quashed the impugned judgement and the appellant is acquitted of the offences alleged against him. The counsel, Mr. Mukesh K. Giri, AOR Mr. Mandaar Mukesh Giri, Adv. Ms. Amaya Giri, Adv.

## Ranveer Allahbadia approaches Supreme Court against multiple FIRs over obscenity allegations

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

The youtuber Ranveer Allahbadia, popularly known as Beer Biceps, has approached the Supreme Court wherein he seeks relief in respect of the multiple First Information Report, FIRs lodged against Ranveer Allahbadia in various states for the offence of obscenity over the statements made by him during the 'India Got Latent' show. The matter was mentioned before the Chief Justice of India, CJI Sanjiv

Khanna by Dr Abhinav Chandrachud on February 14, 2025.

Dr Abhinav Chandrachud stated that it was a petition under Article 32 of the Constitution of India.

The Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna stated that a date has already been given for the petition. Though Chandrachud said that there was an apprehension of coercive action by the Assam police, CJI Khanna did not say anything further.

The Chief Justice of India said that

he does not allow oral mentionings.

As of date, FIRs have been registered by the Maharashtra Police and Assam Police over the statements, which created a huge outrage after they became viral on the social media. Later, Ranveer Allahbadia issued a public apology, admitting that his comments were inappropriate. In 2024, Ranveer Allahbadia was presented the Disruptor of the Year award at the National Creators Award by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

### RANVEER ALLAHBADIA PETITIONS IN SUPREME COURT AS LEGAL TROUBLES MOUNT IN 'INDIA'S GOT LATENT SHOW'

After multiple complaints were filed and criminal proceedings were set aside in action across various states against Youtuber Ranveer Allahbadia over his vulgar and crass comments about parents on the comedy show 'India's Got Latent', the podcaster has petitioned the Supreme Court seeking protection from coercive action.

## Supreme Court: Money laundering serious offence, courts cannot grant bail casually without considering conditions under Section 45 of PMLA

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case *The Union Of India Through The Assistant Director Versus Kanhaiya Prasad* observed and has set aside the bail granted to the individual accused of committing money laundering after noting that the High Court failed to satisfy the twin conditions stipulated under Section 45 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002, PMLA.

The court stated that the conditions enumerated in Section 45 Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002, PMLA will have to be complied with even in re-

spect of application for bail made under Section 439 of Code of Criminal Procedure, Cr.P.C.

The Section 24 provides that in case of a person charged with the offence of money-laundering under Section 3, the Authority or Court shall, unless the contrary is proved, presume that such proceeds of crime are involved in money-laundering. Therefore, the burden to prove that proceeds of crime are not involved in money laundering would lie on the person charged with the offence.

The Supreme Court, 'Criticising the Patna High Court for its "casual and cavalier"

order observed:

'The High Court in a very casual and cavalier manner, without considering the rigours of Section 45 granted bail to the respondent on absolutely extraneous and irrelevant considerations. There is no finding whatsoever recorded in the impugned order that there were reasonable grounds for believing that the respondent was not guilty of the alleged offence under the Act and that he was not likely to commit any offence while on bail. Noncompliance of the mandatory requirement of Section 45 has, on the face of it, made the impugned order unsustainable and untenable

in the eye of law.'

The court observed that the money laundering was not an ordinary offence and was a serious offence having transnational impact on financial systems including sovereignty and integrity of the countries. The court stated that, 'Any casual or cursory approach by the Courts while considering the bail application of the offender involved in the offence of money laundering and granting him bail by passing cryptic orders without considering the seriousness of the crime and without considering the rigours of Section 45 of Prevention of Money Laundering Act, PMLA.'

The Section 45 of Prevention of Money Laundering Act, PMLA mandatory

The Court reiterated that the twin conditions under Section 45 are 'mandatory in nature.' The court referred to the case of *Vijay Madanlal Choudhary* and other precedents such as *Tarun Kumar v Asst Director ED*, the Court observed that "there remains no shadow of doubt that the consideration of the two conditions mentioned in Section 45 is mandatory, and that while considering the bail application, the said rigours of Section 45 have to be reckoned by the court to uphold the objectives of the PMLA.

## Centre notifies appointment of Advocate Maneesh Sharma as Rajasthan High Court judge after 3 years of Supreme Court Collegium recommendation

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

The Central Government has notified the appointment of Advocate Maneesh Sharma as a Judge of the Rajasthan High Court.

The Supreme Court Collegium had recommended the name of Mr. Sharma for appointment to the High Court in 2021. The Union Law Minister shared the news of the appointment on X handle.

It reads 'In exercise of the power conferred by the Constitution of India, the President is pleased to appoint Shri Maneesh Sharma, Advocate as a Judge of the Rajasthan High Court.'

### ARBITRATION LAW EXPERT SWORN IN AS DELHI HIGH COURT JUDGE

Arbitration Law expert Tejas Dhirenbbhai Karia was sworn in as judge of Delhi High Court, increasing its strength to 39. The Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya administered the oath to Justice Karia.

### DELHI HIGH COURT DISMISSED AMANDEEP BATRA'S PLEA POST COMPLAINT CLOSURE

The Delhi High Court in the case dismissed Amandeep Singh Batra's plea to quash a notice from the Delhi Police after they confirmed the complaint against him was closed. Batra claimed the notices were part of a harassment campaign by nightclub owner Prateek Chaudhary amid allegations involving extortion threats.

# RENDEZVOUS MODI AND TRUMP



‘India, US aim to double bilateral trade to \$500 billion by 2030’



Prime Minister Narendra Modi signs the visitor's book in the presence of U.S. President Donald Trump, at The White House in Washington, DC on Thursday. (ANI Photo)

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON

Following the bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Donald Trump, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri provided a detailed overview of the key initiatives launched during the visit and said that the leaders launched Mission-500 in the sector of trade and investment, aimed at more than doubling two-way trade to USD 500 billion by 2030. He said that the leaders unveiled the

US-India Compact for the 21st Century, to accelerate military partnerships, commerce, and technological advancements.

In addition, both leaders committed to negotiating a multi-sector trade agreement by the fall of 2025, with an approach to strengthen trade across the goods and services sector, Misri said.

Addressing a press briefing on Thursday (local time), Misri said, “Two leaders jointly launched the US-India compact for the 21st

century, for catalyzing opportunities in military partnership, accelerated commerce and technology.

In the area of trade and investment, the leaders launched Mission-500, aiming to more than double total two-way trade to USD 500 billion by 2030.”

The Foreign Secretary said, “The two leaders also announced plans to negotiate the first tranche of a mutually beneficial multi-sector bilateral trade agreement by the fall of 2025.

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

India and the US are set to begin talks to sign this year a new 10-year defence framework that will run from 2025 to 2035 and is expected to be finalized later this year.

The framework for the “US-India Major Defence Partnership in the 21st Century,” is aimed at strengthening defence ties between the two countries, according to a joint statement released following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent meeting with US President Donald Trump in Washington DC.

Once this agreement is in place it will ensure that both countries can easily purchase defence goods and services from one another, promoting efficiency in procurement processes.

Addressing reporters after the meeting between PM Modi with the US President, Foreign Secretary said, “Defence as was pointed out by both leaders remains a very important area of cooperation in the strategic partnership between the two countries. The leaders announced plans to finalize a



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump deliver a joint press statement after their meeting at the White House, in Washington, DC on Thursday. (ANI Photo/White House)

new 10-year framework for the US-India major defense partnership in the 21st century. This is a framework that will run from 2025 to 2035 and is expected to be finalized later this year.”

According to the statement, PM Modi and President Trump reaffirmed their commitment to a robust and dynamic defence partnership, with both leaders agreeing to review

their respective arms transfer regulations, including the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR).

This review is expected to facilitate smoother defence trade, technology sharing, and the maintenance and repair of US-provided defence systems in India, as India's status as a ‘Strategic Trade Authorization-1 (STA-1)’ as well as a QUAD partner further solidified its position

for defence cooperation with the US.

“Highlighting the deepening convergence of US-India strategic interests, the leaders reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to a dynamic defence partnership spanning multiple domains. To advance defence ties further, the leaders announced plans to sign this year a new ten-year Framework for the US-India Major Defence

Partnership in the 21st Century,” the statement read.

“Recognizing that India is a Major Defence Partner with Strategic Trade Authorization-1 (STA-1) authorisation and a key Quad partner, the US and India will review their respective arms transfer regulations, including International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR), in order to streamline defence trade, and technology exchange.

## ‘We are being reciprocal with India’, says Trump on tariffs

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

US President Donald Trump reiterated his stance on tariff reciprocity in the joint press conference with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, emphasizing that the United States will match tariffs imposed by other countries, including India, to ensure fair trade.

“We are, right now, a reciprocal nation. We are going to, if it's India or if it's somebody else with low tariffs, we're going to have the same. We're going to have whatever India charges, we're charging them.

Whatever another country charges, we're charging them,” Trump stated.

However, the US President highlighted that trade challenges with the European Union and China are deeper than India, citing high tariffs and unfair practices.

“The European Union is very difficult for us. Very, very difficult. They tax our companies at levels that nobody has ever seen before. They take advantage of a lot of things. So we're not happy about that,” he remarked.

On China, Trump asserted that his administra-

tion had taken a tougher stance than previous US governments. Trump stated, “China, of course, is terrible. And we've never taken in 10 cents until I was president.

We've taken in hundreds of billions of dollars from China since I've been president in first term and now. We have to do that just as a mechanism of fairness. And that's what I've done.”

Regarding India, Trump noted that discussions during his first term failed to yield concessions on tariff reductions. As a result, the US has decided to adopt a direct reciprocal approach.

### WHAT THEY SAY

*“We are, right now, a reciprocal nation. We are going to, if it's India or if it's somebody else with low tariffs, we're going to have the same. We're going to have whatever India charges, we're charging them. Whatever another country charges, we're charging them.”*

-US President Donald Trump

*“We agreed to work together to help build one of the greatest trade routes in all of history. It will run from India to Israel to Italy and onward to the US, connecting our partners, roads, railways and undersea cables, many many undersea cables.”*

-US President Donald Trump

*“Those who stay in other countries illegally do not have any legal right to be there. As far as India and the US are concerned, we have always said that those who are verified and are truly the citizens of India - if they live in the US illegally, India is ready to take them back,”*

-Prime Minister Narendra Modi

*“India is a democracy and our culture is ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’, we consider the whole world as one family. I believe every Indian is mine. Two prominent leaders of two countries never discuss such individual issues.”*

-Prime Minister Narendra Modi

*“It is no different between India and China. We have been discussing any issues that we have with them on a bilateral plane and we will continue to do so,”*

Vikram Misri Foreign Secretary

*“India invited the US to take advantage of the reforms in the Indian education sector to set up offshore campuses of premier institutions of the US in India. They committed to streamlining avenues for the legal mobility of students and professionals and facilitating short-term tourist and business travel while also committing to aggressively addressing and tackling illegal immigration and human trafficking.”*

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri

*“Prime Minister Modi was thoughtful and deeply knowledgeable on a wide range of issues. It was an honor to meet & welcome him today. Wishing you a wonderful trip to the United States, Narendra Modi!..*

Vivek Ramaswamy Republican leader



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being presented a gift by Tesla CEO Elon Musk during a bilateral meeting at Blair House, in Washington, DC on Thursday. (ANI Photo)



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with U.S. President Donald Trump, at The White House in Washington, DC on Thursday. (ANI Photo)



Prime Minister Narendra Modi walks along with US President Donald Trump at the White House, in Washington, DC on Thursday. (ANI Photo)



US President Donald Trump gifts Prime Minister Narendra Modi the book ‘Our Journey Together’ during their meet at The White House, in Washington, DC on Thursday. (ANI Photo)

## ANTI-MONARCHY PROTESTERS



King Charles III meets members of the public, with anti-monarchy protesters in the background, as he walks along Russell Street, during his visit to Middlesbrough in North Yorkshire, UK. Source: James Glossop

## Germany's Left party stages late poll surge with fiery call to the 'barricades'

AGENCIES  
BERLIN

The successor to East Germany's Communist Party has made a late surge two weeks before a national election after its leader stood up in parliament to lash the front-running conservatives for breaking a historic taboo on cooperating with the far right.

Many legislators were numb after the conservatives passed a non-binding motion on restricting immigration on January 29 with the votes of the nationalist, anti-immigrant Alternative for Germany (AfD), unprecedented in a nation still painfully aware of its Nazi past. But Heidi Reichinnek was in her element. "To the barricades!" she shouted in a speech that, polls suggest, has single-handedly



German Left (Die Linke) party member Heidi Reichinnek speaks during the last planned session of German lower house of parliament Bundestag in Berlin, Germany, February 11, 2025. File Photo

rescued her party from oblivion and added a late twist to the election campaign.

Speaking so fast that the words tumbled over each other, the 36-year-old accused conservative leader Friedrich Merz of recklessness for letting the AfD claim its first parliamentary victory.

"You still don't get it," she told Merz, drumming the lectern, before urging voters: "Stand up to fascism in this country!"

The speech has been seen over 30 million times on social media and, while other parties' posts are more viewed, the Left's posts have

more "likes" - suggesting that engagement is genuine and not the result of paid promotion.

A month ago, the party was languishing below the 5% threshold needed to enter parliament, deflated by the defection of its best-known figure, Sahra Wagenknecht, who took half its legislators to set up her own leftist-nativist party.

GERMANS PROTEST AT CONSERVATIVES' TOLERANCE OF FAR RIGHT

But her Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance (BSW) has flagged. It abstained on Merz's motion and, with the AfD, backed a similar draft law he attempted to pass two days later, disapproving those who had hoped it would be an anti-AfD bulwark.

## Musk's tactics frustrate some senior White House officials

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON

As tech billionaire Elon Musk expands his influence over more than a dozen U.S. federal agencies, frustration is growing among some top aides to President Donald Trump, who want more coordination from Musk's team as he slashes the U.S. government, according to four people aware of the tensions.

Trump's chief of staff, Susie Wiles, and her team have at times felt out of the loop as Musk's so-called Department of Government Efficiency seeks to fire thousands of federal workers while accessing sensitive data and disrupting operations, the four people said. Wiles and some of her



Elon Musk and Susie Wiles are pictured in Washington, U.S., February 11, 2025 and in Washington, U.S., February 3, 2025 respectively in this combination photo. File Photo

top aides spoke to Musk recently about the issues, according to one of the sources.

Speaking to reporters at the White House on Tuesday, Musk projected alignment between himself, his tight-knit group of DOGE staffers and Trump. But underlying

tensions with some White House officials highlight potential difficulties for Trump in balancing his core team with Musk's DOGE staff as they spend agencies in a sweeping restructuring that has challenged congressional authority and faced a series of

lawsuits.

In the recent conversation, Wiles and her staff delivered a message to Musk: "We need to message all this. We need to be looped in," according to the source familiar with the encounter. The media was not able to determine the specific date they spoke or what, if any, changes Musk made after that conversation. The source added that Trump himself continued to speak positively about Musk to donors and others.

Musk did not respond to a request for comment. The White House declined to comment. An official with knowledge of the matter pushed back at the sources' description of tensions, saying initial "operational hiccups" had been smoothed out.

# 'US AID CUT RISKS ISLAMIC STATE-LINKED CAMPS IN SYRIA'

Due to changing U.S. funding, contingency plans address disease, riots, and IS attempts for detainees.

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON DC

Moves by President Donald Trump's administration to cut U.S. foreign aid funding risk destabilising two camps in northeastern Syria holding tens of thousands of people accused of affiliation with the Islamic State, aid officials, local authorities and diplomats say.

The seven sources told the media that the Washington's funding freezes and staff changes had already disrupted some aid distribution and services in Al-Hol and Roj, which host people who fled cities where IS was making its last stand between 2017-2019.

They are "closed camps," meaning residents were not detained or charged as IS fighters but cannot independently leave the camps because of suspicions that they are affiliated with or support the ultra-conservative group.

Aid workers and camp officials - led by the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a Kurdish-led force that helps run a semi-autonomous zone in northeastern Syria - have long called for the repatriation of camp residents, among them thousands of foreigners including Westerners.

But the rapid changes to U.S. funding streams have prompted contingency plans for the spread of disease, riots or IS attempts to retrieve residents they see as unlawfully detained, two

- KEY POINTS**
- USAID distributes billions of dollars of aid worldwide
  - Trump has ordered a freeze on most U.S. foreign aid
  - Aid cuts could destabilise Al-Hol, Roj camps, sources say
  - People suspected of IS affiliation are held at the camps



A general view of al-Hol displacement camp in Hasaka governorate, Syria, April 1, 2019. File Photo

senior humanitarian sources and a Roj resident said, requesting anonymity.

The humanitarian workers were not authorised to speak to media and the Roj camp resident has an unauthorised phone, which was used to speak to Reuters.

"If there's no unfreezing then everything except the camp guards stop. We're expecting mass rioting, breakout attempts. IS will come for the people they've wanted to come for," one of the senior humanitarian sources said.

Kurdish authorities in the northeast told Media last month they expected breakout attempts at detention centres holding IS fighters, and have refused handing control of them to the new Islamist-run transitional government in Damascus.

The anticipated violence adds to the complex security challenges in Syria, where Islamist rebels installed the transitional government after toppling Bashar al-Assad

and are holding talks with authorities in the northeast to bring all security forces under Damascus's control.

Sheikhmous Ahmed, head of camps and displaced persons in the autonomous administration of northeast Syria, said U.S.-funded organisations had been crucial in "covering the existing gaps" in basic service provision in the camps.

But if funding halts altogether, IS affiliates "can benefit from these existing gaps and lack of support," he said.

At least one of the organisations operating in the two camps, aid contractor Blumont, has received waivers allowing it to keep operating, said a Blumont official who requested anonymity and al-Hol director Jihan Hanan.

The waiver would last throughout the 90 days the Trump administration said it would use to review expenditures by the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID),

which distributes billions of dollars of humanitarian aid around the world.

The organisation has had to shutter other USAID-funded humanitarian and management services at about 100 unofficial "collective centres" for other displaced people, the Blumont official said.

The official said Blumont was trying to keep up daily bread deliveries to 135,000 people in al-Hol, Roj and the other centres but that it was unclear how long they could continue.

The Roj resident said camp management had told residents to ration their food "because it will be our last in a while" and that other camp services had started being wound down because of a lack of funding from the U.S.

Asked whether that could prompt instability at the camps, the resident said it was likely they would see "more chaos" and frustration from the displaced living there.

## Saudi Arabia spearheads Arab scramble for alternative to Trump's Gaza plan

AGENCIES  
RIYADH

Saudi Arabia is spearheading urgent Arab efforts to develop a plan for Gaza's future as a counter to U.S. President Donald Trump's ambition for a Middle East Riviera cleared of its Palestinian inhabitants, 10 sources said.

Draft ideas will be discussed at a meeting in Riyadh this month of countries including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates. Proposals may involve a Gulf-led reconstruction fund and a deal to sideline Hamas, five of the people said.



Saudi Arabia and its Arab allies were aghast at Trump's plan to "clean out" Palestinians from Gaza and resettle most of them in Jordan and Egypt, an idea immediately rejected by Cairo and Amman and seen in most of the

region as deeply destabilising. The dismay in Saudi Arabia was aggravated, sources said, because the plan would nix the kingdom's demand for a clear path to Palestinian statehood as a condition to normalise ties with Israel

- something that would also pave the way for an ambitious military pact between Riyadh and Washington, shoring up the kingdom's defences against Iran.

All the sources declined to be identified because the issue involves international or domestic sensitivities and they were not authorised to speak in public.

One Arab government source said at least four proposals had already been drafted for Gaza's future, but an Egyptian proposal was now emerging as central to the Arab push for an alternative to Trump's idea.

## PM MODI VISITS FRANCE AND THE US OPENING NEW VISTAS OF OPPORTUNITIES

This week will be remembered for the visit of the Indian Prime Minister to France and the US, as well as his significant discussions with world leaders. India participated in the AI Action Summit held in Paris this week and co-hosted this futuristic AI Summit 2025 in Paris, which has attracted leading global figures, including top political leaders, technology executives, policymakers, and innovative startup founders, all focused on shaping the future of AI governance, innovation, and ethics. This pivotal gathering was aimed to tackle the challenges associated with leveraging AI's transformative capabilities while addressing concerns regarding potential regulatory overreach that could stifle innovation.

In his address, Prime Minister Modi remarked that the world is on the brink of a

new era defined by artificial intelligence, a technology that is rapidly crafting the framework for humanity and transforming our political, economic, security, and social landscapes. He stressed that AI stands apart from previous technological advancements due to its profound implications, urging for a unified global initiative to create governance structures and standards that reflect common values, mitigate risks, and foster trust. Also, he asserted that the governments and the leaders should not solely focus on risk management but also on encouraging innovation and utilizing it for the benefit of all. In this context, he emphasized the importance of making AI accessible to everyone, particularly in the Global South, advocating for the democratization of technology and its applications

### WORLD RECAP ANSHU JOSHI



centred on people to facilitate the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Prime Minister also showcased India's achievements in establishing a Digital Public Infrastructure for its 1.4 billion citizens, built on principles of openness and accessibility. Discussing India's AI Mission, he highlighted the country's initiative to develop its own Large Language Model, reflecting its diverse needs, and expressed India's willingness to share its experiences to ensure that the advantages of AI are distributed equitably.

India is making significant strides in the adoption, research, and development of

artificial intelligence, with forecasts suggesting that its AI sector may reach around USD 20 billion by the year 2027. By partnering with France for the AI summit, India is solidifying its role in the international AI arena, leveraging its technological capabilities and democratic values to promote the ethical advancement of AI. Prime Minister Modi's also visited Marseille, a key port city in France, included paying tribute to the soldiers who lost their lives in the First World War at the Mazargues War Cemetery, as well as remembering Veer Savarkar, who has historical ties with the city. Additionally, he inau-

gurated the Indian Consulate in Marseille and visited the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) project, which represents a global collaboration in nuclear fusion research.

During this visit, India and France reached an agreement to collaborate on the development of advanced nuclear reactors and to enhance their defence partnership through the acquisition of missiles, submarines, and engines for both aircraft and helicopters. Additionally, they committed to working together on projects in third-party nations. The joint statement issued by both countries highlighted the significance of the civil nuclear relationship between India and France, as well as their ongoing efforts to cooperate in the peaceful applications of nuclear energy, particularly concerning the Jaitapur nuclear power plant

initiative.

Following his successful engagement at the AI summit in France, Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in the US, where he completed a two-day visit that included bilateral discussions with President Trump. During their meetings, the leaders addressed several significant topics, such as trade relations, tariffs, the ongoing wars in the world, the acquisition of F-35 fighter jets, the extradition of individuals implicated in the 26/11 attacks and more. Both the leaders praised each other and expressed their mutual dedication to fostering bilateral economic as well as strategic development and asserting global peace and security.

The two leaders emerged from their private discussions with a consensus to enhance trade as well as strategic relations between their

nations, which will encompass collaborations in areas such as space exploration, artificial intelligence, energy production and so on. Both the leaders also announced to increase the bilateral trade relations between India and the US to achieve the target of USD 500 billion by 2030. Before meeting Trump, Indian Prime Minister also convened discussions with several prominent figures, including Michael Waltz, Tulsi Gabbard, Elon Musk, and Vivek Ramawamy. He addressed a wide range of subjects, encompassing artificial intelligence, mobility, collaborative efforts in space, organized crime, and cybersecurity, among others.

Over the past few years, India and the US have upgraded their bilateral ties to a strategic partnership. At the same time, as a representative of the global south, India

has taken significant steps to democratize various international platforms, including the influential G-20, an initiative that has garnered acceptance from Western bloc countries, including the US. This visit has also led to notable advancements in both bilateral and multilateral relations. While both countries express a strong desire to elevate their partnership further, they also face certain challenges. Nevertheless, there remains ample opportunity for dialogue and the exploration of solutions.

This week is ending on a positive note, at least for the Indians, French and the Americans. Hope that the engagement among other nations also increases so that they can collaborate and grow.

The author is Professor, School of International Studies, JNU

PICTURE PERFECT



Tamannaah Bhatia poses for her social media (Instagram)

## RANBIR KAPOOR LAUNCHES HIS LIFESTYLE BRAND 'ARKS'

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

On the occasion of Valentine's Day, Bollywood star Ranbir Kapoor surprised his fans with the launch of his lifestyle brand 'ARKS'.

Earlier in the day, he stepped out in the city to celebrate the opening of the brand's first store in Mumbai. At the store launch, he met and interacted with several of his fans. From giving autographs to fans to taking pictures with them, Ranbir looked extremely happy during the launch of 'ARKS'.

He attended the launch donning a white T-shirt and beige pants teamed with white sneakers.

For men, the collection



encompasses a refined assortment of cotton jersey t-shirts, plush embossed French terry sweatshirts, knitted hoodies, double pique polo shirts, flat knit t-shirts and linen shirts. It

further includes optic wash sweatshirts, versatile cotton twill and denim shackets, stylish denim biker jackets, ultra-limited edition uber sophisticated leather reversible bomber jackets.

In bottom-wear, the collection offers a selection of well-tailored denims in regular and straight fits, versatile cargo pants, comfortable chino shorts, and embossed French terry joggers.

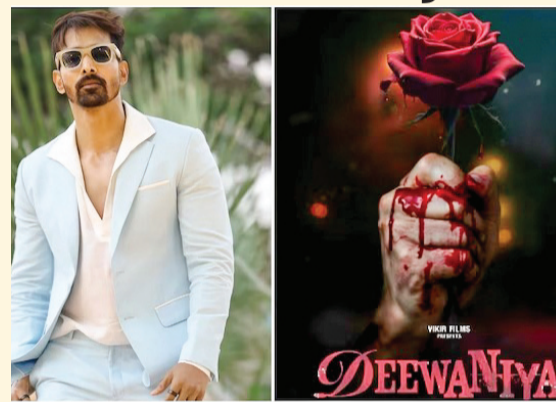
## Harshvardhan Rane announces his new film 'Deewaniyat'

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

Actor Harshvardhan Rane has been signed on to headline a new love story titled 'Deewaniyat'.

The film will be directed by Milap Zaveri and is described as a tale of "passion and heartbreak."

Harshvardhan expressed his excitement about the project in a press note, saying, "I'm grateful to the audience for the overwhelming love they have given me for Sanam Teri Kasam. The power of a love story is eternal, and when I heard the madness, pas-



sion, and craziness of the role and script of Deewaniyat I immediately chose it to be my next film. Excited to be collaborating with my director Milap Milan Zaveri and also with pro-

ducers Amul V Mohan, Anshul Mohan, and the co-writer of this powerful script, Mushtaq Shiekh. Hope the audiences fall in love with this heart-breaking love story too."

Milap Milan Zaveri, too, shared his enthusiasm about the film, saying, "Deewaniyat is one of the most powerful and heart-breaking love stories I've written along with Mushtaq Shiekh. It has the madness of love. I'm so excited to be directing the new sensation and heartthrob Harshvardhan Rane, who is such a great talent and a wonderful person. Amul V Mohan and Anshul Mohan are great producers and friends too, so I'm looking forward to collaborating with them and hopefully delivering a powerful love story to audiences."

## Rashmika Mandanna returns to 'Sikandar' shoot

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Actress Rashmika Mandanna has returned to the sets of her upcoming film Sikandar, which co-stars Salman Khan.

The actress took to Instagram stories on Friday to share a glimpse of her night shoot, where she mentioned that she is back to "this chaotic life of an actor".

Rashmika posted a picture of herself making a heart gesture as she posed for the camera and captioned it as, "PS - Sikandar night shoot. I guess finally we are back to this chaotic life of an actor."

'Sikandar' marks Salman Khan's return to the big screen after more than a year, with his last film being 'Tiger 3'.

AR Murugadoss, known for his work on 'Ghajini' has directed the film.

The movie also marks



Salman Khan's reunion with producer Sajid Nadiadwala after their 2014 blockbuster, 'Kick'.

Meanwhile, Rashmika's latest release, 'Chhaava', has been making waves.

She plays Maharani Yesubai in the film, which is

a cinematic adaptation of Shivaji Sawant's Marathi novel Chhava.

The movie stars Vicky Kaushal as Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, the son of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Akshaye Khanna plays the role of Aurangzeb.

BRAIN PICKING



I must say, I was a very filmy kid. I used to watch a lot of TV and get very influenced by Bollywood.

— RANVEER SINGH  
(Indian Actor)

## Prateik Babbar, Priya Banerjee tie the knot

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

Actor Prateik Babbar has tied the knot with Priya Banerjee.

On Friday evening, Prateik and Priya took to Instagram and shared the good news with their fans and followers. They even shared a couple of pictures from their wedding ceremony.

"I'll marry you in every lifetime #priyaKAprateik," their post read.

Adding to the grandeur, Prateik and Priya wore ethereal ensembles from a special collection by Tarun Tahiliani and Jewellery by Khurana Jewellery House. They were twinning in ivory and gold ensembles.

As soon as they shared the pictures, fans and members of the film industry chimed in the comment section and sent heartfelt congratulations to the newlyweds.

"Congratulations...best wishes to you two," a fan



wrote. Actors Bobby Deol and Karan Tacker dropped a string of red heart emojis in the comment section.

Prateik made his relationship with Priya Instagram official on Valentine's Day last year. He was previously

married to Sanya Sagar, but they reportedly parted ways during the lockdown after tying the knot on January 23, 2019.

On the professional front, Prateik was recently seen in Khwaabon Ka Jhamela alongside Sayani Gupta.

REVIEW: CHHAAVA \*\*\*\*\*

## CHHAAVA

PRAVEEN NAGDA

It's often rare for film stars to be able to wear the shoes of their characters and become those characters. It's not just sets and costumes that give you a taste of history; it is the actor who makes you believe in the character.

Vicky Kaushal in his masterpiece performance plays the role of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharajaka Chhaava, the courageous son of Chhatrapati Shivaji, who puts life into the character. With his emotions, mannerisms, actions, and dialogues Kaushal is living the life of Sambhaji on screen in an outstanding manner in this action-drama flick directed by Laxman Utekar. Kaushal's

performance has been the most promising and illustrious undoubtedly.

Akshaye Khanna playing the dreaded Mughal Emperor, makes you believe that he is the real Aurangzeb, exhibiting all his eccentricities & atrocities, his insecurities & arrogance, his cruelty and carnage in this film. He has lived his character throughout the film till the end where he kills his own General Alamgeer.

The film starts around the times of coronation of Sambhaji as the King of the Maratha Empire, which was spread from Konkan to Karnataka and picturizes epic battles fought between Mughals and Maratha. Aurangzeb on a manhunt for Sambhaji, leaves



*Chhaava is a brilliant big-screen experience, where every shot is spectacular and a visual treat. It's a great mix of historical narratives told via modern storytelling.*

Delhi with his army of 10 Lakh and spends more than 8 years to find Sambhaji, ambushing him to capture with the help of traitors stonewalling Sambhaji's idea of creating a Hindavi Swaraj - The Self Rule of Maratha.

When the two key characters, Sambhaji and Aurangzeb, keep you thoroughly hooked into the movie and the restlessness of Aurangzeb to capture Sambhaji and the sheer grit exhibited by Sambhaji to fight keeps you fully engaged. The ravines, the jungles, the rivers, and the mountains, all become the playground for these battles where Sambhaji comes

out as the true leader. The cinematography is brilliant with a lot of aerial shots, and the cinematic presentation is simply awesome with many special effects, which could have been better. The artistic design and the details captured in the sets give you a real feel of the Sambhaji Kingdom as well as the lives of the Mughals in the war zone.

Rashmika Mandanna playing Maharani Yesubai Bhonsle and Ashutosh Rana as Sambhaji's uncle Hambir Rao do full justice to their roles. Hambir Rao as a strategist and a warrior exhibits his emotional expressions brilliantly,

while Queen Yesubai comes across as a strong wife, a caring mother, and a perfect administrator of the Maratha Kingdom when Sambhaji is away fighting the enemies. Her portrayal as a queen of the Maratha empire is superb as she slips into the role without much effort.

Dinesh Vijan has produced the film under the banner of Maddock Films, and AR Rahman has given the music. The background score is impressive, and the songs fit into the narrative well invoking a patriotic feeling.

Chhaava is a brilliant big-screen experience, where every shot is spectacular and a visual treat. It's a great mix of historical narratives told via modern storytelling.

Praveen Nagda is Festival Director of KidzCINEMA and CultureCinema Film Festivals

# FROM STRESS TO STRENGTH: A WOMAN'S GUIDE TO BEATING INFERTILITY



DR. SHOBHA GUPTA

Infertility is a growing concern among women, and while medical conditions such as polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), endometriosis, and hormonal imbalances are well-known factors, psychological well-being plays a significant role in reproductive health. Anxiety, depression, and stress have emerged as silent yet powerful contributors to infertility. Women struggling to conceive often experience overwhelming emotional distress, which, in turn, exacerbates fertility issues—creating a vicious cycle.

What's the link between mental health and infertility

## HORMONAL DISRUPTIONS

Chronic stress increases the production of cortisol and adrenaline, which can interfere with reproductive hormones such as estrogen and progesterone. High cortisol levels can suppress ovulation, making conception difficult.



## Irregular Menstrual Cycles

Stress and anxiety can lead to irregular menstrual cycles or even anovulation (when the ovary does not release an egg). A disrupted menstrual cycle significantly reduces the chances of natural conception.

## Impact on Ovary Function

Studies suggest that women experiencing prolonged psychological distress often have lower levels of anti-Müllerian hormone (AMH), which indicates diminished ovarian reserve. This means fewer viable

eggs, making conception more challenging.

## Decreased Libido and Relationship Strain

Mental health struggles often lead to a reduced interest in sexual activity. In couples trying to conceive, stress about pregnancy can turn intimacy into an obligation rather than a pleasurable experience, further hindering conception.

## Increased Risk of Miscarriage

Research has linked high-stress levels to an increased

risk of early pregnancy loss. The body perceives excessive stress as a threat and may prioritize survival over reproduction.

## HOW TO OVERCOME STRESS-RELATED INFERTILITY?

The good news is that managing anxiety, depression, and stress can improve reproductive health. Here are some effective strategies:

### Mind-Body Therapies

- Yoga and Meditation: Prac-

ticing yoga and mindfulness meditation reduces cortisol levels, improves blood circulation to reproductive organs, and promotes emotional well-being.

- Deep Breathing Exercises: Techniques like diaphragmatic breathing help in relaxation and reducing anxiety.

### Lifestyle Modifications

- Balanced Diet: A nutrient-rich diet with plenty of antioxidants, healthy fats, and lean proteins supports hormone balance and overall fertility.

- Regular Exercise: Moderate physical activity helps in maintaining a healthy weight, which is crucial for reproductive health. However, excessive exercise can have a negative impact, so balance is key.

- Quality Sleep: Ensuring at least 7-8 hours of restful sleep each night helps regulate stress hormones and reproductive cycles.

### Emotional Support and Counseling

- "Seeking help from a therapist or counselor who specializes in fertility-related stress can be beneficial" said **Dr. Shobha Gupta**. Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) has been shown to reduce anxiety and improve pregnancy outcomes. Support groups, whether online or in-person, help women connect with others facing similar challenges, reducing feelings of isolation.

### Medical Intervention When Necessary

- If stress and anxiety are significantly affecting fertility, consulting a fertility specialist for appropriate treatments such as ovulation induction, intrauterine insemination (IUI), or in-vitro fertilization (IVF) may be necessary said **Dr. Shobha Gupta**.

- In some cases, mild antidepressants may be prescribed under medical supervision to improve overall well-being.

### Acupuncture and Alternative Medicine

- Acupuncture has been

found to enhance fertility by improving blood flow to reproductive organs, reducing stress, and regulating hormones. Some women also benefit from herbal medicine, though it should only be taken under expert guidance.

The impact of stress, anxiety, and depression on fertility cannot be overlooked. Women who are struggling to conceive should prioritize mental well-being just as much as physical health. *By incorporating stress-reducing practices, seeking emotional support, and exploring medical options when needed, it is possible to improve fertility outcomes. Remember, the journey to motherhood is unique for every woman, and maintaining a positive, healthy mindset plays a crucial role in achieving reproductive success.*

*For women experiencing fertility struggles, it is essential to consult a specialist to develop a personalized treatment plan that addresses both physical and emotional health. If you are facing such challenges, know that you are not alone, and support is available* **concluded Dr. Shobha Gupta who also introduces these mind relaxing therapies and personalized treatment plan in both her centres Mother's Lap IVF in New Delhi and Mumma's Blessing IVF in Vrindavan.**

*The author is the Medical Director, Gynecologist & IVF Expert from Mother's Lap IVF Centre in New Delhi and Mumma's Blessing IVF in Vrindavan*

## Women-led development is the focus of fiscal year 2025-26 Budget



KSHIPRA SIMON

The fiscal year 2025-2026 Union Budget, presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, marks a transformative moment for women's empowerment in India, underscoring the government's commitment to fostering gender equality through targeted investments and policies. This year's budget places women at the core of India's growth agenda, with an emphasis on facilitating women's participation in the workforce, encouraging entrepreneurship, and driving rural prosperity. Through the introduction of initiatives like the scheme for first-time women entrepreneurs and a multisector rural prosperity program, the government aims to address longstanding gender gaps in economic opportunities and secure a future of 'women-led development' as part of India's vision for becoming a Viksit Bharat (Developed India) by 2047.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE GENDER BUDGET 2025-26

The Gender Budget Statement (GBS) for 2025-26 has seen an unprecedented increase in its allocation. At Rs 4.49 lakh crore, which constitutes 8.86% of the total Union Budget, it reflects a remarkable 37.5% rise from the previous fiscal year's allocation of Rs 3.27 lakh crore. This increase is not merely a number; it symbolizes the government's evolving focus on women's empowerment. The Gender Budget is the largest-ever in India's history, highlighting the commitment of the government to address the unique challenges that

women face across education, health, welfare, and economic empowerment. This allocation covers programs across 49 ministries that are explicitly designed to benefit women, showcasing a whole-of-government approach to gender equality.

### STRATEGIC INITIATIVES FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

One of the most significant provisions of this budget is the launch of a scheme specifically targeted at first-time women entrepreneurs. This initiative promises to provide loans of up to Rs.2 crores for women

in the process.

### RURAL PROSPERITY AND RESILIENCE

In addition to the focus on entrepreneurship, the budget also highlights the importance of supporting rural women. The multisector rural prosperity and resilience program aims to prioritize job creation for women in 100 agricultural districts. Agriculture remains a central component of India's rural economy, and women play a significant yet often undervalued role in this sector. Through this program, the government intends to increase the participation of rural wom-

en in the workforce, thereby improving their economic status and providing them with sustainable livelihood options. Rural women often face additional barriers such as limited access to resources, training, and technology. By targeting specific districts for job creation and resilience-building, the budget seeks to create localized solutions to these challenges and improve rural women's access to opportunities.

### IMPACT ON WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

The Gender Budget's growth and the targeted initiatives are a strong signal of India's intent to reduce gender disparities in economic participation. With a larger allocation for women-focused programs, the government is laying the groundwork for a more gender-inclusive future. The integration of women into the workforce is expected to boost India's economic growth, with research showing that increas-

ing women's labor force participation could significantly contribute to GDP growth. Furthermore, by targeting rural women, the budget aims to uplift a marginalized group, creating inclusive prosperity that can drive India's development from the ground up.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Union Budget for 2025-26 represents a significant leap forward in the pursuit of gender equality in India. The allocation of funds, combined with strategic initiatives such as the loan scheme for women entrepreneurs and rural job cre-



ation programs, is setting the stage for a more inclusive and diverse economy. If these initiatives are effectively implemented, they can bring about long-term benefits for women, leading to an empowered, resilient, and self-sustaining female workforce, which is essential for India's aspiration of becoming a developed nation by 2047. The focus on women's economic empowerment, rural prosperity, and human capital development in the budget marks a crucial step toward realizing the goal of women-led development in India's growth story.

These sectors will not only improve the quality of life for women but also prepare them for the challenges of an increasingly globalized economy.

### GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING AND EMPOWERMENT GOALS

The broader goal of the budget aligns with India's vision of becoming a Viksit Bharat by 2047, with a clear

## Why India needs a menstruation leave policy in every company

BY ADITI MITTAL

Workplace policies have long been designed through a uniform lens, often overlooking the diverse needs of employees. While gender inclusion conversations have led to maternity leave becoming the norm, menstrual health remains largely unaddressed. The reality is that menstruation is not a choice, yet many employees are forced to work through discomfort, often at the cost of their well-being and productivity.

A 2022 report by S&P Global highlights that women constitute only 26% of India's corporate workforce. In a country striving for gender equity at work, it is essential that policies adapt to support this significant segment of employees. Menstruation leave is not just an accommodation; it is an acknowledgment of biological realities and a step towards true inclusivity.

### THE BUSINESS CASE FOR MENSTRUATION LEAVE

Globally, companies are waking up to the fact that workplace equity extends beyond equal pay and maternity benefits. Countries like Japan, Indonesia, South Korea, and Spain have already implemented menstruation leave policies. Even in India, progressive private firms and state governments like Kerala and

Bihar have taken the lead in recognizing this need.

"Menstruation is a monthly reality for half the workforce. Ignoring it doesn't make it go away—it only pushes employees to suffer in silence," says **Dr. Ritu Sharma, a gynecologist and workplace wellness consultant**. "Companies that recognize this and offer menstrual leave create an environment where employees feel valued and supported."

Contrary to concerns that menstruation leave might reduce efficiency, data suggests otherwise. A 2019 survey by the UK-based Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) found that organizations with flexible and supportive policies report **higher employee engagement and lower absenteeism rates**. Simply put, when employees feel cared for, they contribute more effectively.

### UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF MENSTRUATION AT WORK

Menstruation affects individuals differently. While some may experience mild discomfort, others face severe cramps, fatigue, nausea, or mood fluctuations. For those with medical conditions like **endometriosis or dysmenorrhea**, working through this pain is not just uncomfortable but it's debilitating.

At SAVE, we believe that workplace inclusivity is not about providing special benefits—it's about acknowledging different needs. When employees are given the space to manage their health, they return more engaged, motivated, and productive.

### MENSTRUATION LEAVE: A STEP TOWARDS WORKPLACE EQUITY

Critics argue that menstruation leave could fuel gender discrimination in hiring. However, **equality does not mean treating everyone the same—it means ensuring everyone gets what they need to perform at their best**.

The future of work requires policies that meet evolving workforce needs. Menstruation leave isn't just empathy—it's a business necessity. Prioritizing well-being helps companies attract talent, foster trust, and build a culture of respect and commitment.

As organizations across India strive to become **employers of choice**, it is time to move beyond rhetoric and implement real, tangible support systems. Menstruation leave isn't about giving women an extra day off—it's about creating an equitable, high-performing workplace where everyone can thrive.

*The author is the Group HR Head at SAVE.*



*The author is the Secretary at Buddh Jyoti Foundation (BJF).*

# THE TRANSFORMATIVE CAPACITY OF SOFT POWER



CHIRYA RISELY

“... the greatest challenge to being alive - to witness injustice in the world and not allow it to consume our light.”

- Thich Nhat Hanh

Earth can be either paradise or hell. Currently the world is obsessed with ‘hard power’ that controls, imprisons, abuses, colonises, and much more.

“Hard power involves the ability to use the ‘carrots and sticks’ of economic and military might to make others follow your will”.

- Joseph Nye

Here, “carrots” stand for inducements such as the

reduction of trade barriers, the offer of an alliance, or the promise of military protection.

However, individuals as well as countries across the world are now taking another look, and using a fresh approach to explore an authentic inner power known as soft power, a non-violent, peaceful approach to living. On the national level, soft power refers to a nation’s ability to influence others through non-coercive means, such as culture, diplomacy, and persuasion rather than guns and missiles. For example, the five pillars of India’s soft power — dignity, dialogue, shared prosperity, regional and global security, and cultural and civilizational links - are employed and enhance its global influence.

Soft power comes from within the soul. I am the sum total of the basic pure qualities of the soul — peace, love and joy, and all that is good within. To be aware of my true identity as an



The quality of our consciousness determines how we engage with others - with love and cooperation, or otherwise.

eternal thinking soul, separate from the body, and in this way being an instrument, detached yet loving, creates an unlimited peace

and happiness within. Soft power is spiritual power and enables us to manage our emotions, to focus and re-align our values,

empower our lives, and contribute to co-creating a better and brighter future. Medical science has proved that our emotional state

plays a huge role in determining our health, well-being, and use of power. No one can make us feel happy, hurt, or powerless. It is our internal conversation about their behaviour that

leads to right use of power and implementation of non-violent solutions.

We also need to communicate and rely on the relationship with a higher source. The basis of soft

*Soft power is spiritual power and enables us to manage our emotions, to focus and re-align our values, empower our lives, and contribute to co-creating a better and brighter future. Medical science has proved that our emotional state plays a huge role in determining our health, well-being, and use of power. No one can make us feel happy, hurt, or powerless.*

me: ‘Become a rose; do not remain a thorn. Spread the fragrance of the self.’ To be one thing inside and another thing outside, complain about myself and others, allow worry and doubt to rule my mind, to be fearful of people simply because they think differently, I fully see now these attitudes create Hell. Since I have created it for myself, I also have the capacity to change it, but I certainly need Your cooperation.”

- From ‘In God’s Heart’, by Anthony Strano

We need to check ourselves. How much love do I have for the Father? To what extent do I have divine virtues? The way to develop and use soft power is to be connected to God constantly, full of humility, and serve in the remembrance of God with a lot of lightness, giving all the credit of the service to God.

Chirya Risely is a Rajyoga meditation teacher based at the Brahma Kumaris Peace Village Retreat Center, USA.

determines how we feel. Worry, anxiety, pain, anger, and fear make a huge impact on our physical and mental health. It is the quality of our consciousness - ‘hard’ or ‘soft’ - that

power is knowing that ‘God is doing and making us do’. Since God is all-powerful and imperishable, He will never abandon me.

“Dear God, my wisest Father, you often whisper to

## Is God omnipresent?



B.K. SHEILU

Omnipresence is one of the qualities attributed to God in many religious traditions. It is described as the property of being present everywhere. According to eastern theism, God is present everywhere, in everything, whereas in western theism, omnipresence refers to an unbounded or universal presence.

Hinduism and other religions that derive from it incorporate the theory of transcendent and immanent omnipresence. It is argued that omnipresence is a derived characteristic, as an omniscient and omnipotent being knows

everything, and can be and act everywhere simultaneously. Judaism and Christianity too hold that God is omnipresent. “Do not I fill heaven and earth?”, God declares in the Old Testament.

These religious beliefs raise the question, can anyone be present everywhere at the same time? A being or a person has a form and a distinct identity based on inherent qualities that are manifest in their actions. A being that has a form cannot be present in each and every particle in the world, as then the being would have no form.

If it is argued that God is a supreme energy that is present everywhere, then another question arises: if God, the ocean of peace, love, and mercy, is omnipresent, why are His qualities not apparent everywhere? Any substance or person manifests their qualities wherever they are present. For example, where there is fire, there is heat, and where there is

snow, it is cold. Similarly, a jovial person makes the atmosphere of a place light, whereas a brooding man carries a heavy air with him everywhere. So, how is it that omnipresent God’s qualities are hardly in evidence in the world? On the contrary, people pray to God for even a moment’s experience of His love and compassion.

Another paradox is that God is considered omnipresent, but He is worshipped in particular forms, and the devout beg to have a glimpse of Him. An omnipresent God should be present in the devotees too, in which case no one should need to pray. When we think on these lines, we realise that the current state of the world, with its conflicts, crime, corruption, and untold human misery, is ample proof of God not being present everywhere.

Belief in an omnipresent God flies in the face of devotion and spiritual knowledge, because if



God is not omnipresent, but deep faith and love enable us to feel His presence everywhere.

God did not have a form or distinct identity, it would be impossible for us to have any meaningful relationship with Him.

God is the father of all human souls, and thus He is distinct from us. It

is for this reason that God is said to send messengers or angels to this world to guide and help people. If He were omnipresent, He could have done everything Himself.

The prophets are said to

have received messages from God and conveyed them to the world. In Hinduism, God is said to have incarnated in different forms to destroy evil and salvage the world. These beliefs lend no credence to the idea of an omnipresent Almighty.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, God is quoted as saying that He incarnates Himself in this world whenever unrighteousness reaches extreme proportions, to destroy evil and re-establish a righteous order. The fact that He has to come to this world makes it clear that He is not always present here.

Many faithful believe that they are doing God a great honour by attributing the extraordinary quality of omnipresence to Him. On the contrary, this has led to people developing a casual attitude towards the Supreme Soul. They think that since God is omnipresent, He sees and knows everything, and they do not have the inclination to

relate to Him personally. They also wonder what is the point of God’s existence if all the bad things are occurring despite His presence. Some others argue that if even God is not bothered by the miseries of the world, why should they care, and it is best to focus on enjoying one’s life.

The idea of an omnipresent God most likely developed as an expression of love by the deeply devout, who saw God as a constant companion, always there to help them whenever needed. Over time, that idea evolved into its present form. Those who have deep, heartfelt love for God experience Him as a kind, all-powerful being who, while being beyond this world, manifests His power in such a way that everyone who remembers Him with deep love can feel His presence.

B.K. Sheilu is a Rajyoga teacher at the Brahma Kumaris headquarters in Mount Abu, Rajasthan.

### A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

**Body and soul operate according to separate laws. The body is ruled by the material laws of physiology and biology. The soul operates according to the laws of energy. Consequently, the healing process will be different for each. Because the energy of the soul keeps the body alive, it has a significant influence on the health of the body. Healing the soul is based on wisdom, love, peace and faith. To heal the soul I must take the medicine of virtues every day, morning and evening. This allows me to start my day with peace, love, gratitude and end my day with the same. Today let me heal the soul.**

## The subconscious – A great tool for sustainable success



B.K. MARIA-DULCE ROCHA

The subconscious is part of the anatomy of the soul and it has a very crucial mission - that of creating the reality we set up. Whatever we do, say, think, and most of all feel, becomes a real command or pattern of thoughts and actions. As soon as we have any feeling about any situation, we are already reacting, so that is being stored and will become a pattern, meaning it will happen again and again in the future.

The subconscious works on our behalf. It stores for us whatever we think, feel, and act out. The moment we have feelings about anything or anybody, those

feelings are automatically stored in the subconscious. Once stored, they will emerge naturally when triggered by some event or conversation. This will happen over and over again, even against our will, until it begins to define us. We may become aware of it, and consciously decide to change. Most of us though, are not aware of this.

In reality, the role of the subconscious is massive. It is able to transform us, our habits, our performance, if we simply learn how to use it in our favour and for good. If we want to change, we have to change the ‘command’ or ‘pattern’. This means we have to create a different, or new, feeling about a specific situation or person, in a positive way; one which serves us and allows us to excel. This can be done through understanding (we will never know what that person has gone through in life), acceptance (allow them to be themselves, no matter what; they are behaving that way for a reason that we, and even



The subconscious can transform us, our habits, our performance, if we learn how to use it for good.

they, are not aware of), forgiveness (be detached, allowing others to play their role in this big theatre of life).

This positive programming may not seem to have

any effect for a while, but as long as we know that the new programming is the right way to feel, think, and act, then at some point it will become part of our nature, sooner rather than later. It is

extremely important to create that new positive reality in the now, feeling it strongly as if the transformation has already happened, and it is now a reality.

In practical terms, the

thinking patterns and behavioural habits have been established over a long period of time. So, it is not sufficient to ‘re-programme’ just once. Persistence is the key to overriding the long-term

habits. In other words, we have to repeatedly apply the new behavioural pattern, each and every time the old patterns emerge, until it becomes naturally instilled. Then we will find that it has worked and we have started

There is nothing better to cool our conscious mind than doing meditation. This practice is not only a way of becoming calm and relaxed, which is essential for well-being, but also a means to ponder

*The subconscious is our ‘magic wand’, to be used in a worthwhile way to serve us and the world, by rewinding any negative experience from the past and setting up a new way of seeing it, feeling it; keep detaching from the worst while being inspired by the best.*

setting up our new sustainable life.

The subconscious is our ‘magic wand’, to be used in a worthwhile way to serve us and the world, by rewinding any negative experience from the past and setting up a new way of seeing it, feeling it; keep detaching from the worst while being inspired by the best.

about how we are progressing, and to focus on the best way to excel. Meditation is an amazing tool to help our subconscious mind to operate for our benefit.

Maria-Dulce Rocha is a qualified NLP and Holistic practitioner. She is a teacher of Rajyoga with the Brahma Kumaris. She lives in London, UK.

# INDIA READY TO HOST 2036 OLYMPIC GAMES, ASSERTS SHAH

I can say it today that India has a very bright future in sports: Shah

TDG NETWORK  
HALDWANI

The closing ceremony of the 38th National Games began here on Friday with home minister Amit Shah as his guest of honour asserting that the country is well on track to host a successful Olympics in 2036.

Indian Olympic Association (IOA) president PT Usha declared the Games closed before handing over the flag to Conrad Sangma, chief minister of Meghalaya, the state that will host the next edition of the Games.

"I can say it today that India has a very bright future in sports. We are ready to host the Olympics in 2036," Shah said in his address referring to India's bid to host the Olympics in 2036 that is still in early stages.

Along with Shah, sports minister Mansukh Mandaviya also joined the event to laud the athletes' performances over the last two

## NATIONAL GAMES

- IOA President PT Usha officially closed the Games and handed over the flag to Meghalaya CM Conrad Sangma.
- Shah asserted that India is on track to host the 2036 Olympics.
- Uttarakhand moved from 21st to 7th place in the overall rankings.



weeks. To start with, Uttarakhand chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami welcomed Shah with a commemorative memento, a shawl and a bouquet of flowers.

"Dev Bhoomi' has transformed into 'Khel Bhoomi' not just because of the National Games but also because of its athletes' performance in the Games and Dhami ji's relentless efforts towards hosting a successful Games," Shah said at the Indira Gandhi International Sports Complex here.

"Thanks to their efforts, Uttarakhand has jumped from 21st position (in last

Games) to seventh position (in the overall standings). I congratulate all the athletes who helped paved the way for 'Dev Bhoomi' to also become a 'Khel Bhoomi'. My best wishes are with them." Shah added, "I have observed that some of the records made by athletes during the Games here are comparable to those in international tournaments.

Besides Shah, Mandaviya and Dhami, several other dignitaries are in attendance here, including Mandaviya, next host Meghalaya's CM Kongkal Sangma, Uttarakhand's Sports Minister

Rekha Arya, Indian Olympic Association (IOA) President PT Usha, boxing legend MC Mary Kom, and Olympic medallist shooter Gagan Narang, among others.

"Uttarakhand has conveyed to the country that it is not just Devbhoomi but also a Khelbhoomi. The state ensured that no athlete faced any difficulty during the Games. It is the beginning of India becoming a sports hub," said Mandaviya in his address. The venue has a capacity of 25,000 and was packed for the ceremony.

"It is the beginning of India coming inside the top

10 of Olympic performers by 2036. The country now has a sports ecosystem. It is moving forward in every aspect, including sports," Mandaviya said.

Usha also conveyed a similar message in her address. "The journey does not end here, it is only the beginning for Indian sports," said Usha.

The ceremony will feature a 'Games Recap', highlighting the winning moments from start to the end of the sporting extravaganza that began seven venues on January 28 with state capital Dehradun being the main centre.

At the end of it, traditional powerhouse Services Sports Control Board (SSCB) topped the medal tally for the fifth time in the last six games, with a total haul of 121 medals (68 gold, 26 silver, 27 bronze).

Maharashtra won more medals than Services with 198 (54 gold, 71 silver, 73 bronze) but the lesser gold count meant that it ended at second spot.

# Badminton Asia Mixed Team C'ships: India crashes out in quarterfinals

TDG NETWORK  
QINGDAO



Malvika then had the task of stopping World No. 8 Tomoka Miyazaki, but her efforts were not enough as she went down 21-12, 21-19 against the Japanese star shuttler.

fought back from a game down to take the men's singles match against Kenta Nishimoto in the third and deciding game.

However, Nishimoto was quick to get off the blocks in the decider, racing to a 6-0 lead. Prannoy fought back after changing ends at 3-11, but it was too late to overturn the deficit as he went down 14-21, 21-15, 12-21 in an hour and 17 minutes.

Result: India lost to Japan 0-3 (Dhruv Kapila/Tanisha Crasto lost to Hiroki Midorikawa/Natsu Saito 13-21, 21-17, 13-21; Malvika Bansod lost to Tomoka Miyazaki 12-21, 19-21; HS Prannoy lost to Kenta Nishimoto 14-21, 21-15, 12-21).

she went down 21-12, 21-19 against the Japanese star shuttler.

India needed Asian Games bronze medallist HS Prannoy to put them on track.

The 32-year-old kept those hopes alive briefly as he

# Indian Men's Hockey Team ready for litmus test at FIH Pro League



TDG NETWORK  
BHUBANESWAR

The Indian Men's Hockey Team, currently ranked fifth in the world, is all set to kickstart their highly anticipated FIH Pro League 2024-25 campaign at the iconic Kalinga Hockey Stadium in Bhubaneswar.

Led by Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna awardee Harmanpreet Singh, the Indian squad will open their campaign with two thrilling matches against World No. 7 Spain on February 15 and 16, followed by intense clashes against World No. 4 Germany on February 18 and 19.

India's campaign will open at home, thus offering a prime opportunity for the team to showcase their

recent momentum. Following their encounters with Germany, India will take on Ireland on February 21 and 22, before facing the formidable World No. 2 England on February 24 and 25.

With their Bronze medal triumph at the 2024 Paris Olympics, the Harmanpreet Singh-led side has proven their mettle on the international stage. The team was last seen in action during a two-match Test series at home against Germany in October 2024, where India bounced back from a 2-0 defeat in the first game to defeat the visitors 5-3 in the second. Though Germany won the series via shoot-out, the competitive performances added confidence to India's preparations for the FIH Pro League.

# Richa Ghosh's star knock wins opener for RCB

TDG NETWORK  
VADODARA

Despite Gujarat looking set to start with a win, it was another win for an RCB team who were back to business despite injuries. Richa Ghosh was the star with 64\*, with Ellyse Perry playing a crucial knock.

A massive heist for Royal Challengers Bangalore in the opening match! The defending champions looked to be in a losing situation after early wickets by Ash Gardner and Ellyse Perry falling at a crucial juncture. However, it was a star turn for Richa Ghosh, who hit four sixes and seven boundaries, and Kanika Ahuja, who blitzed 30\* off 13 deliveries.

Franchise cricket is back on Indian shores, as the Women's Premier League commences and signals the start of that portion of the calendar in which India's brightest stars swap out their blue shirts for the multicoloured ones of the teams they represent. The third season of the WPL starts today, with defending champions Royal Challengers Bangalore trying to make a strong start to their title defence, while the Gujarat Giants hope to have a season where they can drag themselves off the bottom of the table, where they have found themselves languishing in each of the first two seasons.



SAI NCOE Bhopal Hockey Stars are TAKING OVER the 38th National Games. (X)

# SESA Football Academy wins Goa Regional Round in shoot-out against Dempo SC

TDG NETWORK  
PANAJI

SESA Football Academy qualified for the National Finals of the Dream Sports Championship 2025 after a tough battle against Dempo SC in the Goa regional round finals at the Fields of Dreams on Friday.

The match ended with a 2-2 draw, but eventually, SESA goalkeeper Sakib Lamture emerged as the hero as his side secured a 4-2 win on penalties in the U-17 Football Tournament.

SESA opened the scoring in the 14th minute when Aniket Terane found the net. A second goal followed when Pramod Gawas doubled the lead for SESA in the 63rd minute. With the victory almost in the bag, Dempo SC turned up the heat.

Jonathan Silva reduced the deficit in the 73rd minute, and in the 5th minute of injury time, Jodric Abranches scored the equalising goal, taking the game to penalties.

In the penalty shoot-out, Jodric and Pradip Kullu found the net for Dempo, but their teammate Favio Martins was unable to convert his penalty. While Favio



missed his attempt, Juvenio Simoes saw his spot-kick saved by the SESA goalkeeper.

For the winning team, only Anmesh Majik saw his penalty saved, while Aniket, Pramod, Leo Soram, and goalkeeper Sakib converted their spot-kicks.

Dempo SC will qualify for the National Finals by virtue of being the best losing regional finalists following the draw and will join the Regional Round winners SESA Football Academy (Goa), Punjab FC (Delhi), Chennaiyin FC (Bengaluru), Reliance Foundation Young Champs (Mumbai), Mohun Bagan Super Giant (Kolkata), and Football 4 Change (Guwahati), completing the final line-up for the National Finals in Goa

# Athletes breaking world records while Indian athletes are in office season training

RUPINDER SINGH

Just a week ago Yared Nguse of USA Olympic bronze medalist from the Paris Olympics in 2024, was immediately followed by Jakob Ingebrigtsen in France last night who clocked 3:45.14 to add to his illustrious list of world records and medals.

This is in complete contrast to most Indian athletes who competed in the National Games at Uttarakhand this week. There was only one record set by Dev Meena in pole vault for men. Many athletes reportedly said we could not clock out best as we are in our office season training.



Top Indian athlete Jyothi Yarraji said in an interview that she only competed to win monetary awards declared by a state. This is despite her being a reliance foundation athlete. The above world-class athletes will continue to improve and no surprise that Indian athletes barring Neeraj Chopra will not be on the odium at the world athletics championships in Tokyo in September 2025. Reminds me of a saying Not failure but low aim is a crime.



# ICC announces prize money for winner of Champions Trophy 2025

AGENCIES  
DUBAI

The return of the Champions Trophy for the first time since 2017 will see the winners of the eight-team tournament earn USD 2.24 million, as well as the trophy they will lift on March 9, as stated in a release from ICC.

The runners-up will receive USD 1.12 million, while the losing semi-finalists walk away with USD 560,000 each, from the total prize pot of USD 6.9 million, a 53 percent increase from the 2017 edition, the release added.

Every match counts at the Champions Trophy and each group match win is worth more than USD 34,000 to the vic-

torious team. Teams that finished fifth or sixth will each earn USD 350,000 while the seventh and eighth-placed sides take home USD 140,000.

In addition, all eight teams are assured of USD 125,000 each for competing in the Champions Trophy 2025. The first global cricket tournament to be hosted in Pakistan since 1996 promises to be a thrilling two-week competition, with matches played in Karachi, Lahore and Rawalpindi.

ICC Chair Jay Shah said the upcoming tournament represents a pivotal moment for cricket. He added that the financial incentive will play a vital role in the growth of cricket.

"The ICC Men's Cham-



ions Trophy 2025 represents a pivotal moment for cricket, reviving a tournament that highlights the pinnacle of ODI talent, where every match is critical. The substantial prize pot underscores the ICC's ongoing commitment to investing in the sport and maintaining the global

prestige of our events. Beyond the financial incentive, this tournament ignites fierce competition, captivates fans worldwide, and plays a vital role in fostering the growth and long-term sustainability of cricket for future generations." Jay Shah was quoted in a release from ICC as saying.

The format of this year's tournament sees the eight teams divided into two groups of four, with the top two teams in each group progressing to the semi-finals. The ICC Men's Champions Trophy will take place every four years with the world's top eight ODI teams, with the Women's Champions Trophy launching in 2027 in a T20 format.