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Review

FEBRUARY
28
2025



MARCH
1
2025

the future is next.



Chief Guest's Session
Shri Narendra Modi
Prime Minister of Bharat



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MANDAPAM,
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HARYANA GOVT LIMITS RS 2100/ MONTH AID ONLY TO POOR WOMEN

25 lakh women will be out of Lado Lakshmi Yojana promised during assembly polls by BJP

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

The Haryana government has decided to provide Rs 2,100 per month only to economically weaker women, contrary to its election promise of giving this benefit to all women in the state. The scheme, named "Lado Lakshmi Yojana," was the key promise in the BJP's election manifesto.

During the state assembly elections, the BJP had listed 20 major promises in its manifesto, with this scheme being the first. As per the information the government was planning to provide the benefit to women having annual income below Rs 1.80 lakh. However, the decision to restrict the benefit to only poor women has

'ANNUAL INCOME BELOW RS 1.80 LAKH'

- During the state assembly elections, the BJP had listed 20 major promises in its manifesto, with this scheme being the first.
- As per the information the government was planning to provide the benefit to women having annual income below Rs 1.80 lakh
- However, the decision to restrict the benefit to only poor women has disappointed around 25 lakh women who expected the aid.
- As per the information the state government is expected to allocate Rs 10,000 to Rs 12,000 crore for this scheme in the upcoming budget session



disappointed around 25 lakh women who expected the aid. A senior government official stated that if everything goes as planned, the scheme will be implemented from

April. Earlier, Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini had announced that a provision for grant of Rs 2,100 per head to the state's women would be made in the upcoming

Budget of the state, and they would start getting the said amount from the coming year.

As per the information the state government is expected

to allocate Rs 10,000 to Rs 12,000 crore for this scheme in the upcoming budget session. To meet this financial requirement, the government may cut down on unnecessary expenses and reduce spending on other schemes.

Under this scheme, women aged 18 to 60 years will be eligible since women above 60 already receive old-age pensions. The scheme will be available only to women from families with an annual income of up to Rs 1.80 lakh. Beneficiaries must provide documents such as the Parivar Pehchan Patra (PPP) and birth certificates.

If the scheme were extended to all eligible women in the state, it would require Rs 1,575 crore per month and approximately Rs 18,900 crore annually.

Blow to democracy: Atishi on AAP MLAs' suspension

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Calling the suspension of 21 Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLAs an "injustice to opposition," Delhi Assembly Leader of Opposition (LoP) Atishi on Friday wrote to Speaker Vijender Gupta and urged him to "protect the democratic values."

"I am writing this letter with great pain and sorrow. The biggest strength of democracy is its fairness and equality. But whatever happened in the Delhi Assembly in the past few days is not only an injustice to the opposition MLAs but also a severe blow to democratic values," Atishi stated in her letter to the Speaker.

She further alleged that "no action" was taken against any MLA from the ruling party.

"On 25 February 2025, during the address of Lt Governor, MLAs of the ruling party raised slogans of



'Modi-Modi,' while the opposition MLAs raised slogans of 'Jai Bhim,' respecting the views of Baba Saheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar. It is very unfortunate that no action was taken against any MLA of the ruling party, but 21 MLAs of the opposition were suspended from the House for 3 days for raising the slogan 'Jai Bhim,' she added.

Atishi further said that "injustice did not stop" here, yesterday when the suspended MLAs were going to

protest peacefully in front of the statue of Gandhiji present in the assembly premises in a democratic way, they were stopped 200 meters before the gate of the assembly and "were prevented from entering the assembly premises."

She said that this is an "insult" not only to the MLAs but also to the mandate given by the people.

"You are the guardian of this assembly. It is the duty of the guardian to do equal justice to all the MLAs, whether they are from the ruling party or the opposition. I urge you to protect the democratic values and ensure that no MLA is deprived of his constitutional rights," Atishi said.

On February 25, tensions escalated in the Delhi Assembly when Speaker Vijender Gupta suspended AAP MLAs, including Atishi and Gopal Rai, amid an uproar before the tabling of the CAG report.

Bengal BJP complains to EC chief over Mamata's allegations

SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA

Suvendu Adhikari, Leader of the Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly, on Friday wrote to Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar to complain against Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's statement about Kumar's appointment.

"The Trinamool Congress chief accused the BJP of trying to influence electoral processes in the country by filling up positions such as the Chief Election Commissioner with 'BJP people', and that by doing so, the BJP is trying to influence the Election Commission of India," he wrote.

Adhikari "requested" the CEC to take cognisance of what he called a "deliberate attempt to malign the Election Commission of India and bring disrepute to the constitutional authority by making false accusations with the motive to tarnish its image among the public."



Along with the letter, Adhikari attached a video clip along with a translated version in English of the relevant portion of the Chief Minister's speech where she was heard referring to the CEC's appointment.

He wrote, "I would like to bring to your attention that the Chief Minister of West Bengal Smt Mamata Banerjee... ques-

tioned your appointment as the Chief Election Commissioner."

Addressing a press conference after handing over another letter to the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), West Bengal, Adhikari claimed that Banerjee had questioned the "integrity" of Kumar as Chief Election Commissioner.

"She (Banerjee) has made all constitutional bodies in the State defunct and is now questioning the appointment of the CEC which has been done in a transparent manner," Adhikari said.

The BJP leader said that the integrity of an officer cannot be questioned if he or she has worked in a particular department or ministry as part of his job.

Adhikari said that a demand has also been placed before the CEO in charge for holding a virtual conference with all senior officials in the districts and to assure them that they can work freely without fear.

Drama, excuse: Delhi CM hits out at AAP for ruckus over CAG report

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Friday slammed the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) for creating a ruckus over the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report, stating that "all this drama is just an excuse." The CAG report in question has flagged a Rs 2,000 crore loss due to the AAP government's liquor policy.

"All this drama is just an excuse because they could not listen to the facts written in the CAG reports... I will not let even a single penny of the state treasury go to waste....," said the Del-



hi CM.

She also accused AAP of misusing Delhi's tax revenue for election campaigns in other states. Gupta claimed that the AAP leaders are rattled by the release of Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) reports, which expose their misdeeds.

"They were the people who collected tax from Delhi and used it for elections in other states... We are releasing all the CAG reports one by one, so they (AAP leaders) are rattled by it. They cannot dare sit in front of us in the house and listen to their deeds," added Rekha Gupta.

The Delhi CM said that the AAP leaders couldn't bear to face the truth and therefore created a drama around the removal of Babasaheb Ambedkar's portrait. She emphasised that the Narendra Modi government has ensured Ambedkar receives the respect he deserves, more than any

previous government.

"They just needed an excuse to get out of the house, so they picked up this issue of Babasaheb Ambedkar's portrait... Narendra Modi government has ensured that Babasaheb Ambedkar gets his due respect, which no government could do....," added Gupta.

On Tuesday, 21 AAP MLAs were suspended for disrupting Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena's inaugural address by raising slogans against the alleged removal of portraits of BR Ambedkar and Bhagat Singh from Chief Minister Rekha Gupta's office in the assembly.

RTI revealed Rs 455 cr have 'disappeared' from Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao: Kharge

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday raised serious questions about the Centre's commitment to women's safety and empowerment.

He claimed that a recent RTI revelation has exposed that a whopping Rs 455 crores have gone missing from the Modi government's 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' scheme, launched in 2015 to address gender imbalance and promote women's empowerment.

In a social media post on X, he wrote, "RTI has revealed that Rs 455 crores have disappeared from Modi government's 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' scheme."

He said that the BJP's advertisement "Enough of attacks on women" now rings hollow, given the numerous instances of harassment and violence against women that have occurred under the BJP rule.

"Echoes of the BJP advertisement 'Enough of attacks on women' have been mocking the cries of all the women for



the last 10 years who have been harassed under the BJP rule and sometimes by BJP goons. Be it the recent rape of a woman in a government bus in Pune, or our daughters of Manipur and Hathras, or the female Olympic champions - there is no trace of women's safety left under the BJP rule," Kharge posted.

He accused that the RTI revelation has also brought to light the government's alleged attempts to hide statistics related to the scheme.

"We had recently asked three questions to Modi Ji on 'Beti Bachao', one of which was on hiding statistics. Today, the

latest revelations of RTI have once again exposed the lies of the Modi Government," added Kharge.

Earlier in January 2025, the Congress President questioned the scheme's effectiveness, touted as a revolutionary initiative to empower women and address the declining child sex ratio in India.

Kharge questioned the government's commitment to women's safety and empowerment on the "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao" scheme, launched by the Modi government in 2015 after completion of 10 years of the scheme.

In a post on X, he raised three critical questions, seeking answers from Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "Why did the BJP adopt the policy of 'Save the criminals' instead of 'Save the daughters'? When will the women of Manipur get justice? Whether it is the Dalit daughter of Hathras or the daughter of Unnao, or our champion female wrestler, why has the BJP always protected the criminals?" he wrote.

Breathalyser test no proof of alcohol consumption: Patna HC reiterates SC verdict

TDG NETWORK
PATNA

The Patna High Court has reiterated the Supreme Court's verdict that a breathalyser (breath analyzer) test cannot be considered conclusive proof of alcohol consumption.

According to Patna High Court advocate Shivesh Sinha, the court passed an order stating that under the Excise Act, a First Information Report (FIR) cannot be filed solely based on the results of a breathalyser test.

Speaking on the Patna High Court's verdict on the breathalyser test, Advocate Shivesh Sinha said, "A Supreme Court's verdict from 1971 says that as per the medical jurisprudence, only conclusive proofs for alcohol consumption are blood test and urine test.

In our case, the blood and urine tests were not done, and only on the basis of the breathalyzer test was an FIR filed. So, the Patna High Court has reiterated the Supreme Court's verdict that the breathalyzer test cannot be considered conclusive proof of alcohol consumption. The HC has said that under the Excise Act, an FIR cannot be filed only on this basis."

He further said that the centre would decide whether to bring an amendment to the Excise policy requiring those who are arrested in such cases to undergo medical tests to reveal the truth.

"There are limited resources and it is practically difficult to conduct medical test of everyone held under alcohol consumption," he further said.

Manipur Gov extends deadline for voluntary surrender of looted arms

TDG NETWORK
IMPHAL

Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla has extended the deadline for voluntarily surrendering arms up to 4 pm on March 6.

The Manipur Governor's house issued a press release for the same. On February 20, Bhalla had requested the people of all the communities, especially those living in the valleys and hills, to voluntarily surrender looted weapons and ammunitions to the nearby police stations, outposts or security forces camp within seven days, the press release said.

Several people requested for the deadline to be extended and as the deadline for returning the voluntary arms and weapons expired. The Manipur governor considered the request of the people and has extended the deadline until March 6, the press release said.

On Wednesday, the Assam Rifles and Indian Army re-



covered 48 illegal weapons in a coordinated effort under the aegis of the Spear Corps, along with the Manipur Police and the state administration.

The surrendered arms were recovered from various locations across the valley and hill districts, including Imphal West, Kangpokpi, and Chura Chandpur.

According to officials, the surrendered weapons included 12 Carbine Machine Guns (CMG), eight 7.62 mm SLR, one AK 47 rifle, one INSAS LMG, six .303 rifles, four 12-bore single-barrel Rifles, one Single-Barrel Rifle, two country-made Rifles, six improvised/country-made

mortars, one Under-Barrel Grenade launcher (UBGL) Gun, one revolver, one pistol, four rockets, ammunition, and war-like stores.

Meanwhile, earlier in the week, Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla and joint efforts in public awareness by District Police, Assam Rifles and CRPF, people in Manipur have begun surrendering illegally held weapons.

On Tuesday, a total of 87 weapons were surrendered by the public to the following places Chura Chandpur, Imphal East, Bishnupur, Thoubal, Kangpokpi, Jiribam and Imphal West Districts.

We would like to be aerospace power by 2047: Air Chief Marshal

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal AP Singh on Friday set his sights on becoming a major aerospace power by 2047. He said that the Indian Air Force (IAF) has already taken significant steps towards achieving this goal, including educating its personnel to be more space-oriented.

Addressing the 'Chanakya Dialogues Conclave', the Air Chief Marshal said, "We would like to be an aerospace power by 2047... We have already taken steps towards educating our people to be more space-oriented." The IAF has been actively involved in the Gaganyaan project, India's ambitious human spaceflight mission. The four Gaganauts, India's first astronauts, were IAF of-

ficers, and the force's medical and training team played a crucial role in their selection and training. The IAF also contributed to the safety requirements of the mission. "Indian Air Force has been involved in the Gaganyaan project from the beginning. The four Gaganauts were our officers, and our medical and training team was involved in their initial selection and training... The safety



requirements of this manned mission were decided with

contributions from the Indian Air Force....," added Air

Chief Marshal AP Singh. Gaganyaan project envisages the demonstration of human spaceflight capability by launching a crew of 3 members to an orbit of 400 km for a 3-day mission and bringing them back safely to earth by landing in Indian sea waters. Shubhanshu Shukla, a serving IAF officer, will serve as the pilot for Ax-4 mission. The Ax-4 mission will be commanded by former

NASA astronaut Peggy Whitson, Axiom Space's director of Human Spaceflight. The two mission specialists are ESA project astronaut Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski from Poland and Tibor Kapu from Hungary. Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla was recently chosen as the 'Prime' astronaut for Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) Gaganyaan mission, for Axiom Mis-

sion 4, scheduled for Spring 2025.

Looking ahead to 2047, Air Chief Marshal Singh predicts that the IAF will have a fleet of advanced aircraft, including Rafale and upgraded Su-30 class jets.

The force will also prioritize interoperability with ground, land, and maritime forces, enabling seamless communication and data transfer during operations.



4
SLBC TUNNEL RESCUE:
500 PERSONNEL
DEPLOYED



11
ISRAEL AIMS EXTENSION
OF GAZA TRUCE BY SIX
WEEKS: EGYPT SOURCES



16
NO SIGNIFICANT INJURY
CONCERNS: KL RAHUL AHEAD
OF NEW ZEALAND CLASH

NXT CONCLAVE 2025

GLOBAL EXPERTS SHARE IDEAS ON TECH BIAS TO INDIA'S RISE

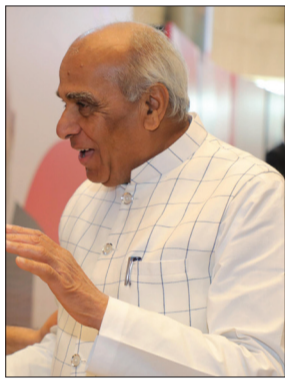
The two-day event saw insightful deliberations on varying topics such as health and lifestyle to international relations

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Renowned experts from diverse fields on Friday brainstormed on topics as varying as tech and gender and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's lifestyle to international relations at the NXT Conclave, organised by ITV Group at Bharat Mandapam in the national capital.

Among them, former Union Minister and BJP leader Smriti Irani highlighted concerns about the growing biases embedded in technology, particularly in AI and facial recognition systems. She pointed out that 80% of facial recognition systems are based on white skin or male models, perpetuating gender and racial biases.

Keith Vaz, former British MP, discussed the evolving India-UK relationship, emphasizing that India has emerged as a global superpower. He noted that the relationship between India and the UK is now one of equals, with both countries



Glimpses from Day 1 of NXT Conclave 2025.

engaging in diplomatic efforts to strengthen ties. He praised India's leadership under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

On the economic front,

Philipp Ackermann, Germany's ambassador to India, spoke about India's rising economic power. He expressed confidence that India would soon surpass

Germany to become one of the world's largest economies.

Globally renowned holistic nutrition and lifestyle expert Luke Coutinho made

the special announcement about 'The Modi Dish'—an Indian superfood prepared by using indigenous millet, which is not only palatable but also

India, EU set year-end deadline for mega FTA

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on Friday agreed to conclude an ambitious India-EU free trade deal by this year amid fears that the Trump administration's threat of higher tariffs could adversely impact the global economy.

In their talks, both the leaders also decided to expand two-way defence co-operation, especially in the Indo-Pacific with Vonder Leyen announcing that the European Union (EU)



Prime Minister Narendra Modi presents a memento to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, at Hyderabad House in New Delhi on Friday. (ANI Photo)

was looking at firming up a security and defence pact with India in line with its partnerships with close allies Japan and South Korea.

The deadline for concluding the trade deal that

would be the largest of its kind globally came over 17 years after the two sides first began negotiations for it. The negotiations for the pact was relaunched in

Viksit Bharat: India needs to grow at 7.8%, says World Bank

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The World Bank on Friday said India will need to grow by 7.8 per cent on average over the next 22 years to achieve the country's aspirations of becoming a developed country by 2047.

A new World Bank report released on Friday finds that this target of India is possible. Recognizing India's fast-paced growth averaging 6.3 per cent between 2000 and 2024, the report notes that India's past achievements provide the foundation for its future ambitions.



Auguste Tano Kouamé

Getting there however

Economy grows 6.2% in Oct-Dec

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The Indian economy grew by 6.2 per cent in real terms in the October-December quarter of the current financial year 2024-25, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation's official data showed on Friday.

The October-December growth is higher than the July-September quarter. In July-September, the GDP grew by 5.6 per cent.

The GDP (gross domestic product) growth was 9.5 per cent in the October-December 2023 quarter, according to the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) on Friday.

The October-December quarterly growth was however lower than RBI's forecast of 6.8 per cent.

The GDP numbers in April-June and July-September too

EPFO keeps rate at 8.25% for 2024-25

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Central Board of Trustees of the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has recommended continuing with the interest rate of 8.25 per cent on Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) deposits for the financial year 2024-25.

The decision was taken during the 237th meeting of the Central Board of Trustees (CBT), EPF, chaired by Union Labour and Employment Minister Mansukh

Market plunges 2% on weak global cues

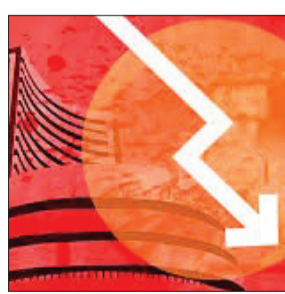
TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

The stock market plunged nearly 2 per cent on Friday, tracking losses in global markets following US announcing 10 per cent additional tariff on Chinese products rattled investors.

The BSE benchmark Sensex tanked 1,414.33 points or 1.90 per cent to settle at 73,198.10.

The NSE Nifty slumped 420.35 points or 1.86 per cent to 22,124.70. The eighth straight day of losses for the market.

Traders attributed the steady decline to relentless foreign fund outflows.



Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 556.56 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data. Rising concerns about the US economic outlook made investors jittery, analysts added.

From its record peak of 85,978.25 hit on September 27 last year, the BSE

Make Punjab drug-free in 3 months: Mann to police

TARUNI GANDHI
CHANDIGARH

The first-ever bulldozer treatment to drug smugglers had raised eyebrows of many in Punjab. Acting further, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann has called a meeting of all deputy commissioners and SSPs to the Punjab Bhawan in Chandigarh and instructed them to eradicate this drug menace from the State in three

months.

The Punjab Government has also made up its mind to make drug smugglers and their families to rot in the mud by stopping benefits of all government schemes for smugglers and their families.

So far, Punjab Police have demolished three houses of drug smugglers. Cabinet Minister Aman Arora has cautioned them saying: "Either leave drug trad-

Avalanche buries BRO camp in U'khand: 32 workers rescued

25 other workers remain trapped

TDG NETWORK
DEHRADUN/NEW DELHI

Thirty-two of the 57 BRO workers trapped under an avalanche in the high-altitude village of Mana in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district have been rescued, after a massive avalanche struck near Mana village in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district, the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) said on Friday.

Concern over the safety of the other 25 are mounting as night fell on the snowbound slopes and rescue efforts came to a temporary halt.

The snowslide, which buried a Border Roads Organisation camp between Mana and Badrinath, rolled down early on Friday morning. Multiple teams battled through tough terrain, heavy snow and icy temperatures through the day to reach the men. They initially pulled out 10 workers and then the others, sources said.

Four of those rescued are reported to be in a critical condition, the Army PRO said. All 32 have been taken to the ITBP camp in Mana for treatment, the sources said.

NDRF Director General Piyush Anand said their focus was to evacuate the maximum number of people. He added that Union



Indian Army conducts a rescue operation after 57 workers engaged in road construction got trapped under huge blocks of snow during an avalanche, in Chamoli on Friday. ANI

Home Minister Amit Shah has been monitoring the operation closely and has given directions to save every life.

"16 people have been evacuated. Four teams of NDRF have been mobilised. Our focus is on rescuing a maximum number of people. The Union Home Minister has been monitoring the operation closely. He has spoken to DG ITBP (Indo-Tibetan Border Police) and me. The Home Minister has given clear directions to save every life," Anand told ANI.

Uttarakhand Disaster Management Secretary Vinod Suman said a team of 65 people are engaged in the rescue missions. He

said the situation remained difficult due to continuous snowfall in the region. However, Suman added that rescue operations were underway to rescue those trapped BRO workers.

"The situation there is difficult as there is continuous snowfall in the area. A team of 65 people is engaged in the rescue mission. So far, 10 people have been rescued, and an operation is underway to rescue those trapped. We have made a demand for an Army helicopter," Suman said.

His remarks came after Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama on Friday said that the rescue mission was underway to pull out BRO workers who got trapped under the snow in the aftermath of a massive avalanche that struck near Mana village in the Chamoli district.

"Rescue mission is underway. Due to inclement weather, helicopter service cannot be used. We are trying to rescue the labourers. The offices of the PM and Home Minister are in touch with us," Dhama said, addressing a press conference here.

Earlier in the day, Dhama took stock of rescue efforts to free the trapped workers. He reached the state disaster Control Room to review the efforts to rescue workers trapped under snow.

The Uttarakhand government has issued helpline numbers



NDRF team inspects the area after the water level of the Tawi River rises amid flash floods, in Jammu on Friday. ANI



Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann holds a meeting with senior police officials in Chandigarh on Friday

ing/smuggling or leave the State".

The Chief Minister in the meeting with police officials said this is a historic moment as the state government has adopted a zero-tolerance policy against drugs. He expressed the hope that the Police will uphold its glorious tradition and make the state completely drug-free with the active support and cooperation

P5

PUNE BUS RAPE: ACCUSED ARRESTED, BROUGHT TO POLICE STATION

13 teams were formed to catch culprit, Opp slams Fadnavis-led Govt over law and order

TDG NETWORK
PUNE

The accused in the Pune rape incident, who was detained by a team of the Pune Crime Branch from a village in Shirur Tehsil of Pune district, has now been formally arrested, official said on Friday.

DCP Smarhana Patil, Zone 2, Pune City Police, stated that the accused, Dattatray Ramdas Gade, has been formally arrested.

According to police a request for food and water from a house led to the arrest of the accused who was on the run after allegedly raping a woman inside a bus at Swargate bus station in Pune

BJP MP Bhagwat Kishanrao Karad on Friday condemned the recent rape incident in Pune and expressed confidence that strict action would be taken under the leadership of Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

He also mentioned that 13 teams were formed with the help of Maharashtra's administration and the Home Ministry to catch the accused.

Shiv Sena (UBT) spokesperson Anand Dubey on

'STRICT ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN'



■ BJP MP Bhagwat Kishanrao Karad expressed confidence that strict action would be taken under the leadership of Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

"The Pune incident has shaken the entire Maharashtra...We are living in modern times, but such barbarism is happening in these times. The government and those responsible for law & order are responsible for this," said Shiv Sena (UBT) spokesperson Anand Dubey

Congress national spokesperson Atul Londhe Patil also criticised Maha-



rashtra government over the recurring rape incidents in the state.

Friday criticised the Devendra Fadnavis-led government over the arrest of the accused in the Pune rape incident.

Dubey labelled the government and law and order responsible for the incident,

demanding the death penalty for the accused and a thorough investigation into the case.

Dubey said, "The Pune incident has shaken the entire Maharashtra...We are living in modern times, but such

barbarism is happening in these times. The government and those responsible for law & order are responsible for this. People swear by the law & order in Maharashtra."

He further pointed out

that the law and order situation in the state was deteriorating.

"The manner in which crime has increased in Pune is very unfortunate...After 48 hours, the government is appreciating itself that it has nabbed the accused... What is the guarantee that he acted alone? It is possible that there is a gang behind this...Locals say that buses remain parked there, and incidents happen on those buses every day. This incident has come to light, but several others might not have. The government must dismantle this entire gang. We demand that Devendra Fadnavis hang the guilty and also have an investigation...Law & order of entire Maharashtra is collapsing..." he further added.

Congress national spokesperson Atul Londhe Patil also criticised Maharashtra government over the recurring rape incidents in the state.

Patil said, "Such incidents, happening again and again, reveal the failure of the government. A fake encounter was done in the Badlapur case. The High Court also made an observation. It is a failure of the government that it is unable to provide security to women."

SLBC tunnel rescue: 500 personnel deployed

TDG NETWORK
NAGARKURNOOL

Rescue operations are ongoing in Nagarkurnool after a tunnel collapsed on February 22, trapping eight workers. Efforts to rescue them have been intensified, with a total of 500 rescuers deployed at the site to help trace the eight people who have been trapped in the SLBC tunnel

A joint effort involving mining experts from Singareni, the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), the Indian Army, and other agencies is in progress, officials said.

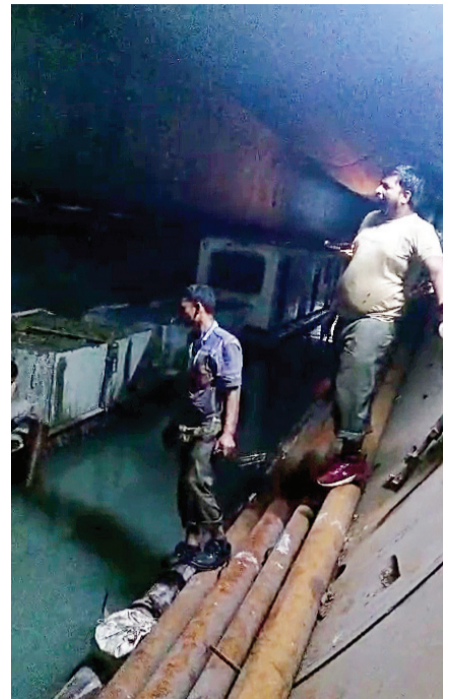
An officer from the rescue team said, "Initially, we deployed 20 people and yesterday and today we are going to deploy 200 personnel... All our rescue team personnel from Singareni are experienced in working underground and in emergency situations. So, they are experts in rock cutting."

Nagarkurnool SP Gaikwad Vaibhav Raghunath said, "All Singareni teams, NDRF team, SDRF team, Army and company officials are here. Sludge has been brought out since yesterday. Hopefully, we will get good results soon. The combined teams are working here. It is a combined operation."

Meanwhile, Nagarkurnool District Collector B Santhosh dismissed reports that NGRI's ground penetrating radar (GPR) have captured images of human bodies in debris of the SLBC tunnel where eight persons were trapped.

"We have noticed that some fake news is going on that some bodies have been found. That news is not true. I request the Media also. If there is any such news, we will inform from the Collector's side," he told reporters.

According to Congress MLA Dr. Chik-kudu Vamshi, relief operations are con-



tinuing on the seventh day since the incident. He highlighted that 12 departments are collaborating to expedite the process, and experienced personnel from Singareni mines are playing a crucial role.

"This is the 7th day since the incident occurred... Today, work is being done on war footing with the collaboration of 12 departments. Those who are the experts in India are working here... I hope that by this evening, most of the slush will be removed... People who have the experience of working in Singareni mines are here..." he said.

He further said, "People of BRS only do political drama. So many incidents occurred during their regime, and nobody responded. But today, with their malafide intention, they are doing propaganda. This is very unfair & unfortunate. Their attitude is not good. People of Telangana are watching this..."

Stalin asks people to defend state amid row over delimitation, three-language policy

TDG NETWORK
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Friday urged the people to "rise" to defend the state in a fight against the delimitation of constituencies and the three-language policy.

Sharing a video message, Tamil Nadu CM said that the state is confronting two critical challenges, one of language and the other is the fight against delimitation.

Stalin pressed that the constituency delimitation state's self-respect, social justice, and welfare schemes for the people.

"Today, Tamil Nadu is confronting two critical challenges - the battle for language, which is our lifeline, and the fight against delimitation, which is our right. I earnestly urge you to convey the true



essence of our battle to the people. Constituency delimitation directly impacts our state's self-respect, social justice, and welfare schemes for the people. You should take this message to people. Every individual must rise to defend our state," Stalin said in a video message on X.

Stalin said that other states were raising their voice of solidarity against the central government.

"Today, we are witnessing voice of solidarity rising from Karnataka, Punjab, Telangana and beyond. Faced with this resistance, the Union Government insists that it is not imposing its will upon us, yet all their actions suggest otherwise," Tamil Nadu CM said.

Stalin criticised the three-language policy, saying that it had resulted in the centre withholding the state's funds and that delimitation would now 'affect' the state's representation.

"Their three-language policy has already resulted in the withholding of our rightful funds. Likewise, while they claim they will not reduce Tamil Nadu's parliamentary seats, they are unwilling to assure that the representation of other states will not be disproportionately increased.

Leaders from southern states, including Tamil Nadu CM Stalin and Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah, have strongly criticised the Centre over the issue. Earlier in the day, Stalin urged the people to "rise" to defend the state in a fight against the delimitation of constituencies and the three-language policy.

Sharing a video message, Tamil Nadu CM said that the state is confronting two critical challenges, one of lan-

There's a growing concern in South: Venugopal on constituency delimitation

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Congress' General Secretary KC Venugopal on Friday expressed concern over the centre's plans of constituency delimitation and said that Union Home Minister Amit Shah's comment only created "more confusion among southern states"

"That statement (by the HM) created more confusion among the southern states. You are going to increase the total seats, and then you are telling southern states that your seat will not decrease from now on. What is it? There is a growing concern in South India," Venugopal said.

After facing heavy criticism from the southern states over the proposed delimitation of constituency, Amit Shah had assured that southern states will not lose a single Lok Sabha seat.

Leaders from southern states, including Tamil Nadu CM Stalin and Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah, have strongly criticised the Centre over the issue. Earlier in the day, Stalin urged the people to "rise" to defend the state in a fight against the delimitation of constituencies and the three-language policy.

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Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah termed Amit Shah's assurance to Southern states that they would not be disadvantaged in the delimitation process as untrustworthy.

Cong plans to corner Himanta govt over corruption ahead of state polls

TDG NETWORK
GUWAHATI

Assam Congress President Bhupen Kumar Borah on Friday said that the party has devised its strategy for the 2026 Assam Assembly elections and will take its fight against the Himanta Biswa Sarma-led government to the grassroots.

"We had a very long meeting with the party high command regarding the strategy for the upcoming 2026 Assam Assembly elections. All the party's state leaders resolved that we will fight against the corrupt government of Himanta Biswa Sarma in one voice," Borah said.

He further stated that the party has presented a file detailing allegations of corruption against Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to the Congress high command and intends to take it to every household across the villages.



"We presented the entire file of Himanta Biswa Sarma's corruption in front of the party's high command. We will also take that file to every house of every village..." he said.

On Thursday, Congress held a meeting of its leaders from Assam at Indira Bhawan to prepare for next year's assembly polls.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and party leader Rahul Gandhi attended the meeting, which also included party leaders from Assam, including Gaurav Gogoi, the party's Deputy Leader in the Lok Sabha.

Congress leader Gaurav



Gogoi said that "the corrupt government" in Assam has to be uprooted to "save democracy" in the state. He said the Congress president and Rahul Gandhi spoke to the party leaders from the state.

"They listened to us and instructed us to move forward. If we have to save democracy in Assam, the corrupt BJP government there has to be uprooted.

Everyone knows that there is an atmosphere of unrest in society. The Lanka of corruption that Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has established has to be destroyed," Gogoi said.

SC sets aside termination of two women judges in Madhya Pradesh

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday set aside the termination of two women judges by the Madhya Pradesh High Court and the State government.

A bench of Justices BV Nagarathna and N Kottiswar Singh noted that

their termination was illegal and arbitrary as their performances, as per the High Court's report, spoke otherwise.

Thus, the Court proceeded to direct the reinstatement of the terminated judges and called for showing sensitivity towards women judicial officers.

The top court was dealing

with a suo moto case concerning the termination of six women judges in MP. Four were reinstated in September 2024 after the top courts' intervention.

The top court had taken suo moto cognizance in the matter in January 2024 following the termination of the women judges in the State.

related to construction in Delhi." Shah instructed that "the Delhi government should appoint special prosecutors so that these cases can be disposed of soon" to ensure the quick disposal of the 2020 Delhi riots cases.

Besides, Union Home Secretary and IB Chief along with senior officers from the Ministry of Home Affairs joined the meeting.

The Home Minister further directed the Delhi Police to



start recruiting for additional posts soon, and the DCP-level officers should go to police stations, organize public hearing camps, and solve the

problems of the public. Shah also suggested forming "new security committees in JJ clusters for the safety of women and children."

He also instructed that the "Delhi Police should identify the places where there is daily traffic jam and Delhi Police Commissioner and Chief Secretary should meet and find a quick solution to this, so that the public can get relief."

The Home Minister also asked the Delhi government to "prepare a 'Monsoon Action Plan' to deal with water-logging by identifying the places where water-logging occurs."

In the nearly two-hour

meeting, Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan and Director Intelligence Bureau were present, along with the senior officials from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Delhi Police, and Delhi government, to discuss recent developments, security challenges, and measures to ensure public safety in the national capital.

The Delhi Police showcased a detailed presentation about the law and order situation in Delhi in the meeting, which

focused on strategies to enhance coordination among the newly formed Delhi government and the Delhi Police to strengthen policing measures and address any emerging threats

The meeting was expected to focus on strategies to enhance coordination between the newly formed Delhi government and the Delhi Police, as well as strengthen policing measures to address emerging threats to law and order in the city.

Take strict action against police stations over poor performance: Shah

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah chaired a crucial meeting to review the law and order situation in the national capital on Friday.

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, Delhi Home Minister Ashish Sood and senior officers from the Delhi government are present in the meeting.

The Home Minister directed the Delhi Police Com-

missioner to take strict action against police stations and sub-divisions that consistently perform poorly."

Union Home Minister said, "It should be the priority of Delhi Police to eliminate interstate gangs in Delhi with a ruthless approach."

"Work with top to bottom and bottom to top approach in narcotics cases and dismantle its entire network," directed Shah, adding "permission of Delhi Police will not be required in matters

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON BANGLADESH POLITICAL CRISIS

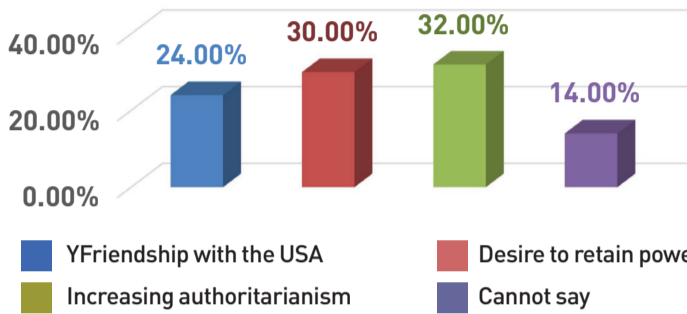
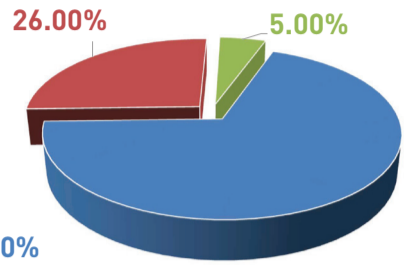
69% believe that the trust of the military in the Yunus government in Bangladesh is declined

A significant majority (69%) believe the military's trust in the Yunus government has declined. However, 26% think there is no decline in trust, while 5% remain uncertain. This indicates growing concerns over civil-military relations in Bangladesh.

Q1.▶

Has the trust of the military in the Yunus government in Bangladesh declined?

Yes No Cannot say



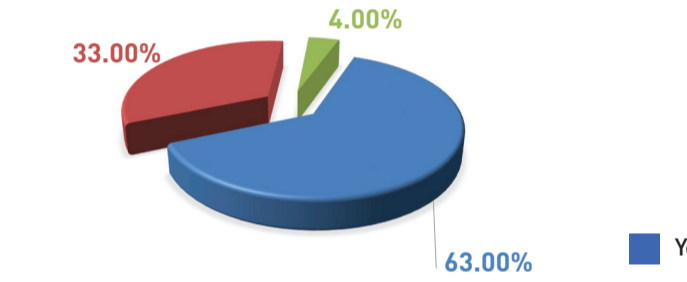
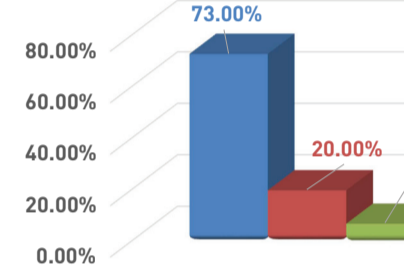
Q2.▶

What do you believe is the reason behind the deteriorating relations between Mohammad Yunus and Army Chief General Jaman?

Q3.▶

Is the increasing conflict between Yunus and the military pushing Bangladesh toward instability?

Yes No Cannot say



Q4.▶

Can the military take control of Bangladesh like in Pakistan?

Yes No Cannot say

Jahan-e-Khusrau made place in hearts of people in 25 years: PM Modi



Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the 25th Anniversary Of Sufi Music Festival 'Jahan-E-Khusrau', at Sunder Nursery in New Delhi on Friday. (ANI Photo)

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said that the Sufi music festival Jahan-e-Khusrau has made a place in the hearts of people, calling it its biggest success over the years.

Addressing the audience, PM Modi emphasised the significance of such festivals for the country's culture and art.

"Before coming to the mehfil, I had the opportunity to visit THE Bazaar... Moments like these are not only important for the country's culture and art but also bring a sense of relief," he said.

"Jahan-e-Khusrau's journey is completing 25 years. Over these years, this festival has carved a place in people's hearts, which is its greatest success," PM Modi added.

The Prime Minister also extended Ramzan greetings on the occasion.

"I extend my greetings to the entire country as Ramzan is about to begin. Since I am here at Sunder Nursery, it is important to remember Aga Khan. His contribution to beautifying Sunder Nursery has been a blessing for many artists," he said.

"In the 'Nazr-e-Krishna' presented here, we saw glimpses of our shared heritage. There is a unique

fragrance in this event of Jahan-e-Khusrau--the fragrance of Hindustan's soil!" he added.

PM Modi stated that Amir Khusrau described India as greater than all the big countries of the world at that time "Hazrat Amir Khusrau described India as greater than all the big countries of the world at that time...He called Sanskrit the best language in the world...He considers the wise men of India to be greater than even the greatest scholars," he said.

Speaking about Sufi culture, he remarked, "When Sufi culture came to India, it felt connected to its roots." The three-day festival, held from February

28 to March 2, brings together artists from across the world to celebrate the legacy of Amir Khusrau.

Organized by the Rumi Foundation, the festival was started by renowned filmmaker and artist Muzaffar Ali in 2001 and is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year.

During the event, the Prime Minister visited the TEH Bazaar (TEH: The Exploration of the Handmade), which showcased One District-One Product crafts, exquisite artifacts from across the country, and short films on handicrafts and handlooms.

He also interacted with shopkeepers during his visit to the Bazaar.

Global experts share ideas

CONTINUED FROM P3

loaded with nutrition.

"For the first-time, we are thrilled to be requested to create and unveil to India and the world 'The Modi Dish'. It is completely Made in India and crafted by my team and displayed at the prestigious here at our stall," he said.

NASA Astronaut Dr. Mike Massimino said that efforts are being made to safely bring back NASA astronaut Indian-origin Sunita Williams and Butch Wilmore, which were stranded

in the International Space Station for over 125 days, to the Earth within this March.

Former Canadian Prime Minister Stephen J. Harper, in his keynote address spoke extensively about India's pivotal role in the evolving global order. He acknowledged that while the world is undergoing significant transformations, India is uniquely positioned to navigate these changes successfully.

Rt. Hon. Stephen J. Harper, former Prime Minister of Canada, delivered a thought-provoking address on the

significant policy shifts that followed Donald Trump's election. Harper shared his surprise at Trump's assertive approach, especially in regard to U.S.-Canada relations. On the domestic front, Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini said "we have a government in its third term led by the respected Narendra Modi Ji. If you compare Haryana from before 2014 to what it will be like in 2025, you'll notice it's changing fast. I'm glad to see that in the last 10 years, every district in Haryana has been getting four-lane roads."

Avalanche buries BRO camp in U'khand: 32 workers rescued

CONTINUED FROM P3

Mobile No: 8218867005, 9058441404; Telephone No: 0135 2664315; Toll Free No: 1070.

According to Uttarakhand government's Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), people are encouraged to contact the helpline numbers, which are being operated through state emergency operation centre of Uttarakhand State Disaster Management Authority.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah spoke to

Dhami and assured that the government's priority was to safely evacuate the people trapped in the incident.

The Home Minister also spoke to the DG of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and the DG of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) regarding the evacuation efforts. Meanwhile, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh also spoke to Chief Minister Dhami and assured local army units are providing all possible assistance.

(WITH AGENCY INPUTS)

India needs to grow at 7.8%

CONTINUED FROM P3

would require reforms and their implementation to be as ambitious as the target itself, the World Bank said in a statement, soon after unveiling the report.

"Lessons from countries like Chile, Korea and Poland show how they have successfully made the transition from middle- to high-income countries by deepening their integration into the global economy," said Auguste Tano Kouame, World Bank Country Director.

"India can chart its own path by stepping up the pace of reforms and building on its past achievements," he added. The report evaluates three scenarios for India's growth trajectory over the

next 22 years.

The scenario which enables India to reach high-income status in a generation, requires: achieving faster and inclusive growth across states; increasing total investment from current 33.5 per cent of GDP to 40 per cent (both in real terms) by 2035; increasing overall labour force participation from 56.4 per cent to above 65 per cent; and accelerating overall productivity growth.

"India can take advantage of its demographic dividend by investing in human capital, creating enabling conditions for more and better jobs and raising female labour force participation rates from 35.6 per cent to 50 per cent by 2047," said Emilia Skrok and Rangeet Ghosh, co-authors of the

report.

In the past three fiscal years India has accelerated its average growth rate to 7.2 per cent. In order to maintain this and attain an average growth rate of 7.8 per cent (in real terms) over the next two decades, the World Bank report recommends four critical areas for policy action: increasing investment; fostering an environment to create more and better jobs; promoting structural transformation, trade participation and technology adoption; and enabling states to grow faster and together.

In 2025-26, the Indian economy is projected to grow between 6.3 per cent and 6.8 per cent, as noted in the Economic Survey presented on January 31.

Economy grows 6.2% in Oct-Dec

CONTINUED FROM P3

grew at a slower pace than was estimated by the central bank. The weak GDP numbers can be gauged from the consumption in the economy and latest stock market performance. The RBI has projected real GDP growth for 2024-25 at 6.6 per cent. In the January-March quarter, the GDP is expected to grow 7.2 per cent, RBI projected in December monetary policy.

According to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation's estimates, the Indian economy, in real terms, is expected to grow by 6.5 per cent in 2024-25 as compared to the 8.2 per cent growth in 2023-24. It is 10 basis points less than RBI estimates.

Nominal GDP is expected to witness a growth rate of 9.7 per cent in 2024-25 over the growth rate of 9.6 per cent in 2023-24.

In 2025-26, the Indian economy is projected to grow between 6.3 per cent and 6.8 per cent, as noted in the Economic Survey presented on January 31. India's GDP grew by an impressive 8.2 per cent during the financial year 2023-24 and continued to be the fastest-growing major economy. The economy grew by 7.2 per cent in 2022-23 and 8.7 per cent in 2021-22. It also released the second advance estimate for the current fiscal and pegged the economic growth at 6.5 per cent against 6.4 per cent estimated in the first advance estimate released in January.

Market plunges 2%

CONTINUED FROM P3

benchmark index is down 12,780.15 points or 14.86 per cent. The Nifty dropped 4,152.65 points or 15.80 per cent from its lifetime high of 26,277.35 hit on September 27, 2024.

"The equity markets closed for the week deep in the red, with the front-line indexes losing altitude by 1.90 % and the broader markets close to 3%. While the trend of market decline continues unabated, the larger than expected fall has been caused due to uncertainties surrounding the actual impact of the countervailing tariffs imposed by the US, and similar walls erected by other countries including China. What has caused much of consternation is the possibility of China devaluing its currency in response to the

tariffs to sustain its trade competitiveness," said Dr. Joseph Thomas, Head of Research, Emkay Wealth Management

The move may have consequences for other regional currencies as well like Taiwan and South Korea, though the Rupee may be much less affected as it is still under managed floating and has a perennial trade deficit, he added.

Among the Sensex pack, Tech Mahindra slumped over 6 per cent followed by IndusInd Bank which tanked over 5 per cent.

Mahindra & Mahindra, Bharti Airtel, Infosys, Tata Motors, Titan, Tata Consultancy Services, Nestle and Maruti were also among the major laggards. HDFC Bank emerged as the only gainer from the pack. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong

Kong settled with deep cuts. European markets were trading mostly lower. US markets ended sharply lower on Thursday.

"The national market experienced a sharp decline amid heightened bearish sentiment largely influenced by weak global cues. The decline was largely triggered by fear of the implementation of 25 per cent tariff on US imports from Canada and Mexico, set to take effect next week, along with an additional 10 per cent tariff on Chinese goods," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

"This marked the fifth consecutive month of losses for the Nifty-50, the longest losing streak in nearly three decades," Ameya Ranadive, Chartered Market Technician, CFTE, Sr Technical Analyst, StoxBox, said.

Make Punjab drug-free

CONTINUED FROM P3

of general public. Mann said that the government will set up special courts for speedy trial of drugs cases. He said there is no dearth of funds for this The

CM further noted that the supply line of drugs should be snapped and those selling the drugs should be put behind the bars. He said that the war against drugs should be transformed into a mass and social campaign for which the officers must

plan a big action.

Citing example of Narangwal village where illegal property of drug smuggler was razed on Thursday evening, Mann said that library will be constructed over the Shamlat land where the house was razed.

India, EU set year-end deadline for mega FTA

CONTINUED FROM P3

June 2022 after they were suspended in 2013 due to a gap in ambition.

"Today, we have decided to create a bold and ambitious roadmap for the India-EU partnership for the period beyond 2025. It will be launched during the next India-EU summit," Modi said.

India is set to host the summit later this year.

The negotiations for the deal were not moving forward ostensibly in view of the EU's persistent demands to New Delhi cut tariffs on cars, wine and agricultural products.

The EU Commission president, accompanied by the College of Commissioners or senior political leaders of the bloc's member nations began her two-day India visit on Thursday.

It is the first such visit after the European parliamentary elections in June last. In his media state-

ment, Modi indicated resolve by the two sides also to move forward on negotiations for an investment protection pact as well as on geographical indications as part of broader efforts to boost investments. "We have prepared a blueprint for collaboration in the areas of trade, technology, investment, innovation, green growth, security, skilling and mobility," he said.

"We have directed our teams to conclude a mutually beneficial bilateral free trade agreement by the end of this year," he said.

Echoing Modi, Von der Leyen said: "We have tasked our teams to build on this momentum and finalise our free trade agreement before the end of this year."

"We are expecting a lot of our trade negotiators, we told them they should surprise us," she said.

EPFO keeps rate at 8.25% for 2024-25

CONTINUED FROM P3

Mandaviya in New Delhi on Friday.

According to an official statement, the interest rate will be officially notified by the government, after which EPFO will credit the amount to the subscribers' accounts.

Ministry said: "CBT recommended 8.25 per cent annual rate of interest to be credited on EPF accumulations in members' accounts for the financial year 2024-25. The interest rate would be officially notified by the Government of India, following which EPFO would credit the rate of interest into the subscribers' accounts".

The government also high-

lighted that EPF continues to offer high and stable returns compared to many other fixed-income instruments.

The interest earned on EPF deposits is also tax-free up to a specified limit, making it a preferred long-term investment option for salaried employees. Apart from the interest rate announcement, the CBT approved key modifications in the Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance (EDLI) scheme to improve financial security for the families of EPF members.

One of the major changes is the introduction of a minimum insurance benefit for employees who pass away within one year of service.

CHARM OF THE 'VIRAR KA CHHOKRA'

OPINION

RASHEED KIDWAI



Govinda is in news again... this time not due to politics or films but on a tragic spectacle of breakdown of marriage after 37 years. His fans and well wishers pray that divorce reports prove to be untrue and he and Sunita continue in united and marital bliss.

On the personal front, Govinda is married to Sunita, the friend who became his wife when he was barely out of his teens. Reminiscing about the moment of his engagement, he had said, 'I came home one day from shooting and my mother said it's high time I got married. Sunita and I were married the next morning at 4.30 a.m.' Govinda described it as a 'love cum arranged marriage', since the two knew each other well. 'We used to fight constantly,' Sunita recalls. 'He thought I was too mod [modern] for him.' But he married at his mother Nirmala Devi's insistence. 'I never questioned my mother,' he says. 'I just tried to give her all the happiness that was in my hands.'

There is more to Govinda's private life, however, than this bland statement reveals. There were fleeting rumours of his link-up with Karisma (previously known as Karishma) Kapoor when she first started out in films

and was paired opposite him. But the love of his life seems to have been his co-star Neelam Kothari.

Film glossy Stardust had run a story on the Neelam-Govinda romance under the heading: 'Why Govinda could not marry Neelam.' According to contributor Suguna Sundaram, the two were from drastically different backgrounds. The actor, who described himself quite unapologetically as 'an unpolished boor', was smitten by his Hong Kong-born leading lady, who seemed to him like 'a Dresden doll - pure, clean, polished and dignified'. He confessed to having felt inadequate in her presence, because his spoken English was far from sophisticated. Govinda met Neelam for the first time at producer Pranal Mehta's office, where she had turned up in white shorts, her long hair flowing behind her 'like an angel's', as he put it later. While working together in Love 86, followed by Ilzaam (1986)

Govinda's alleged romantic involvement with Rani Mukerji, whom he would meet on the sets of Hadh Kar Di Aapne (2000), created quite a scandal, as, by then, he was a married man. The Times of India wrote of the rumours circulating about the pair: of the actor gifting Rani an expensive car, diamond jewellery and even a high-end apartment. The affair supposedly reached a point where Sunita registered her protest by moving out of her marital home. Eventually, Govinda's unwillingness to give up on his marriage would lead to the break-up of his relationship with Rani who, many years later, went on to marry bil-

lionaire film producer and director Aditya Chopra.

There must have been something special about the 'Virar ka chhokra' to attract women who wouldn't normally have considered him their 'type'. It could well have been the quality that has been described as his 'simplicity', but there was obviously more to him than met the eye. Even author Shobha De, who had spent an evening with Govinda for a film-tabloid feature, was impressed by him. 'He has a native intelligence and a terrific sense of humour,' she would observe, adding, 'and he's a shrewd businessman. He's figured out what his audience wants and he delivers it.' Speaking to the author, film-maker Mahesh Bhatt commented on the Govinda 'magic' and his success in films which was based on 'essentially a salt-of-the-earth everyman appeal combined with sincerity and innocence. His Indianness was his major asset'. Bhatt, who had directed him in Awaargi (1990), would add, 'People could tune into him.'

In Govinda, David Dhawan saw the 'yahoo exuberance' of Shammi Kapoor and the poignancy of Raj Kapoor's Anari (1959). 'Govinda had a natural vitality, which was spontaneous, not cultivated,' he remarked.

The same spontaneous charm would work wonders for his political career soon after Sonia Gandhi took over as Congress president in late 1990s. An accomplished and successful actor by then, Govinda was invited to a high-profile political event organized at Congress leader Murlu Deora's residence to welcome 'politician' Sonia Gandhi in Mumbai. Deora's wife Hema clearly remembers how Murlu had led Govinda directly to the table where Sonia was seated and introduced him.

Someone in 1998, Murlu Deora had hosted a party in honour of Sonia Gandhi who had taken over as the AICC president. An accomplished and successful actor by now,



Govinda was invited to a high-profile political event organized at Murlu Deora's residence to welcome 'politician' Sonia Gandhi in Mumbai. Deora's wife Hema clearly remembers how Murlu had led Govinda directly to the table where Sonia was seated and introduced him. The Congress president is said to have remarked, 'Of course, I know him. My children keep talking about him.' Govinda was then seated next to her, while the hosts Murlu and Hema excused themselves to attend to other guests. Hema recalls noticing from a distance how the actor had Sonia Gandhi in splits several times on that occasion. Congress leaders close to her had then observed that the AICC chief had been in-

stantly struck by Govinda's simplicity and easy manner and had invited him to pay a visit to IO, Janpath when the actor was next in Delhi - a meeting that would finally materialize in 2003. Govinda maintained that he had great admiration for the Nehru-Gandhi family. 'I chose the Congress for its thoughts, its acceptance of people of all opinions and its wide perspective,' he would declare.

In 2004 Lok Sabha polls, Govinda had earned a tag of a giant killer when he had posted a spectacular victory against BJP veteran and former central minister Ram Naik. However, by 2008, the Congress MP from Mumbai North had become disillusioned and made sev-

eral threats to quit politics. From January-February 2008 till May 2009, his association with the Congress and his parliamentary constituency were minimal. The actor did not campaign for the Congress during the 2009 polls, but the Party's nominee Sanjay Nirupam won the seat.

Govinda had little to do with the Congress's ideology or its social programmes and had remained absent for most of the Lok Sabha sessions. In fact, as MP, the actor had earned the dubious distinction of skipping the highest number of Lok Sabha meetings during his tenure (2004-2009) in Parliament, with records showing that he had attended merely 12 per cent of

all the Parliament sessions during his five years there. Moreover, the few speeches and remarks he had made in Parliament were deemed 'politically incorrect' and a source of embarrassment to the Party leadership.

Govinda remained politically inactive during the second phase of UPA. He was miffed as neither Sonia Gandhi nor prime minister Dr Manmohan Singh offered a Rajya Sabha seat. While speaking to this correspondent then, Govinda would often withhold comments, merely expressing his unwillingness to talk about politics. 'You are free to draw your conclusions on why I left politics,' he had told me, avoiding comment on politics and his experience of working with Sonia, Dr Manmohan Singh and the Congress Party. 'I felt that it would be proper to quit politics because I didn't have much experience in this field,' he said by way of explanation.

However, for an actor known mostly for his loud brand of comedy and equally loud outfits, along with his sexual innuendo-laden dialogues and violent pelvic thrusts - all carefully calculated to target and win over the masses, primarily, the front-benchers in the audience - Govinda had been a surprise as a political package. During the tireless rounds of campaigning, the enthusiastic actor often spouted poetry with the same ease with which he had executed his famous 'latka-jhatkas', the suggestive dance moves, that had earned him a vast fan following. He also had a quick wit about him: when someone asked him once, if, with Atal Bihari Vajpayee around, more poetry would be recited and there would be more 'taal-mel', or harmony, in Parliament, Govinda had retorted: 'Taal toh zaroor hoga, lekin mel ke bare mein keh nahi sakte (Rhythm will certainly be there, but I can't be so sure about harmony).'

That was the charm of the

'Virar ka chhokra', as the boy from Virar was fondly referred to. Coming from the fringes of society was, surprisingly enough, one of Govinda's greatest strengths. He was born as Govind Ahuja to a Punjabi family that had settled in Maharashtra and fallen on hard times even before his birth. His mother, the late Nirmala Devi, was a classical vocalist and his father Arun Ahuja, a struggling film actor who is best remembered for his role in Mehboob Khan's Aurat (1940).

Long before Rahul Gandhi's politically motivated Metro rides to project himself as one of the people, it was Govinda who would board the local train to garner support for his Party. Potential voters felt reassured and warmed to him. 'Yeh bheedu toh apun ka aadmi hai (This man is one of us),' they were heard murmuring to each other. A big crowd always accompanied him, talking to him and cheering him on with, 'Chal, Govinda bhai, chal.'

At times actress Zeenat Aman would be by his side in the election campaign. And contribute her bit by saying, 'They call us nachne gaane wale. But let me tell you we sell our art for a living, but never our integrity (iman nahin bechte).' 'Govinda alare ala (Govinda is here)! he would exclaim, adding, 'Ram Naik gela re gela (Ram Naik is about to be sent packing).'

In an interview for the Hindustan Times in 2017, Govinda had said, 'I am proud to say that whatever I have ever wanted, I have done it my way,' he would declare. 'I didn't have to please anyone to get where I am. I worked towards it. I wanted to be at the top of films, I did it my way. Then I wanted to try my hand at politics, and I did that. In 2009, I wanted to get out of it [politics] without any controversies, and I have to admit, I'm really very lucky to [have managed that]. Now I am here again, entering films, when I want to.'

Shudh Desi Etiquette

FROWNING PROHIBITED

JAS KOHLI



There is a move to rename India as Bharat. But as a prelude to this, Indians should shun the habit of being overly self-critical (of course, we do need to get rid of some bad traits and in our heart of hearts we are aware of them). Take pride in the Brand Desi and also promote it all over the world so as to enhance our soft power. So, avoid giving 'kacha khaa jaane wali' look to someone who is making slurping

sounds while sipping tea. Even a brief stay in a foreign country may infect us with foreign accent, crowd phobia and firangi etiquette. Don't provide free entertainment to onlookers by opting to eat a samosa with a fork and knife. The morsel can become a projectile and may land on the plate of your date. It may even enter her mouth which just got opened to convey her 'falling in love'. And one's rating may fall from a high-as rapidly as a skydiver.

Whenever Indians meet a relative or a good friend, they don't converse about the weather - that is the British way of knocking the door of talking. To convey your relationship as 'jigri dost' or 'sachi sahel', one often begins with - you are looking thinner (a person with a small frame can also be referred to as 'weak'). To make the

comment weighty, one can add, 'You don't need to diet. Rather, you should eat as if there is no tomorrow!'

If someone has put on weight, 'sugar coat' the comment by saying - you are looking 'healthier'. Other notable adjectives include - radiant, tired, younger, saggy, uplifted, sad, cheerful etc. Commenting on someone's dress or perfume is less impactful. The term 'body shaming' has come into vogue only recently. Indians have been doing socially sanctioned body shaming since time immemorial.

Privacy is a Western concept. Desis are expected to poke noses into each-others' internal affairs. Whenever someone comes out of the polling booth after casting the 'secret ballot', a common query is, 'Whom did you vote for?'

In our country, most of the family secrets get metamorphosed into family tales. They can even be revealed by co-passengers who get familiar during a long-distance train journey. A few months ago, a client consulted me for the first time regarding the premature wrinkling on



Privacy is a Western concept. Desis are expected to poke noses into each-others' internal affairs. Whenever someone comes out of the polling booth after casting the 'secret ballot', a common query is, 'Whom did you vote for?'

her face. I asked her if there was any pre-disposing factor. Pat came the reply, 'It is my husband. When I was young, I was so pretty that many men were after me. But my judgement got clouded and I chose him.

Probably I was destined to be with this irritating specimen.'

In fact, in most of our conversations, we end up gossiping about relatives and friends. There is always a person with a 'marked

deviation from the mean' personality about whom one can talk for hours or even more. Topics like the extent of the universe or the evolution of life are to be discussed only after downing a few drinks or if one is with an intellectual or a pseudo-intellectual. Political and religious discussions should be held only amongst like-minded individuals. Otherwise, good friends can develop thousand-year enmity - like that of 'India-Pakistan'.

When in Desi-land, do as the Desis do!

FORM IV

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HARPER ENVISIONS INDIA AS THE NEXT GLOBAL POWER

TIKAM SHARMA
NEW DELHI

Former Canadian Prime Minister Stephen J. Harper, in his keynote address at the NXT Forum 2025 held at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, spoke extensively about India's pivotal role in the evolving global order. He acknowledged that while the world is undergoing significant transformations, India is uniquely positioned to navigate these changes successfully.

Harper noted that India would have preferred a reformation of global rules and institutions to reflect its rising status, but these frameworks are losing relevance instead of evolving. Despite this, India does not need excessive hedging strategies,

as it is emerging as a global power based on its size and strategic appeal.

Highlighting India's demographic and economic strength, he pointed out that India is set to become the world's most populous nation and has secured its place among the top five economies, growing faster than any major country. Combined with its vast landmass and cultural influence, India is on track to become a leading global force.

However, Harper acknowledged India's challenges, including agricultural inefficiencies, a military that lags behind its economic strength, and geopolitical pressures from China and elements within the Islamic world.

Despite these obstacles, he emphasized India's strategic

RBI CUTS RISK WEIGHTS

- ▷ Harper sees India as a rising global power, uniquely positioned to navigate global changes.
- ▷ India is set to become the most populous nation and one of the top five economies, growing faster than any major country.
- ▷ India faces issues like agricultural inefficiencies, a lagging military, and geopolitical pressures from China and the Islamic world.
- ▷ India is a desirable partner, aligned with democratic values, especially in countering China's influence.
- ▷ India's post-colonial status helps it build partnerships across the Global South.



advantages—it is seen as a desirable global partner rather than a threat. He also underlined that India's democratic values align with the EU and the U.S., making

it a key player in countering long-term challenges posed by China.

Harper highlighted India's unique position as a post-colonial nation, enabling it to

build strong partnerships across the Global South, including the Gulf, Africa, and Brazil. As the world shifts into a multipolar order, India remains one of the few

nations capable of expanding its global influence while sustaining growth and prosperity.

However, he warned that the emerging world order mirrors the rivalries of the pre-World War I era, a troubling prospect given modern military advancements and AI technologies. He cautioned that such rivalries could lead to even greater instability.

Harper urged India to balance power politics with its commitment to democratic values, playing a constructive global role rather than being drawn solely into spheres of influence. He emphasized that challenges like economic growth, climate change, health crises, and global security require international cooperation, which cannot thrive in a

world dominated by authoritarian power struggles.

India, as a free and democratic nation, is well-positioned to be the voice of the Global South while maintaining democratic leadership. He criticized the West for its recent failures in leadership, oscillating between self-doubt and moral superiority, which has created a global leadership vacuum that India is well-placed to fill.

Harper viewed the rise of strongman politics, exemplified by Trump, as a necessary but temporary correction and emphasized that the world still needs a strong yet idealistic America.

Meanwhile, he highlighted India's strong leadership and forward-looking vision, praising its rapid modernization and expanding global

partnerships. He commended India's G20 presidency for representing not just its own interests but also those of Latin America, Africa, and other developing nations.

Harper reaffirmed India's openness to leading democratic power, distinct from the West, capable of shaping an Asian Century based on cooperation rather than coercion. He stressed that India's significance lies beyond its economic and military rise, as it also serves as a beacon of democracy, deeply rooted in its unique history and culture.

Finally, he lauded India's openness to dialogue and intellectual exchange, noting that this spirit fosters global discussions like the NXT Forum, reinforcing India's role in shaping the future world order.

From Ukraine-Russia war to climate change, AI, and trade tariffs: Abbott chats with Kant

Q: In light of current geopolitics, what are the three key issues: when will the war in Europe end, the impact of 'Make America Great Again' on climate action, and how will AI and quantum computing shape global production and productivity?

A: Well, thanks, Amitabh. Look, I hope the war in Europe ends as soon as possible, but I hope it ends on terms that are as just and as fair to the victim as possible. And plainly, Russia invaded Ukraine. There was no justification for the invasion of Ukraine and any ceasefire that doesn't provide Ukraine with ongoing security. And that means serious European soldiers on the ground as a tripwire against any future Russian invasion, I think would give the aggressor a win. And if the aggressor wins in one place, potential aggressors in other places will be massively emboldened. So that's that one.

On Climate Change:
"I've got to be honest with you, I don't think climate change is the biggest problem we face, obviously, here in India. The chief issue is trying to give more and more Indians, a decent middle class standard of living. And frankly, any attempt to reduce emissions that damages, that is not worth doing. And at the moment, in countries of the West, Biden's America, Britain, still Australia is still Europe. This quest to reduce emissions is making us economically weaker. And ultimately it's hurting our efforts to compete with the dictatorships that wish us harm."

On Artificial Intelligence:
"Now, as for AI, it's going



to make a huge difference obviously over time. But in the end, I just know that it's just another tool and it's the people that use the tool that really count. The tools are there to make us help us to do better. But, anyone who's dominated by the tool is a fool."

Q: With rising protectionism and the breakdown of the WTO, what are the implications for the Global South, and countries like Australia and India?

A: Okay. Well thanks, Amitabh. Look, the so-called global South is vastly better off now than it was a generation ago. Inequality between countries is much less now than it was a generation ago. I think of the poor in inverted commas country that I know best, namely PNG. And you compare Port Moresby, say, 30 years ago to Port Moresby today and it's chalk and cheese. Sure, there are a lot of poor people in Port Moresby. Yes, there's a lot of inequality of wealth in Port Moresby, but in many ways it's now a sophisticated global city as well: Port Moresby. So, so globalization has meant equalization. And the reason for that is that a world

with freer movement of goods, people and ideas has given the less well-off more chance to get ahead than ever before. There's no doubt that free trade, makes everyone better off in the long run. In the short run, they can be quite difficult adjustments. And it's the job of Democratic governments to try to smooth those difficult adjustments. One particular consequence of free trade, ever since China was brought into the WTO, is that China has exploited free trade but not practiced it. And this is where Prime Minister Modi showed rare courage and insight, and great leadership when he refused to join the Chinese led Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. Because this, in the end, was just going to be another device like the Belt and Road Initiative for China to practice various forms of economic colonialism. So, look, free trade is very important. But frankly, I am much more in favor of free trade with our friends with like minded democracies than I than, of free trade with those who wish to do us harm, such as communist China under the

present regime.

Q: Do you think China's market penetration is driven by state support and subsidized goods?

A: Exactly right. What China has deliberately set out to do is to dominate critical markets, particularly emerging markets. Now, here in Australia, you know, Australia, my country, we constantly hear this talk, Oh, Australia has got to become a renewable energy superpower, as if no other country has wind or sun. In fact, the only country that is going to become a renewable energy superpower is China, because China is making the solar panels and the wind turbines that we are importing often enough on the back of slave labor, from the Uyghurs in Xinjiang province. Now, that's not the kind of thing that we want to participate in, in my view.

Q: Given China's dominance in critical minerals and renewable energy, could the vacuum created by U.S. withdrawal from climate action further strengthen its monopoly?

A: But, but but again, we are only buying electric cars because governments are subsidizing them.

China is the biggest challenge in the Indo-Pacific: Tomohiko Taniguchi

TIKAM SHARMA
NEW DELHI

Tomohiko Taniguchi, former foreign policy advisor to the late Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, shared his insights on Indo-Pacific policy while speaking at the NXT Forum 2025. He highlighted the major challenges and key opportunities in the region.

Taniguchi emphasized that for any national leader to effectively guide their country, they must maintain an optimistic vision for the future. However, he identified the three biggest challenges in the Indo-Pacific, saying, "Number one, China. Number two, China. Number three, China." He warned that China would continue to grow both economically and militarily, becoming even more formidable. While some argue that China's economy is slowing, its population advantage is turning into a liability, and



wealthy Chinese citizens are seeking investment opportunities outside the country, overall economic growth remains significant. Even if China's growth rate moderates to 3%, 4%, or 5% annually, it would still mean a doubling of the economy within 14 years. As a direct consequence, military expenditure and power will also continue to expand.

Looking ahead five or ten years, Taniguchi pointed out that both Japan and India are inadvertently contributing to China's growing military power every day. This raises a crucial ques-

tion: How can democratic nations like India and Japan coexist with and manage the rise of an increasingly powerful Chinese military? The first major challenge, therefore, is China's military expansion.

The second challenge stems from China's economic trajectory, which has defied conventional expectations. It was once widely believed that economic growth would naturally lead to the rise of the middle class, which in turn would foster greater political openness and public discourse. However, this assumption has proven entirely false in China's case. Instead of moving toward liberalization, China is becoming even more authoritarian. This trend is expected to have profound global implications, intensifying the ideological and strategic competition between democratic and authoritarian models of development. This rivalry,

which has already begun unfolding, is only going to escalate further.

The third critical challenge, Taniguchi stressed, is Taiwan. Although not directly about China, Taiwan's future holds immense significance for Japan. He underlined the gravity of the situation, stating that Taiwan's fate is paramount for Japan's future. Should Taiwan fall under the control of the Chinese Communist regime, Japan would face a drastically reduced strategic space. Beyond the geopolitical implications, such a scenario would also impact Japan's national psyche and confidence, making it harder for the country to stand firm against China or maintain its own public discourse. The situation in Taiwan is thus not just a regional issue but a direct and pressing concern for Japan's security and strategic position in the Indo-Pacific.

Data is the raw material of today in tomorrow's world: Alec Ross

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Alec Ross lauds the NXT event for 'diversity of the people' speaking at the conference. Ross said, "We've literally gone from a Hungarian minister to an American cowboy. So I'll be bringing the perspective. We've talked a little bit about America and America's place in innovation." He further introduces himself, "While I'm an academic and I write books, I come from this sort of cowboy world of entrepreneurship and ven-



ture capital."

Ross started a company in a basement with three buddies without \$0.02 to their name and grew it into a global company. "And now I'm focused on supporting other young entrepreneurs around the world, including here in India. And what I want to do is I want to give

perspective about some of what I think is about to happen, not looking out science fiction, looking out 20, 25 years," he added.

Speaking about the data in today's world, Alec said, "But let's talk about not what people are so focused on necessarily in 2025. But let's look at 2026 and under arching all of this. When we talk about the raw material of the economy, I can't help but think that land was the raw material of the agricultural age, Iron was the raw material of the industrial age, and data is the raw material of today in tomorrow's world."

"In today's world, he or she who owned the data, controlled the data, or can harvest meaning from the data are those that are creating the industries and businesses of the future," added Ross. Alec also stated that he no longer believes there is actually a digital sector anymore but rather believes that all sectors are in fact digital. "All sectors are in fact being transformed by technological forces, the most recent of which is artificial intelligence," he added.

'Insights into future of high-speed tube travel'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Speaking at the NXT Conclave, Sebastien Gendron, Founder & CEO of Transpod, stated, "Our vision is to create high-speed transportation." He continued by shedding light on the concept of tube transportation, saying that the idea has been around for more than 100 years.

While addressing the attendees at the NXT Conclave, Gendron stated, "Our vision is really to create the next generation of AI-speed transportation for those who are familiar with the current state-of-the-art high-speed trains. I've been around for 50 years now, and at Transpod, we really

believe that the next generation of high-speed transportation belongs to what we call tube transportation. Or, you may have heard of Hyperloop."

Sebastien Gendron, Founder & CEO of Transpod, added, "Today, trains are limited to 200 kilometers per hour. By removing most of the air, you can achieve speeds of 2000 kilometers per hour. Now, be careful. We're not designing a magnetic gun. We're not shooting people in a tube. We're talking about decent acceleration and deceleration. It will take a few kilometers to reach top speed and then several kilometers to decelerate."

He further shared, "The vehicle we've been devel-



oping at Transpod is called the FluxJet. It's the size of a train coach or bus—about 25 meters long. But as you can imagine, within that tube, there's no air. So, it looks more like a spacecraft without wings. It's really made of composite materials, and the vehicle is built with magnetic propulsion

and a levitation system."

Sebastien Gendron also shared, "Part of our development plan, over the next 3 to 5 years, is to reach commercialization. Our preliminary work is in Alberta, where we've signed a memorandum of understanding with the Alberta government to develop our first line between Calgary and Edmonton."

He added, "For those who follow, I'm glad we have a former Prime Minister of Canada here in the audience. The Alberta government just announced last year a transportation plan defining their mobility plan up to 2060. The report will be released this summer, and a decision will be made by the committee this fall."

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

We have now identified through our In Space program and a policy that has now been formalized to open up the resources of our space organization, ISRO. It famously landed on the south pole of the moon about 12-18 months ago to the private sector. Following this discussion, Union Minister for Science & Technology & Department of Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh, spoke about what's upcoming in the space industry.

Union Minister Jitendra Singh said, "We manufactured, but this was one such antibiotic that was indigenously developed. And I am proud that I'm associated with the Department of Biotechnology, which did that.



Right from the first antibiotic that we had somewhere in the late 90s, the fence line, which was founded by Alexander Fleming. It was rated as green of drugs."

Furthermore, he added, "Successive generations were actually alien. So we have actually opened up into a new arena in the medicinal drugs as well. And of course, that's a beautiful example of public-private participation, because all the trials and the

salt were developed in the public sector."

While discussing the space story of India, the Union Minister said, "See, I think what is amazing is that the space story of India is itself going to be a case study in the years to come, because the entire shift or the quantum leap that has happened has happened in the last four light years."

"It's important to understand the strategies behind that. Before I come to the fu-

ture missions, and of course, some of the recent missions that you referred to were amazing because Isro, the Indian Space Research Organization, was established in the year 1969, which has gone down in the history of the year. But the first human being on the surface of the moon, Neil Armstrong, and Isro were just being born," the Union Minister added.

Further, Jitendra Singh says, "Then we set out 72 communication satellites for some of the private players, who were, you know, engaged in the communication industry. So let me put some of these thoughts in perspective. There are 970 television channels operating in India, of which 358 news channels, believe it or not, India Today is consuming 20GB of data per month."

'ONE OF THE GREATEST FALLACIES IS BELIEVING TECH IS AGNOSTIC TO BIAS': SMRITI IRANI


 ANJALI SINGH
 TDG NETWORK

Smriti Irani discusses AI's significance in gender equality at NXT Conclave 2025, highlighting how technology is neutral to its users. She talks about how artificial intelligence (AI) can help close the gender gap and create a more inclusive digital future.

While speaking about AI at the event, Smriti Irani shed light on what does 'I mean for gender saying, "I think one of the greatest fallacies that have been sold is that technology is agnostic to bias. As AI grows, one recognizes, realizes, and many people monetize the fact that technology has created certain schisms, certain gaps which have become opportunities for many those who have lived as thought leaders or as policy makers dedicated to equity. Their decadal presumption was that equality will be assured. That is still a challenge when you talk about the age, let's say, of AI, many people compute how much it will add to a nation's GDP."

"Not much psychological computation has been done as to how it will affect the psychology of consumerism, and from a gender perspective, if you look at global research, you will

find that of everything that women earn, close to 80 to 90% of their own earnings goes into the health and education of their own families. Now, as technology enables consumerism, you will find today, the research says 72% of purchasing decisions are affected by algorithms. One would presume that that algorithm would deepen your engagement as a woman on spans of education and health, because you are genetically predisposed to it. But what happens is that technology and the Journal of Psychology especially says that women, through algorithms, get 22% more spending on perishable consumables and at 30% less likely to get algorithmically driven data sets or content, which encourages them to invest "She added.

The former Union Minister continue herself by sharing a research done by Berkeley by a lady called Genevieve Smith.

"A small research was done by a lady called Genevieve Smith. They did a study across 133 AI systems and they found that there was a gender bias in 44% of those systems. They did a study across 133 AI systems and they found that there was a gender bias in 44% of those systems. Now, why this research came about also is very unique. Gene-

vieve Smith, along with her husband, applied for a credit card in the US. She had the same money in the bank, in fact, had a joint account".

She continued, "Her credit score was better than the husband's and her tax returns were as transparent as the husband's. She got credit 10% less than the husband or 20% less. That drove her to start studying the technological effects of how women enhance or how the credit worthiness of women decreases over a period of time. So when this happened to her, her husband was very outraged and he went on Twitter and he said, this is happening to people and I think very, very, this is a comedy of errors because he was in the field of technology, helping code web-based applications. So he did a call out on Twitter to say this has happened to our family. Steve Wozniak, I believe, who was, I think, party to one of the first devices or applications made by Hacker, he went and responded and said, guess what this, I don't know, I like this". Irani also shed light on bias facial recognition systems, "They use a male body or the dynamics of a male body on an AI system. They do not look at anticipate a female driving and the impact on a female body. They do not anticipate a pregnant woman driving.

Process has started for safe return of Williams, Wilmore: NASA Astronaut

 KAUSHAL VERMA
 NEW DELHI

NASA Astronaut Dr. Mike Massimino, at the NXT Conclave on Friday, stated that efforts are underway to safely bring back NASA astronauts of Indian origin, Sunita Williams and Butch Wilmore, who have been stranded at the International Space Station for over 125 days. The plan is to bring them back to Earth by March of this year.

"We are putting efforts into sending the capsules in March to bring her back safely within March. The process in this regard is underway to send the capsule. Both astronauts, including Sunita Williams, will be brought back six days after the capsule reaches there," he told The Daily Guardian on the sidelines of the NXT Conclave held at the Bharat Mandapam in the national capital.

Initially, they were supposed to return home aboard the Boeing Starliner capsule, but due to some technical issues, NASA will now use the SpaceX Crew Dragon spacecraft for the mission.

NASA had initially planned for Williams and Wilmore to return in late March or April. However,



in mid-February, they announced a switch to the SpaceX capsule, advancing their return to mid-March. This change shortens their stay on the ISS by at least two weeks, adjusting the schedule for upcoming missions.

Sunita Williams, an American astronaut, has completed multiple space missions. She flew to space aboard the Space Shuttle Discovery in December 2006 for her first mission, STS-116, and later traveled to the ISS as part of long-duration missions. She is a retired U.S. Navy officer and one of the most experienced spacewalkers, with nine spacewalks (the second most for a woman) and a total time of 62 hours and 6 minutes (fourth overall, and most by a woman). Williams was assigned to the ISS as a member of Expedition 14

and Expedition 15. In 2012, she served as a flight engineer on Expedition 32 and then as commander of Expedition 33.

In 2024, Williams returned to the ISS on the Boeing Crew Flight Test, the first crewed mission of the Boeing Starliner. From August 2024 until March 2025, Williams and fellow astronaut Butch Wilmore are slated to undertake various scientific experiments and maintenance tasks aboard the ISS.

Indians, in general, are quite excited and proud of this development, and many have shared their views with The Daily Guardian.

Kolkata-based youngster Naheed Fatima said, "It's a very proud moment for all the Indians. We look up to Sunita and prayed for her safety."

"Just because of her, I believe girls are getting inspired to explore their careers in the space sector," Shillong-based Fini Daris told The Daily Guardian on the sidelines of the event.

On the other hand, Priya Bhakat, from West Bengal's Murshidabad district, expressed surprise at the delay in her safe return. She believed that a premier agency like NASA should have made more efforts from the very beginning to reduce the length of their stay.

"They (NASA) should work on such delays. They are not normal," Bhakat added.

Dr. Mike Massimino, a NASA Astronaut shares about how it feels to be in space; he said, "It's magical. It's interesting because it's a bit stressful because you're doing your job, whatever that might be on your mission. My missions were both on the space shuttle going to the two missions of the Hubble Space Telescope. So we did a lot of spacewalking, and the Hubble Space Telescope is this great instrument, very important, making great discoveries."

Furthermore, he stated, "It's work. But at the same time, it's just magical to be up there, working with the people" He also mentioned.

Insights on health from conclave

 TDG NETWORK
 NEW DELHI

Clinician scientist & neuroscientist Dr. Ann Liebert and Managing Director of Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council Dr. Jitendra Kumar sat down for an interactive session chaired by Prof. Jonathan Fleming, Senior Lecturer at the MIT Sloan School of Management, to discuss what lies ahead in the field of medicine, at the NXT Conclave 2025 organised at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi.

Prof. Jonathan Fleming, Senior Lecturer at the MIT Sloan School of Management on Friday delivered a keynote address on medicine and its far reaching effects while addressing the gathering at the NXT Conclave 2025 in Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.

Robots will provide life-saving care outside of hospitals, Fleming underlined as he stressed that the next mountain to climb in the field of medicine is the brain. Jitendra Kumar "to see how these technologies that are developed at the laboratories can be translated into a commercial product through entrepreneurial means".

CM Saini unveils vision for Haryana's growth

 TDG NETWORK
 NEW DELHI

Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini marked his attendance at the NXT Conclave held at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. While speaking at the event Mr. Saini laid emphasis on the development Haryana has seen and what are his plans for the state.

When asked how does he see the future of Haryana, Nayab Singh Saini stated, "We have a government in its third term led by the respected Narendra Modi Ji. If you compare Haryana from before 2014 to what it will be like in 2025, you'll notice it's changing fast. I'm glad to see that in the last 10 years, every district in Haryana has been getting four-lane roads."

He further shared, "We've connected every district to the four-lane project. In the near future, our goal is to



ensure that areas in Haryana close to Delhi and the airport are easily accessible. No matter where you start in Haryana, you should be able to reach the airport in about two to two and a half hours."

The Haryana CM added, "This is the kind of connectivity we're aiming for. Our vision is to attract industries

and investments to Haryana, and we've developed a major plan for that. In the upcoming budget session, we'll be discussing this further."

Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini also revealed, "We talked to the officials from the textile industry, who are members of our association, about the pre-budget plans.

We discussed what we can do to attract more industries to Haryana in the future. We've come up with a solid plan to encourage investors to set up shop here. People see the environment and atmosphere in Haryana and think, "I want to start my business here."

He concluded, "The government is always trying to

simplify things for him, so that more people can come without any hassle. We've set up a separate system in Haryana called HPCC, where if someone submits a single application through the single window system, we make sure they get their complete NOC in a timely manner. This way, anyone can come here and easily get what they need."

Detailing the ongoing road connectivity projects, the Chief Minister stated, "We have successfully connected every district through the four-lane project. Moving forward, our objective is to enhance accessibility to areas in Haryana that are close to Delhi and the airport. Our aim is that regardless of where someone starts their journey in Haryana, they should be able to reach the airport within approximately two to two and a half hours."

Keith Vaz calls Modi-Trump bond a 'bromance' with diplomatic impact

 TIKAM SHARMA
 NEW DELHI

Keith Vaz, former MP of the UK House of Commons, emphasized the growing significance of India-UK relations while speaking at the NXT Forum 2025 at Bharat Mandapam in Delhi. Addressing the audience via video conference, Vaz highlighted that, as a British citizen of Indian origin, the relationship between the two nations holds deep personal and diplomatic importance. He stressed that this bilateral engagement should remain a pivotal aspect of both countries' foreign policies.

Reflecting on India's remarkable global ascent, Vaz noted that in just four decades, India has transformed into a major superpower. He remarked that India-UK relations have evolved into a partnership of equals, largely due to India's succession of impressive leaders who have consistently advocated for equal footing in international affairs. India, he emphasized,



engages with other nations only on terms of mutual respect and parity.

Keith Vaz, speaking via video conference at the event, said, "Fast forward 40 years, and India has become this global superpower. Relations with the UK are very important to me as a British citizen of Indian origin. It's extremely important that this remains one of the pivotal relationships in our diplomatic and foreign policy areas. I think it has improved, and I think it has become one of equals. This is because India itself has had a succession of very impressive leaders, all of whom have argued very

strongly that India will only deal with countries on the basis of equality."

He added, "I think this relationship will only grow stronger and stronger. I was present at the first EU-India summit when I was a Foreign Office minister under Tony Blair, and I know there was a great deal of excitement around that. But now, meetings of this kind are routine, and you can't make any of the big decisions in the world without having India involved in those decisions. The relationship between our two countries is strong and pivotal, and I think it can only get better. But it takes goodwill on all

sides to ensure that happens."

When asked if India and the US were heading for a great future together, Keith Vaz stated, "One can only look at the chemistry between David Cameron and Donald Trump to know that something very special is going on—probably beyond a bromance. It's much more important than that. Prime Minister Modi went to Washington before many other world leaders, certainly before the prime ministers of the UK and other countries. The President of France went there, and he met President Trump in the Oval Office. There was a great deal of warmth, manifested by many years of friendship. I think we all remember Trump's visit to India and how successful it was, as well as Prime Minister Modi's visit to the US. But a visit is not enough." He added, "What really matters is bilateral negotiations. I'm very worried about the threats the United States is making to impose tariffs.

 TDG NETWORK
 NEW DELHI

With India set to become the third-largest economy by 2030, German envoy to India Philipp Ackermann, while speaking at the NXT Conclave 2025 in Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi on Friday, said he wouldn't be surprised if India overtakes Germany in the coming years as "we are eagerly waiting" for India "to overtake us in this statistics" because Bharat is a "country of 1.4 billion inhabitants with a strong growing economy".

"And I think it's only natural that India moves up on the ladder. I would not be surprised if in the years to come, India will overtake Germany. A growing and strong economy means room for more partnership and increased engagement," Ackermann said while speaking on the prospects of a larger collaboration between the two countries.

Highlighting that more German businesses are



I think there will be no change in our clear sort of attention towards India and our conviction that India is a very important partner.

growing interested to work with India, the envoy further said that the more the Indian industry grows, the more the Indian private sector becomes global, and the better it is for bilateral trade relations.

Ackermann also noted that with a conservative body winning the recently concluded German election, the European nation is "in the first steps of what we call the coalition building". "We, the Conservative

Party, who has won the elections, needs a coalition partner to, get elected in parliament. And that will happen now in the weeks to come. It will take a certain while, maybe a month or two. But at the end of the day, we will have a stable and very, you know, sound government, which is a center government, clearly," he underlined.

Stressing that there won't be a change in India-Germany relations under the

incoming leadership in Germany, the envoy told the conclave that Chancellor-elect Friedrich Merz "will continue this very, very dedicated, friendly course" with India.

Ackermann had, on an earlier occasion too, emphasised that Germany's foreign policy would prioritise European unity, transatlantic relations, and engagement with 'key partners like India'.

Stressing that there will be 'no change' in Berlin's attention towards India, the German envoy had said, "I think, it's easy to say foreign policy in Germany is rather consensual. So, foreign policy continuity is notable whether it's the Conservative Party or the left-centre parties who ruled the government. So you remember, the last conservative chancellor was Angela Merkel. She had excellent relations with Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) and the Indian government. I expect the same for the new government."



'THE MODI DISH' — LUKE COUTINHO UNVEILS THE INDIAN SUPERFOOD AT CONCLAVE

KAUSHAL VERMA
NEW DELHI

Globally renowned holistic nutrition and lifestyle expert Luke Coutinho here today at the NXT Conclave organized by the ITV Network made the special announcement about 'The Modi Dish'—an Indian superfood prepared by using indigenous millet, which is not only palatable but also loaded with nutrition.

"For the first-time, we are thrilled to be requested to create and unveil to India and the world 'The Modi Dish'. It is completely Made in India and crafted by my team and displayed at the prestigious here at our stall," he said during his session in the NXT Conclave, which was held at Bharat Mandapam.

He said that the trending millet meal is made with millet superfoods.

"Offer this 'Modi Dish' for all our guests and the world beyond," he said. Mr. Luke Coutinho Co-Founder, Luke Coutinho Holistic Healing



Systems.

Coutinho also praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for improving healthcare at the grassroots level, particularly focusing on children's health. He commended Modi's efforts in addressing obesity and promoting healthier dietary habits, including reducing oil consumption.

Luke Coutinho is an Indian entrepreneur, author and lifestyle guru specialising in nutritional science and alternative medicine. He is the co-founder of Luke

Coutinho Holistic Healing Systems Private Ltd and Youcarelifestyle.com.

Coutinho authored several books including Eat Smart Move More Sleep Right (2011), The Great Indian Diet (2014), and The Magic Immunity Pill (2020).

Speaking about the rising obesity crisis, Coutinho called for immediate action. He noted that obesity, diabetes, and prediabetes are becoming widespread, emphasizing the need for early education and proper nutrition from childhood. He

supported PM Modi's call for a healthier nation, urging awareness through education in diverse languages.

Coutinho also advocated for the consumption of local superfoods like desi ghee and millets, which are rich in essential nutrients. He praised Modi's promotion of millets and acknowledged India's leadership in the UN's declaration of 2023 as the International Year of Millets. India cultivates all nine traditional millets, including sorghum, pearl millet, and finger millet, which provide significant health benefits.

Highlighting government initiatives, he spoke about the portion tracker nutrition program and the need to reduce edible oil consumption by 10-15%. He also emphasized the importance of home-cooked meals, encouraging both men and women to cook. Homemade food should always be promoted. Cooking is a basic skill everyone should learn," he said.

Coutinho lauded Modi's holistic approach to public

health and urged collective efforts to build a healthier India.

Meanwhile, supporting the vision of the Fit India movement, Coutinho advocated for simple, sustainable habits. He encouraged everyone to embrace home-cooked meals, teaching young generations the art of cooking, and reducing oil intake by 10-15%. He also spoke about the importance of daily physical activity, promoting a holistic approach to fitness that includes strength training, muscle endurance, stamina, flexibility, and mobility. Additionally, mind-body exercises like yoga, pranayama, and meditation were integral to maintaining overall wellness.

He concluded by urging Indians to take personal responsibility for their health, embracing fitness as a daily routine, regardless of time constraints. "Even if you can't spare an hour, do 30 minutes. Just move, eat mindfully, and stay healthy," he said.

The Great Indian Popcorn: Makhana as health boost

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Luke Coutinho, a renowned health expert, shared valuable insights at the NXT Conclave about the importance of incorporating traditional Indian superfoods into our daily diets, stressing their health benefits for both body and mind. Speaking passionately about various natural foods, Coutinho praised the initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Fit India Movement and highlighted some powerful superfoods that can help combat obesity and promote wellness.

Coutinho began by discussing Makhana, also known as fox nuts, calling it "The Great Indian Popcorn." He explained how Makhana, a seed rather than a nut, could be a healthier alternative to traditional snacks like popcorn. When prepared correctly, Makhana is crunchy, low in calories, high in protein, and rich in fiber, making it an excellent snack. "If paired with the right ingre-

dients like protein, it can be a very well-balanced and nutritious option," Coutinho emphasized.

He then spoke about the nutritional benefits of coconut, especially for those with metabolic issues. Coconuts are complex carbohydrates packed with fiber, bioactive compounds, and B vitamins, making them a great choice for improving health. To enhance its benefits, Coutinho recommended preparing coconut as a snack by roasting it in pure ghee with turmeric, salt, and pepper.

A key point Coutinho raised was the need for food manufacturers to avoid adding unnecessary chemicals, sugars, or unhealthy ingredients to these nutritious foods, especially Makhana. By consuming them in their natural form, we can maximize their health benefits and keep them wholesome.

Coutinho also highlighted the powerful properties of Amla, an Indian super berry. Packed with antioxidants—17 times more than pomegranates.

'Millets for better health'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Luke Coutinho stated, "We have two categories of health in our world right now. We have complication where the latest trends are red light therapy, ice baths, longevity supplements and pills. And then we have a category which focuses on the full complication. Have we got the basic fundamentals right. What are these basic fundamentals that every one of us need. You, me, all our citizens across the country, in the world."

He continued, "What are these fundamentals that we need? How do diseases start to get better when we use the best medication? But we also complemented with the right lifestyle. Very aware of emerging science is showing us the correlation of sleep deprivation with a suppressed immune system. We're aware of the signs showing us chronic stress levels, the impact on cortisol, adrenaline, hormonal health and our immune system, and inflammation. We're aware of a sedentary lifestyle and what it does for our system."

Powering India's future: Nuclear innovation and global partnerships

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

As the world moves towards native sources of power, particularly renewable and cleaner energy, nuclear sector is where experts and observers see tremendous collaboration between India and other countries. So, what is the potential for this energy of the future, and what are the areas for change and efficiency that can be utilised by all humanity? Ashwin Nandapurkar CEO, India Ex-Fusion; Ted Jones, Senior Director for National Security at the Nuclear Energy Institute and Chris Singh Founder Chairman, Holtec, sat down in conversation with Suhan Mukerji, Founding Partner at PLR Chambers, for a panel discussion on 'Next in Nuclear' at the NXT Conclave organised in New Delhi on Friday.

'India Has Huge Possibility to Deploy Nuclear in Different Areas'

Responding to a question on how he sees the ecosystem development and what are models that India could look at to increase private



participation and an opening up of the market, Ted Jones Senior Director for National Security at the Nuclear Energy Institute, said it's a very timely question since India seems to be considering private sector participation in the nuclear energy sector.

"The US is one of the few countries in the world that has had private sector leading in the nuclear energy sector from the beginning. The invention of the commercial technologies was by General Electric and Westinghouse with the boiling and pressurized water reactors, many, many decades ago. And since then, the US has a very large ecosystem that includes a lot of public private-partnerships. And internationally, we

have been very comfortable working with both: governments and private industry. I think the US has a pretty strong record of industrial partnership with technology transfer and localisation and even setting up new nuclear industries that in some cases have become rivals in their own right. So I think India, with its dynamic private sector, has a huge possibility to deploy nuclear (Energy) in different areas as it's required today. And I think there's a lot of companies in the US who would be interested to explore partnerships." Giving a quick intro of what fusion for dummies is, Ashwin Nandapurkar CEO, India Ex-Fusion, explained that fusion is the reaction where two small atoms come together and

form a bigger atom and release a lot of energy.

"That's the reaction that powers the sun, that powers all stars for millions of years. That's what a lot of private companies are trying to create on Earth, to solve the climate crisis and energy crisis in the world. This has been happening for the last about 75 years", Nandapurkar said.

Research started in the 1950s in the US, where there were two or three major changes, he said. "First one happened in 2018, when a lot of research from MIT Plasma and Fusion Research lab spun off as a private company with a lot of funding from the private sector that immediately changed the gears for the industry, because that showed the world that the industry is much more closer to commercialization because private money was willing to back private or fusion research.

"...The same company has recently, about a couple of years ago released the strongest Magnet in the world, which enables fusion power to move forward.

'India plays a pivotal role determining the future of the world in AI': Dinkar Jain

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

During the NXT Conclave 2025 at Bharat Mandapam, Uber's Vice President of AI & Marketplace Dinkar Jain reiterated India's role in determining the future of the world in AI. He spoke about how India is a major contributor of internet user data, which makes it an important stakeholder in AI-based industries.

Jain pointed out, "75% of internet users outside China are from the developing world. And these are the people. Whenever they like something, they click something. They do anything, anything with their phones. They are generating digital data, right? That digital data is what powers all of these companies. On this list, you will find some of the storied names in the world of AI."



The AI Surge and Developing World Data

Jain indicated that although AI businesses depend on data generated by users, most of it does not come from the developing world. He emphasized that this represents a huge opportunity for India, which needs to tap its "data dividend" to power its AI ambitions.

He stated, "So this is In-

dia's data dividend. We've talked about the demographic dividend for many decades, but this is India's data dividend. And the developing world's data dividend, which remains completely untapped by our own economies."

Jain also demystified AI, explaining its basic concept without technical jargon. He compared machine learning (ML) to a programming function created with data rather than written instructions.

"That's it. There is no other mystery to this," he said. "Now, what does that mean? A traditional program, the way we would write it, you would write a set of instructions. If this, then that for I equals 1 to 20, do this or whatever it is. So that would be what a traditional program would be, a machine learning program."

Uber VP Dinkar Jain at the

NXT Conclave 2025 claimed that it is not possible for India to achieve its vision of a developed country, or 'Dixit Bharat' by 2047, without a prominent role in AI. He emphasized that AI is crucial for enhancing standards of living, healthcare, education, security, and law enforcement.

"We can do this overnight if we did it, with AI and the goal of Dixit Bharat or a developed country cannot be attained," Jain said. "It's an inconceivable to think about that goal without India being a very prominent player in the field of AI."

Jain emphasized that although most nations are concentrating on data sovereignty—keeping data at home—such an approach holds back AI from realizing its maximum potential. Rather, he asserted, AI sovereignty should be the actual objective.

GLIMPSES OF NXT CONCLAVE



SUPREME COURT GRANTS BAIL IN UAPA CASE NOTING THAT IT WAS APPLIED TO DEFEAT THIS COURT'S ORDER OF INTERIM PROTECTION, CONDEMNS CHHATTISGARH POLICE

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Manish Rathore Versus State Of Chhattisgarh observed and has deprecated the conduct of Chhattisgarh police in applying the stringent provisions of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, UAPA against an accused soon after he was granted interim protection from arrest in another case.

The bench comprising of Justice Ujjal Bhuyan and Justice Abhay S Oka was hearing the present matter.

The bench in the case observed and has expressed its strong displeasure with the police action.

The bench headed by Justice Oka stated that, 'The officer is aware that this court has protected



him from arrest and then hurriedly the sections of UAPA are applied. We see the game in this. This is grossest impropriety committed by him. We would not hesitate to initial criminal contempt against him.'

The counsel appearing for the State submitted before the court that the accused had jumped bail in other cases and the UAPA case was added when sufficient material was found in the course of investigation linking him with Naxalite activities.

The bench headed by Justice Oka then stated that the State ought to have sought the Court's permission.

The bench of Justice Oka stated that, 'Was it not necessary for you to come before the court and seek leave of the court before taking action?'

On January 02, 2025, the Court had granted interim protection to the accused in relation to one First Information Report, FIR and prior to that, an FIR no. 39 of 2024 was regis-

tered against appellant at the same police station, in which he was enlarged on bail.

The court in the case noted in its order that after service of notice of the present case, the SDPO of the police station suddenly applied on 28 January 2025 to the Sessions Judge for adding section 13 of UAPA to FIR 39/2024.

The court in its order stated that, 'The police officer was fully aware of the order passed by this court on 2nd January 2025 and the minimum which we expected was an application made to this court by the State seeking leave of this court to take action against the appellant in connection with FIR no. 39 of 2024.'

Adding to it, the court stated that, 'Obviously to defeat the interim order

of this court January 02, 2025, the action has been taken by the police against appellant to ensure that he is taken into custody. The interim order dated January 02, 2025 of this court is completely nullified. This court deprecate this conduct.'

The court in its order stated that, 'Under our order dated second 17th February, this court had indicated that we will consider the prayer for grant of bail in FIR no. 39 of 2024 as well. This court considered the fact that that it is so apparent that arrest of the appellant in connection to the side offence only with the view to defeat the interim order of this court dated 2nd January 2025, the appellant is entitled to be enlarged on bail in the said case as well.'

Supreme Court: Court judgements always retrospective in nature unless judgement itself specifies its prospective operation

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Kanishk Sinha v State of West Bengal observed and has reiterated that a judgment of the Court will always be retrospective in nature unless the judgment itself specifically states that it will operate prospectively.

The bench comprising of Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia and Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah was hearing the present matter.

The bench in the case observed that, 'Whereas a law made by the legislature is always prospective in nature unless it has been specifically stated in the statute itself about its retrospective operation, the reverse is true for the law which is laid down by a Constitutional Court, or law as it is interpreted by the Court. The judgement



of the said court will always be retrospective in nature unless the judgment itself specifically states that the judgment will operate prospectively.

Adding to it, the bench stated that, 'The prospective operation of a judgment is normally done to avoid any unnecessary burden to persons or to avoid undue hardships to those who had bona fide done something with the understanding of the law as it existed at the relevant

point of time and further it is being done not to unsettle something which has long been settled, as that would cause injustice to many.'

The bench in the case made these observation wherein holding that the 2015 judgment in the case of Priyanka Srivastava Vs State of Uttar Pradesh was applied prospectively. Thus, the said judgment mandated that complaints filed under Section 156(3) of the Criminal Procedure

Code, CrPC for initiating police investigation must be accompanied by the affidavit by the complainant. The said direction was issued to check the trend of frivolous complaints.

The court in the case observed that, 'Such a step could only be prospective in nature, and this is clearly reflected from the very language used by the Learned Judges in Priyanka Srivastava (supra).'

The court observed that language of the judgment conveyed that what the Court intended was that from now onwards it would be necessary that an application would be accompanied by an affidavit.

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case held that a complaint filed before the date of the said judgment could not be rejected on the ground of not having an accompanying affidavit.

Supreme Court grants pre-arrest bail to former Chhattisgarh Advocate General Satish Chandra Verma in NAN scam case

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Satish Chandra Verma Versus State Of Chhattisgarh observed and has granted pre-arrest bail to former Advocate General of Chhattisgarh Satish Chandra Verma in connection with the Nagrik Apurti Nigam, NAN scam case.

The bench comprising of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta was hearing the present matter.

The bench in the case was hearing a special leave petition filed challenging Chhattisgarh High Court's order dated February 13, wherein the court denied the anticipatory bail.

The present matter involves allegations under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 and the Indian Penal Code, 1860.

However, it being the



contention of the State that some incriminating WhatsApp chats between the former AG and prime accused in the Nagrik Apurti Nigam scam, Anil Tuteja and Alok Shukla were recovered by the Income Tax Department, which were shared with the Enforcement Directorate.

Verma helped the prime accused persons in securing bail.

The Sessions Court rejected his anticipatory bail petition in November last year.

He approached the Supreme Court seeking anticipatory bail.

The counsel, Senior Ad-

vocate Mukul Rohatgi argued before the court that he was being 'hounded' only because of change in government last year. It was further pointed out that bail was granted to the prime accused in 2019 and the state had not challenged the said bail orders (however, ED had challenged grant of bail).

On February 21, the Supreme Court in the case issued notice on the present petition and recorded a statement which being on behalf of Chhattisgarh government that no coercive steps will be taken against Verma till the next date.

The counsel, Senior Advocate Vivek Tankha and Advocate-on-Record Suameer Sodhi appearing for Verma.

The counsel, Senior Advocate Mahesh Jethmalani represented Chhattisgarh.

Supreme Court dismisses PIL over New Delhi Railway Station stampede

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Anand Legal Aid Forum Trust Versus Union Of India And Ors observed and has dismissed a Public Interest Litigation, PIL filed in relation to the stampede which occurred in the New Delhi Railway Station on February 15, leading to several deaths.

The petitioner, Anand Legal Trust, claimed that not all deaths were accounted for and compensation remained to be paid to many families.

The bench comprising of Justice BR Gavai and Justice PK Mishra was hearing the present matter.

The bench in the case refused to entertain the matter, asking the petitioner to approach the High Court.

The petitioner submitted in the plea, 'Incidents of stampede have become recurrent...Railways has issued notices to people to remove videos that are being uploaded...200 people have died.'

The bench stated that it was open for the affected persons to approach the Court. The bench headed



'The petitioner submitted in the plea, 'Incidents of stampede have become recurrent...Railways has issued notices to people to remove videos that are being uploaded...200 people have died.'

by Justice Mishra observed that, 'if any has died and their family member has not received ex-gratia, they can approach and say that my name is not there...any such incident you have come across? So that we can appreciate what you are saying...that 200 died but only 50 have been accounted for.'

The petitioner claimed that there were videos and

eye-witnesses accounts which show that the death toll was higher.

The bench in the case expressed its disinclination to entertain the matter.

Last week, the Delhi High Court sought the response of the Union Government and the Railways in a plea seeking measures to prevent stampede at railway stations.

INTERGLOBE AVIATION FACES RS 1.30 CR PENALTY OVER INPUT TAX CREDIT DISPUTE

The InterGlobe Aviation Limited faces a penalty of Rs 1,30,40,966 after a tax officer disallowed their input tax credit for FY 2020-21. THE Company plans to challenge this decision legally, believing its input tax credit claims.

KPMG LAUNCHES FIRST LAW FIRM BY BIG FOUR IN THE US

The KPMG LLP has involved KPMG Law US, its first law firm in the US Market. The firm offers technological solutions combined with legal services, aimed at evolving legal department's needs. With over 100 clients in Arizona, the new subsidiary works in alignment with KPMG's tax practice and benefits from KPMG's global network in over 80 jurisdictions.

SUPREME COURT COLLEGIUM RECOMMENDS APPOINTMENT OF 5 ADVOCATES AS CALCUTTA HIGH COURT JUDGES

The Supreme Court Collegium recommended the appointment of five advocates as judges of the Calcutta High Court.

The name of the Advocates are: Smita Das De; Reetobroto Kumar Mitra; Md Talay Masood Siddiqui; Krishnaraj Thaker; and Om Narayan Rai.

The Supreme Court Collegium has made the said recommendation on February 05.

VODAFONE IDEA RECEIVES RS 16.73 CR GST DEMAND ORDER

The Vodafone Idea, VIL received a Rs 16.73 crore GST demand order from the Deputy Commissioner, Large Taxpayer Unit, West Bengal, VIL disagrees with the order and plans to file an appeal. The present issue involves alleged excess Input Tax Credit availed and shot payment of tax under the GST Act 2017.

Delhi High Court in Zee versus Saregama case: Plaintiff cannot file documents as per its whims and fancies at any stage of commercial suit

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court in the case of Zee Enterprises Ltd Versus Saregama India Ltd observed and has ruled that a plaintiff cannot be permitted to file documents as per its whims and fancies at any stage of a commercial suit.

The bench headed by Justice Amit Bansal stated that, 'The whole purpose of expeditious disposal of commercial suits would be frustrated if the parties are permitted to file additional documents at any stage of the suit.'

The court in the case observed and has dismissed an application filed by Zee Entertainment Enterprises Limited in its copyright infringement suit against Saregama India Limited.

Zee sought Court's leave to place on record additional documents as well as an additional affidavit of evidence of its witness.

The suit filed seeking permanent injunction to restrain Saregama from infringing Zee's copyright in the sound recordings incor-

'The bench headed by Justice Amit Bansal stated that, 'The whole purpose of expeditious disposal of commercial suits would be frustrated if the parties are permitted to file additional documents at any stage of the suit.'

porated in 29 cinematograph films.

The bench headed by Justice Bansal found no merit in Zee's application and dismissed with costs of Rs. 25,000. The costs has to be paid by Zee to Saregama within the period of two weeks.

The court in the case noted that admittedly, Zee was aware that it did not possess the originals of the documents on the basis of which it had filed the suit.

The bench headed by Justice Bansal stated that no steps were taken by Zee to lead secondary evidence to prove the documents till the filing of the application in question in October last year.

The court stated that Zee cannot wake up after seven

years to take steps to lead secondary evidence.

The court in the case stated that in order to lead secondary evidence, a party has to lay down the foundational evidence for the same, in the absence of which, secondary evidence would be inadmissible.

The court concluded that Zee failed to show any due diligence on its part to lead secondary evidence despite being aware that it did not have in its possession the originals of the documents.

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case stated that, 'At this stage would be completely contrary to the statutory scheme laid in place for conduct of commercial suits.'

TOP OF THE DAY

SINGAPORE RECORDS LOW FERTILITY RATE IN 2024

SINGAPORE: Singapore's total fertility rate remained at its record low of 0.97 in 2024, a disappointment for the birthrate-promoting government initiatives of the prosperous island state. The country's fertility rate fell below 1.0 for the first time in 2023, and preliminary estimates show that it was unchanged last year, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office Indraneel Rajah said in parliament on Friday. Preliminary data showed there were 30,800 resident births last year, up slightly from 30,500 in 2023. Despite significant government efforts and incentives to encourage childbirth, the nation faces a persistent demographic challenge.

PAK WARY OF US WEAPONS IN AFGHANISTAN

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday reiterated its concern over the weapons left by the US in Afghanistan after hasty withdrawal in 2021. Foreign Office Spokesperson Shafiqat Ali Khan said at the weekly briefing that those sophisticated weapons were being used by terrorists for attacks inside Pakistan. "We have impressed upon the international community and Afghan authorities to address this issue," he said. Time to time Islamabad has raised its concern over the leftover weapons in Afghanistan. The country expressed fears that these weapons, now in the hands of militants, are escalating regional security threats and fueling instability in the region.

CHINA EXECUTES WOMAN FOR TRAFFICKING 17 KIDS

BEIJING: A Chinese woman convicted of abducting and trafficking 17 children for over a decade, was executed on Friday in Guizhou, southwest China's Guizhou province. Yu Huaying, 62, was accused of conspiring with others to traffic children across multiple regions, including Guizhou, Chongqing, and Yunnan between 1993 and 2003. The execution was conducted by the Guizhou Intermediate People's Court in Guizhou province after the death sentence was approved by the Supreme People's Court, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

ISRAEL'S EXPORT OF SERVICES ROSE IN DECEMBER

Tel Aviv: Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics released the data on exports of services for December, 2024. As per December 2024, seasonally adjusted data, the total export of services (not including the start-up companies) increased by 6.3 per cent compared to a decrease of 1.8 per cent in the previous month. The export of services of the hi-tech industries (not including the start-up companies) increased by 3 per cent compared to a decrease of 1.8 per cent in the previous month.

ISRAEL AIMS EXTENSION OF GAZA TRUCE BY SIX WEEKS: EGYPT SOURCES

Hammas opposes the extension of the truce and insists on proceeding to the second phase of the deal as originally agreed.

AGENCIES
CAIRO

An Israeli delegation in Cairo aims to negotiate to extend the first phase of the Gaza ceasefire deal by an additional 42 days, two Egyptian security sources said on Friday. Hamas opposes the extension and insists on proceeding to the second phase of the deal as originally agreed, the sources said. The second phase is meant to include steps leading to a permanent end to the war.

The first phase of the ceasefire is set to end on Saturday, and the warring parties have yet to clarify what will happen if no agreement is reached by then. Egypt and Qatar are mediating the talks, with U.S. support.

In a statement on Friday, the Palestinian militant group urged the international community to press Israel to immediately enter the second phase without any delay.

Two Israeli government officials said that Israel was seeking to extend the initial phase, with Hamas freeing three hostages each week in exchange for Palestinians held by Israel.

THE DEMAND

- Israeli delegation in Cairo seeks 42-day extension of Gaza ceasefire's first phase.
- Hamas opposes extension, insists on moving to the second phase.
- First phase ends Saturday; no clarity on next steps if no agreement.
- Egypt and Qatar mediate, with U.S. support.
- Hamas calls for immediate move to the second phase.
- Israel proposes weekly hostage exchanges during the extended ceasefire phase.



Palestinians walk near the rubble of buildings, amid a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in the southern Gaza Strip on Thursday. Agency

1,778 IMPRISONED PALESTINIAN TERRORISTS RELEASED

Tel Aviv: Israel authorities released 643 imprisoned Palestinian terrorists as part of the ceasefire agreement, the Israeli Prison Service confirmed on Thursday. Since January 19, Israel has freed 1,778 Palestinians in exchange for 33 hostages. The completion of Wednesday night's exchange marks the end of the first phase of the ceasefire agreement. The fate of the remaining 59 hostages is to be determined by negotiations. Critics say the phased approach condemns them to open-ended captivity and undermines Israel's war gains. At least 1,200 people were killed, and 252 Israelis and foreigners were taken hostage in Hamas's attacks on Israeli communities near the Gaza border on October 7. Of the 59 remaining hostages, 32 are believed to be dead.

In another incident, MDA (Magen David Adom) said that, following Thursday afternoon's car ramming terrorist attack near the northern town of

Pardes Hanna, an MDA helicopter is transporting two seriously injured in the attack from Hillel Yaffe Hospital to Sheba Hospital in Tel Hashomer.

MDA is Israel's National emergency pre-hospital medical and blood services organisation. The two include a 16-year-old girl with head and limb injuries and a 76-year-old man with a head injury who is ventilated. In the attack a car rammed into pedestrians at a bus stop on the side of the road at an intersection.

Turkey's peace push to boost domestic, Syria goals

AGENCIES
ISTANBUL

Tayyip Erdogan's long-held goal of ending Turkey's conflict with Kurdish militants is a step closer after their jailed chief's peace call, giving the president a potential political boost at home and a chance to resolve key regional security concerns.

Thursday's call from Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) leader Abdullah Ocalan for the outlawed group to disarm and disband has triggered both hope and scepticism in Turkey.

The announcement, accompanied by a photo of Ocalan sitting with pro-Kurdish politicians, capped



Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan greets his supporters during the Grand Congress of his ruling AK Party in Ankara, Turkey, February 23, 2025. File Photo

a delicate dialogue as Erdogan looks to capitalise on the upheaval in Syria and military gains against the PKK fighters based in northern Iraq.

Success now hinges on sustained cooperation among the various parties

involved, but political analysts are far from confident that the PKK militants, based in mountainous northern Iraq, will heed the appeal of Ocalan, who has been held in an island jail near Istanbul for a quarter of a century.

Opposition alliance holds grand conference in Islamabad

AGENCIES
ISLAMABAD

The opposition alliance Tehreek Tahafuz Ayeen-e-Pakistan (TTAP) continued its second and final day of the grand conference in Islamabad on Thursday despite facing challenges in booking a venue for the two-day event, The Express Tribune reported.

The event started at Legend Hotel in Islamabad on Wednesday, with TTAP accusing the government



Leaders of Opposition Alliance in Islamabad. Agency

of pressuring the hotel administration to revoke permission for the second day. The leaders of the TTAP gathered at the venue for two days to discuss freedom of speech, constitutional

breaches, human rights violations and political instability.

The conference was attended by key political figures, including Opposition Leader Omar Ayub, former Pakistan Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Secretary General Salman Akram Raja, and others.

The grand alliance accused the authorities of trying to halt the conference and pledged to organise the event at all costs.

Growing number of foreigners missing in China, rights group raises alarm



AGENCIES
BEIJING

An increasing number of foreign nationals have gone "missing" in China in recent years, with many later discovered to be in detention by the authorities, prompting a rights organization to publish a guide for families facing similar circumstances, as reported by Radio Free Asia (RFA).

The detention of individuals such as US citizens, Taiwanese citizens, Hong Kong residents, Japanese nationals, and Australians has garnered international attention recently, but these cases represent only a small fraction of the problem, according to Safeguard Defenders, a rights group based in Spain, as referenced by RFA.

"Since Xi Jinping assumed leadership in 2012, the nation has gradually become more

"Since Xi Jinping assumed leadership in 2012, the nation has gradually become more closed off to outsiders," the organization noted in its newly released guide for families of foreigners who have gone missing in China, as quoted by RFA.

closed off to outsiders," the organization noted in its newly released guide for families of foreigners who have gone missing in China, as quoted by RFA.

"It has also grown bolder in arresting foreigners for politically charged reasons, including instances of hostage diplomacy, where Beijing seeks to exert pressure or impose sanctions on a foreign government," the handbook stated as reported by RFA.

Such arrests and disappearances can leave family members "feeling powerless in the face of the country's obscure legal system," it explained, providing a range of practical advice for those coping with a loved one's disappearance in China, as cited by RFA.

North Korea launches strategic cruise missile

AGENCIES
SEOUL

North Korea has launched strategic cruise missiles in waters off its west coast to demonstrate the potential of its nuclear deterrence, local media reported adding that its leader Kim Jong-un has called for thorough war preparedness with the country's nuclear forces and readiness for their use.

Kim oversaw the missile launch and called for permanently defending the country's sovereign right and security with the "reliable nuclear shield," Seoul's Yonhap cited the North's official Korean Central News Agency. South Korea's military con-



A missile is launched at an unknown location in North Korea in May 2024. File Photo

firmed the missile firing, noting it had detected the launches of multiple cruise missiles toward the Yellow Sea at about 8 am on Wednesday, and they were be-

ing analyzed by South Korean and US intelligence authorities, Yonhap reported.

As per the KCNA the goal of the exercise was to dem-

UNHRC condemns deportation of Uyghurs from Thailand to China

AGENCIES
GENEVA

United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk has condemned the deportation of 40 ethnic Uyghurs, who had been held in Thailand for over 11 years, to China, terming it a "clear violation of international human rights laws and standards".

He expressed regret over the forcible return of 40 ethnic Uyghurs.

"This violates the principle of non-refoulement for which there is a complete prohibition in cases where there is a real risk of torture, ill-treatment, or other irreparable harm upon their return," Turk said.

The principle of non-refoulement is contained in Article 3 of the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment to which Thailand is a party, in Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as well as Thailand's own domestic legislation, according to a press release from the Office of the High Commis-



sioner for Human Rights press release.

Turk said that his office has repeatedly urged Thai authorities to respect their obligations under international law in relation to individuals who are need of international protection. He called it important that the Chinese authorities disclose information regarding their whereabouts.

He said, "My office has urged repeatedly that the Thai authorities to respect their obligations under international law in relation to these individuals in need of international protection." He said, "It is deeply regrettable that they have been forcibly returned."

Calling on China to reveal their whereabouts, he said, "It is now important for the

"This violates the principle of non-refoulement for which there is a complete prohibition in cases where there is a real risk of torture, ill-treatment, or other irreparable harm upon their return," Turk said.

Chinese authorities to disclose their whereabouts, and to ensure that they are treated in accordance with international human rights standards."

According to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the men, who were part of a larger group, have been held in poor conditions at a number of immigration detention facilities in Thailand since March 2014. Five of them died in custody and eight of them are believed to remain in detention.

China to send Pakistani astronaut to its space station

AGENCIES
BEIJING

China plans to send an astronaut from its all-weather ally Pakistan as the first foreign guest to its space station Tian-gong.

China and Pakistan on Friday signed an agreement including bilateral efforts to select and train Pakistani astronauts and then send some of them to Tiangong, currently orbiting 400 kilometres above the earth. China Manned Space Agency (CMSA) said in a news release here.

The agreement to send the Pakistani astronaut in space was signed by the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA) and Pakistan's Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) at a ceremony attended by Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad, state-run China Daily reported.

ISKCON India hasn't filed legal case related to Bangladesh

AGENCIES
DHAKA

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) India has not filed a legal case related to Bangladesh, the organisation said in a media statement.

Recently, various media outlets have mentioned ISKCON India in connection with a legal case related to Bangladesh. However, the religious organisation said the information was not accurate.

"Firstly, ISKCON India has not filed this case. ISKCON is a religious and non-political organization that does not interfere in the political or internal matters of any country in any manner", the statement said.

"Secondly, the individual who filed the case is not an officer of ISKCON. He is a well-wisher who supports some of the activities at our Ludhiana branch as a part of the steering committee, which includes many other residents of Ludhiana", it

added. "As part of our activities, we often assign various roles to respected local individuals. However, it is important to note that such individuals are not official representatives or office bearers of ISKCON", the statement said.

"Therefore, their personal decision or action should not be considered as those of ISKCON, nor do they reflect the organization's policies", it said, without mentioning which case they referred to.

ITS NOT GREEK



A man plays guitar as people gather to protest outside the Greek parliament in Athens, Greece. Peaceful protests in Athens turned violent, with clashes between youths and riot police marking second anniversary of a fatal train crash. Source: Louisa Gouliamaki

Tens of thousands protest against deadly train crash anniversary in Greece

AGENCIES
ATHENS

Protesters hurled petrol bombs and set fire to trash cans in Athens on Friday as hundreds of thousands of Greeks went on strike and took to the streets in nationwide demonstrations on the second anniversary of the country's deadliest train crash.

Fifty-seven people were killed when a passenger train filled with students collided with a freight train on February 28, 2023 in central Greece. The accident has become a painful emblem of the perceived neglect of the country's infrastructure in the decades before the crash and the two years since.

"The government hasn't done anything to get justice," said Christos Main,

"The government hasn't done anything to get justice," said Christos Main, 57, a musician at the Athens rally. "This wasn't an accident, it was murder," he said.

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In one of the biggest protests in Greece in years, public services and many private businesses were brought to a halt and people poured into the streets of cities and towns chanting "murderers" against what they say is the state's role in the disaster. The government denies wrongdoing.

A sea of people descended onto Athens' Syntagma Square in front of parliament, where protesters

spray-painted the names of the dead in red on the ground. The slogan "I have no oxygen" - a woman's last words in a call to emergency services - echoed in chants across the country.

The Athens protest was peaceful until a group of hooded youths hurled petrol bombs at police and tried to storm the barricades of the parliament building. Riot police fired tear gas and water cannon and cat-and-mouse clashes then spread into the surrounding neighbourhoods.

Clashes also broke out in

Greece's second city, Thessaloniki, where a giant crowd choked the centre and people released black balloons into the sky in memory of the dead.

More than 80 people were detained and five were injured in Athens alone, authorities said.

POLITICAL THREAT

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis' centre-right government, which won re-election after the crash in 2023, has faced repeated criticism by relatives of the victims for failing to initiate a parliamentary inquiry into political responsibility.

The government says it is up to the judiciary to investigate the accident. In a Facebook post on Friday, Mitsotakis said his government would work to modernise the railway network and make it safer.

Trump says 'yes' to King Charles' invitation for state visit

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

King Charles III extended an invitation to United States President Donald Trump for an official state visit to the United Kingdom, The Hill reported.

During their meeting on Thursday in Washington, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer brought a letter from Charles to their meet-

ing in the Oval Office, during which Trump called Charles a "beautiful man, a wonderful man."

"This is a letter from Your Majesty, the king. It's an invitation for a second state visit. This is really special. This has never happened before. This is unprecedented," Starmer said, touching Trump's shoulder. "This is a very special letter, I think the last

state visit was a tremendous success this is truly historic."

"The answer is yes," Trump said in response to Starmer asking if he would take the invite to Windsor Castle. "We look forward to being there and honouring the king and honouring really the country."

Trump accepting this invitation from King Charles, making him the first elected

political leader in modern times to be hosted for two state visits by a British monarch.

In a post on X, the White House wrote, "President Donald J. Trump, responding to an invitation from King Charles for a second state visit: 'We look forward to being there and honoring the King, honoring the country.'" @Keir.Starmer."

COURT FOR INJUNCTION AGAINST US BIRTHRIGHT CITIZENSHIP ORDER

The 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals rejected the Trump administration's request to halt the injunction.

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump's effort to curtail automatic birthright citizenship nationwide as part of his hard-line immigration crackdown suffered another legal setback on Friday when a second federal appeals court declined to lift one of the court orders blocking the Republican's executive order.

The Richmond, Virginia-based 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals rejected the Trump administration's request for an order putting on hold a nationwide injunction issued by a federal judge in Maryland who concluded the order was unconstitutional.

"For well over a century, the federal government has recognized the birthright citizenship of children born

- Trump's birthright citizenship executive order faces legal setback.
- 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals rejects Trump administration's request.
- Court upholds injunction blocking the order, calls it unconstitutional.
- Court stresses birthright citizenship has been recognized for over a century.
- Public interest served by leaving injunction in place, avoiding confusion.

THE SETBACK



U.S. President Donald Trump signs a document in the Oval Office at the White House in Washington, U.S. February 4, 2025. File Photo

Similar injunctions issued by judges in Seattle, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire.

in this country to undocumented or non-permanent immigrants," the appeals court said.

"The government has not shown that it will be harmed in any meaningful way if it continues to comply, for the pendency of its appeal, with

that settled interpretation of the law," it added.

The court also said the public interest was served by leaving the injunction in place, saying it would be "hard to overstate the confusion and upheaval" that would result from

implementing Trump's order.

It was the second time an appellate court had taken up Trump's executive order on birthright citizenship, whose fate may ultimately be decided by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Will have immediate, extremely strong response: Canada on US

AGENCIES
OTTAWA

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Friday issued a warning regarding the potential imposition of tariffs by the United States, stating that "Canada will have an immediate and extremely strong response," CBC News reported.

"We will continue to do that work and do everything necessary to avoid these tariffs coming in, but like I said, if on Tuesday there are unjustified tariffs brought in on Canada, we will have an immediate and extremely strong response, as Canadians expect," Trudeau said.

The statement comes amid growing tensions over trade between the two countries. US President Donald Trump has repeatedly criticised the flow of illicit drugs into the US, allegedly coming from both Canada and Mexico.

As a result, Trump has decided to move forward with the imposition of tariffs on both countries, start-



ing March 4. Additionally, reciprocal tariffs are set to continue with full force from April 2.

Further, Trudeau added that, "the first thing on tariffs is to emphasise that our government, and indeed all of Team Canada, premiers, business leaders, community leaders, are focused on one thing, making sure that come Tuesday and for the weeks that follow, there are no tariffs imposed on Canada," as per CBC News.

"The tariffs that the president speaks of for next week are centered around the fentanyl crisis that they're facing in the United States, but that we are also facing in

Canada," he added.

Addressing concerns regarding fentanyl trafficking into the United States, he said "And for months now, I've been emphasising that less than one per cent of the fentanyl that arrives in the United States comes from Canada. But we know that even that one per cent, or less than one per cent, should be reduced, which is why we've invested USD 1.3 billion in strengthening our border capacities with Blackhawk helicopters, with drones, with 10,000 people patrolling our borders and keeping Canadians and Americans safe.

"And that Canada is not

the source of problems for the United States," he added.

Meanwhile, on February 4, the US President paused tariffs on imports from both countries for 30 days, saying that he had secured new commitments from the two countries to improve border security. The pause was put in place after President Trump said he spoke to his counterparts from Mexico and Canada.

"Drugs are still pouring into our Country from Mexico and Canada at very high and unacceptable levels. A large percentage of these Drugs, much of them in the form of Fentanyl, are made in, and supplied by China. More than 100,000 people died last year due to the distribution of these dangerous and highly addictive POISONS," Trump said in a post on Truth Social.

Citing the smuggling of drugs across the border, Trump has vowed to stop or "seriously limit" such drugs, especially Fentanyl.

TWISTS AND TURNS IN ENDING RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR, GUTERRES TO VISIT BANGLADESH

In a notable shift, the US joined hands with Russia for the first time since the onset of the conflict in Ukraine three years ago, working to put a draft resolution put forth by Ukraine at the United Nations. This week, the 193-member UN General Assembly cast votes on the draft resolution titled "Advancing a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine," which was proposed by Ukraine and its European allies. This resolution called for measures aimed at "de-escalation, an early cessation of hostilities, and a peaceful resolution" to the ongoing situation in Ukraine. While the proposal garnered backing from various European countries and the G7, the US chose to oppose it, aligning instead with Russia in this diplomatic manoeuvre. It seems that the European countries are backing Zelenskyy while Trump and

Putin are standing on the same side.

Over the past three years of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, there seems to be a shift in the US approach from its earlier stance, suggesting a possible divide with its European allies. President Donald Trump has emphasized this change in his recent statements, particularly drawing attention to the direct conversations held with Russia in Riyadh.

India and China opted not to engage in the voting process, underscoring their positions as some of Russia's closest allies since the onset of the conflict. The outcome revealed that 93 countries, including prominent European nations such as Germany, the UK, France, and more expressed support for the resolution. In contrast, 18 countries, including Russia, the US, Israel, and Hungary, cast votes against it, while 65 nations, among

WORLD RECAP

ANSHU JOSHI



them India, China, and Brazil, chose to abstain. India's abstention aligns with its previous stance of not voting on UN resolutions related to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, illustrating its diplomatic strategy of carefully navigating relationships with key partners on both sides of the debate.

Among India's neighbouring countries, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka abstained, while Bhutan, Nepal, and the Maldives voted in favour, joining the 93 nations that supported the resolution alongside European countries.

The US has also put forward a different resolution named "The Path to Peace," which conveys deep regret regarding the unfortunate

loss of life stemming from the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. In this context, France has suggested an amendment that seeks to replace the term "the Russian Federation-Ukraine conflict" in the US resolution with "the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation."

As European countries have expressed their dissent towards the approach of the US, it appears that Trump and Putin are aligning their positions. Recently, an agreement was reached between Russia and the US to commence initiatives focused on resolving the conflict in Ukraine and improving their diplomatic and economic ties, signifying a notable change in

Among India's neighbouring countries, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka abstained, while Bhutan, Nepal, and the Maldives voted in favour, joining the 93 nations that supported the resolution alongside European countries.

American foreign policy under Trump. Additionally, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio had also indicated that both nations have largely concurred on the reinstatement of personnel at their embassies in Washington and Moscow, the formation of a high-level team to support peace talks concerning Ukraine, and the exploration of avenues for enhanced relations and economic cooperation.

As the global community anticipates an end to the ongoing conflict, The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is scheduled to visit Dhaka from 13-16

March. He has reaffirmed the UN's dedication to mobilizing international support for Bangladesh, which is currently accommodating Rohingya population. He has officially confirmed the visit dates, following an invitation from Bangladesh's Chief Adviser, Muhammad Yunus.

The UN leader mentioned that he has asked his top managers to guide the UN Country Teams in Bangladesh and Myanmar on how to enhance humanitarian aid and support for livelihoods in both the nations. Guterres has also expressed hope that the upcoming

high-level meeting on the situation of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar would attract renewed global focus and help create more solutions for the Rohingya and other minority groups.

However, this announcement has sparked a different kind of debate. It is essential for Guterres to take into account another pressing issue concerning the rights of minority communities in Bangladesh. We must remember that the relationship between India and Bangladesh has notably worsened since the interim government took office, which has led to increased violence against Hindus residing in Bangladesh. In response to the concerns raised by the Indian government, Bangladeshi officials reiterated that the safeguarding of minorities is a matter of internal governance. However, these officials also ac-

knowledged that members of the Hindu community in Bangladesh have been subjected to various forms of persecution.

India upholds the principles of integral humanism and the philosophy of 'Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah', yet it continues to encounter challenges related to intolerance, particularly from neighbouring nations such as Pakistan and Bangladesh. As democracies, both countries bear the responsibility to protect the rights of their religious minorities and to address the rise of fundamentalism. In these times, it is essential for all parties to collaborate in resolving longstanding issues and to foster a spirit of coexistence. I hope that Guterres would also recognize the importance of this approach and work towards ensuring peace for everyone involved.

The author is Professor, School of International Studies, JNU

PICTURE PERFECT



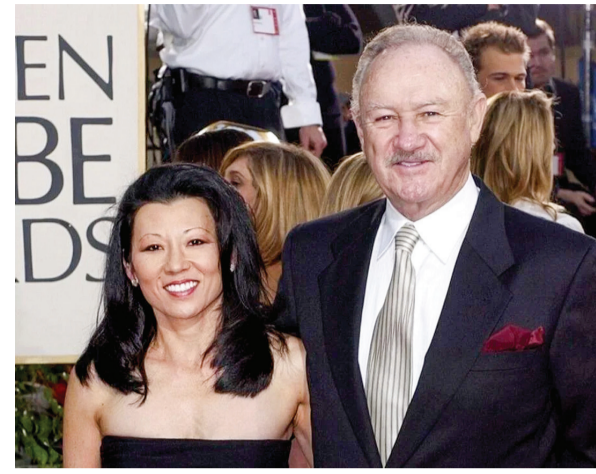
Sharvari Wagh snapped in a metallic gown at the Filmfare Middle East Most Influential Women 2025 (Image credit: Instagram)

GENE HACKMAN, BETSY ARAKAWA'S DEATHS INVESTIGATED AS 'SUSPICIOUS'

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

The deaths of legendary actor Gene Hackman and his wife Betsy Arakawa are under investigation by authorities after their bodies were found in their Santa Fe home on Wednesday. Although foul play is not currently suspected, investigators have labelled the deaths "suspicious" and have launched a thorough search and investigation to determine the cause, according to Variety.

Two maintenance workers discovered Hackman and Arakawa's bodies in separate areas of their home. Arakawa was found



lying on the bathroom floor, with an open prescription pill bottle and scattered pills nearby. Hackman was located in the mud room, adjacent to the kitchen, with his sunglasses by his side. Both appeared to

have fallen to the ground. In addition, a dead dog was discovered near Arakawa's body in the bathroom closet, while two healthy dogs were found on the property, according to Variety. The Santa Fe County Sheriff's

Office, which responded to the scene, noted no signs of forced entry into the home. Fire department and gas company personnel checked for a possible gas leak or carbon monoxide poisoning, but no signs of such hazards were detected. "No obvious signs of a gas leak," said Det. Roy Arndt in a search warrant affidavit, though the circumstances were deemed suspicious enough to warrant further investigation, according to Variety. The bodies showed clear signs of decomposition. Arakawa's body had bloating in her face and mummification of her hands and feet. Hackman's body exhibited similar signs, according to the affidavit.

Kangana Ranaut, Javed Akhtar end their five-year-long defamation case

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

Bollywood actor-politician Kangana Ranaut and veteran lyricist Javed Akhtar have successfully resolved their five-year-long defamation case. On Friday, Ranaut took to her Instagram Story and posted a picture with Akhtar from the court, sharing that the duo had settled their legal matter. She also said that Akhtar was "kind and gracious" during the mediation process.

"Today, Javed ji and I have resolved our legal matter (defamation case) through mediation. In the



mediation, Javed Ji has been very kind and gracious. He also agreed to write songs for my next directorial," Ranaut wrote in the post.

Both Ranaut and Akhtar shared a smile as they posed for the camera. In November 2020, Akhtar filed a criminal defama-

tion complaint against the actor over her reported remarks dragging his name in her feud with Hrithik Roshan. The legal dispute intensified when Ranaut filed a counter-complaint against Akhtar.

Meanwhile, on the work front, Ranaut is currently working on a new movie,

which reunites her with her 'Tanu Weds Manu' co-star R. Madhavan. The two actors, who previously delighted audiences with their performances in the successful romantic comedy series, will now collaborate again in a psychological thriller.

The announcement came shortly after the release of Ranaut's film 'Emergency', in which she portrayed former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Akhtar, on the other hand, released his docuseries 'Angry Young Men' last year. It explores his formidable creative partnership with Salim Khan.

Sidharth Malhotra and Kiara Advani announce pregnancy

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

Sidharth Malhotra and Kiara Advani are all set to embark on the journey of parenthood. The duo is expecting their first child. On Friday, the couple took to Instagram and shared the good news with their fans and followers.

"The greatest gift of our lives (baby emoji) coming soon," Kiara wrote, adding an adorable image in which the couple can be seen holding a baby's pair of socks.

Kiara and Sidharth's "pregnancy" announcement left everyone elated. In no time, netizens, including friends and members from the film industry, flooded the comment section with heartiest congratulations.

"Congratulations are in order," actor Shilpa Shetty commented.

"Congrats guys! And bless up, lil one! Safe journey," wrote Ishaan Khatter.

"Omg Congratulations," actor Samantha Ruth Prabhu commented.

Sidharth and Kiara tied the knot in Rajasthan in



While Kiara confirmed that they were "more than friends", Sidharth said, "I am manifesting a brighter and happier future. If it was her, it would be great."

February 2023 and officially began their "happily ever after" chapter. The two, who fell in love during the shoot of their film 'Shershaah', left everyone star-struck with their wedding festivities. They opted for a grand destination wedding in the Suryagarh Hotel, Jaisalmer, where their family members and only close friends were present.

After taking "saat pheres", Sidharth and Kiara posted adorable pictures from their wedding ceremony and wrote, "Ab humari permanent booking hogayi hai."

In 2022, Sidharth and Kiara appeared on different episodes of Koffee with Karan Season 7, where Karan Johar got them talking about their relationship for the first time.

While Kiara confirmed that they were "more than friends", Sidharth said, "I am manifesting a brighter and happier future. If it was her, it would be great."

Meanwhile, on the work front, Sidharth was last seen in 'Yodha' with Raashii Khanna and Disha Patani. His next project is titled 'Param Sundari'.

BRAIN PICKING



I am quite a dreamer. I think we all are dreamers. We all don't like to live a practical life all the time. There is a thin line between our hopes and dreams.

— RANI MUKERJI
(Indian Actress)

Zendaya joins swampy family as Shrek's daughter in 'Shrek 5'

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

In a major casting coup, actress Zendaya has joined the upcoming fifth installment of the beloved animated franchise, 'Shrek.' According to The Hollywood Reporter, the actress will lend her voice to the role of Shrek's daughter, joining a star-studded cast that



Ollywood actor Uttam Mohanty passes away at 66

AGENCIES
BHUBANESWAR

Veteran Ollywood actor Uttam Mohanty, renowned for his immense contribution to Odia cinema, passed away at the age of 66. The actor, who had been battling liver cirrhosis, succumbed to his illness at Medanta Hospital in Gurugram after a prolonged treatment. Born in 1958 in Baripada, Mayurbhanj, Odisha, Mohanty had a deep connection with the culture and traditions of the region.

He graduated from MPC College before embarking on a remarkable career in the Odia film industry. His film journey began with his debut in 'Abhimanyu', marking the beginning of a career that would span several



decades and make him a household name in Odisha.

In early January, Mohanty was admitted to Medanta Hospital after receiving initial treatment in Bhubaneswar. Due to his deteriorating health, he was airlifted to Delhi, where he spent 20 days under intensive care. The news of his death has deeply shocked the entertainment industry. Tributes and condolences

have poured in from various corners, including senior politicians, fellow artists, and fans. Sritam Das, Secretary of the Odisha Cine Artists' Association, confirmed that Mohanty's mortal remains will arrive in Bhubaneswar around 11 am today, February 28, 2025, Friday. Fans, admirers, and well-wishers could pay their final respects to the legendary actor.

REVIEW: SUPERBOYS OF MALEGAON ***** SUPERBOYS OF MALEGAON

PRAVEEN NAGDA

The joy of filmmaking and passion for cinema have historically created great entertainment for audiences all over the world. Buster Keaton, who made 29 silent films, almost a century ago in the decade of 1920s was one of the greatest comedians and filmmakers, who became a key inspiration

for the cinephiles from Malegaon, a small town in Maharashtra, India. Their journey was captured in the 2012 documentary, 'Supermen of Malegaon', which is now brought alive on the big screen as 'Superboys of Malegaon' by Ritesh Sidhwani, Farhan Akhtar, Zoya Akhtar, and Reema Kagti under the banner of Excel Entertainment and Tiger Baby Production, as a capti-



ivating cinematic experience. Directed by Reema Kagti, written by Varun Grover, and a star cast of Adarsh Gourav, Vineet Kumar Singh, Shashank Goyal,

Muskaan Jafari, Saqib Ayub, and Anuj Singh Dhan among others, the movie is a brilliant story of the passionate young boys who live and breathe cinema.

Nasir Shaikh (Adarsh Gourav), a young cinephile runs a video parlour in Malegaon with his elder brother Nihal (Gyanendra Tripathi), where he comes across and learns the editing tricks using VCR while buying a pirated copy of a Bollywood flick. He creates smart edits and develops great comedy content to lure the local audiences, which they applaud,

and his parlour is houseful. However, this success is only short-lived and ends up with anti-piracy raids very soon crashing down his filmy dreams.

Undeterred by this debacle, Nasir decides to make his own films but most people around him only ridicule his idea by laughing it off. However, Nasir gets support from his friends Farogh (Vineet Singh), Irfan (Saqib Ayub), Akram (Anuj Dhan), and Shafique (Shashank Arora), who are also as passionate as him, when it comes to cinema helping to realise his dream.

Nasir begins with a parody of the evergreen Bollywood film 'Sholay', creating 'Malegaon Ke Sholay', where Gabbar Singh becomes Rubber Singh and Basanti turns into Basmati, all on a budget of just Rs 30,000. Needless to say, the film is a huge success and does a business of Rs 3 lakhs, making Nasir buoyant and inspired to create more such parodies around popular blockbusters like 'Shaan' and Superman.

Nasir uses local actors, real-life settings, and jugaads (local hacks) to mobilise his ambitious project, which also

ensured a passionate involvement from everyone, including his friends. Unlike novel-based or simply adaptations of literary works, there aren't many feature films made based on documentaries, and 'Superboys of Malegaon' is one of such fascinatingly engaging experiments.

The movie is all about small-town passion for cinema, their ability to find creative solutions to work under resource constraints, self-learning the art & craft of cinema, and figuring out the tricks of the trade with an unbridled passion to bring in joy

& entertainment for the audience. It's a remarkable piece of work that will bring many moments of smiles and tears to all, including those who come from small towns with big aspirations and those who associate with their journey, struggle, ingenuity, love, and passion for cinema.

'Superboys of Malegaon' is bound to give you comical thrills and emotional indulgence, while enhancing your cinephile quotient.

Praveen Nagda is Festival Director of KidzCINEMA and CultureCinema Film Festivals

Empowering Children as Changemakers: The Dream Accelerator Initiative by Bal Raksha Bharat



The initiative is rooted in Article 12 (A) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which emphasizes the importance of children's voices in governance. It aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) thus ensuring meaningful participation of children and youth in decision-making processes. By equipping hundreds of children like Jasmeen, with skills, knowledge and platforms to advocate for their rights, Bal Raksha Bharat strengthens child-led governance models, making it a cross-cutting approach in all its thematic interventions.

TDG NETWORK

Jasmeen, a 16-year-old student from Government PU College, faced financial constraints that limited her opportunities for growth. Her journey took a transformative turn when she joined the Dream Accelerator Children's Group run at one of the Multi Activity Centers (MAC) in Bengaluru. With training and parental support, she developed confidence and leadership skills, leading initiatives like International Girl Child Day and engaging with stakeholders to promote for inclusive education. She is spearheading a micro-project to support weak migrant students and mainstream them to school education. "I am grateful for the support from my parents and the community, which has been in-

strumental in my journey," adds the chirpy young Jasmeen.

Children like Jasmeen, have a right to express their views, participate in decision-making, and take action on issues that impact their lives. Recognizing this, Bal Raksha Bharat launched the Dream Accelerator Initiative, a groundbreaking program that nurtures child participation and leadership, enabling young changemakers to influence governance and community devel-

opment. Building Agency: A Rights-Based Approach

empower children and youth as changemakers. First, it focuses on capacity building, equipping potential Child and Youth Champions with knowledge on child rights and advocacy through targeted training sessions. Second, it drives child-led micro-projects, enabling young leaders to design and implement solutions to pressing social issues within their communities. Third, the initiative emphasizes the formation of Children's Councils, creat-

and make them the Champions of tomorrow.

The Training and Leadership Development component of the Dream Accelerator Initiative equips children and youth with essential skills to become effective believers for change. Using participatory training methods—including audio-visual tools, role-plays, and group discussions—the initiative fosters engaging and interactive learning experiences. Trained youth have



opment.

Building Agency: A Rights-Based Approach

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The Dream Accelerator: A Journey of Impact

Launched in April 2020, the pilot phase spanned across Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, and Assam, reaching outstanding young leaders aged 15-24 years. Encouraged by its success, the program scaled up to 13 states in 2021, including Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Odisha.

The Dream Accelerator Initiative follows a structured and impactful four-pronged strategy to

ing democratic platforms where children can actively engage with local and state authorities to influence decision-making. Lastly, it ensures participatory design and implementation, placing children at the heart of program planning, execution, and evaluation, fostering a sense of ownership and agency in driving meaningful change.

The Dream Accelerator Initiative until 2023, has empowered over 2500, directly and indirectly, children and youth, equipping them as community leaders. With 624 hours of dedicated training sessions, the initiative has fostered confidence and leadership among young changemakers. Notably, children and youth from the program have represented their communities on global platforms like COP27 and COP28, amplifying their voices on climate justice and child rights. Currently implemented in 10 states (Assam, Bihar, Odisha, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal), the initiative ensures gender-balanced participation, with 63.8% of participants being female. The program is aiming to reach more than 5000 children and youth across 10 identified states to inculcate the spirit of leadership

successfully launched campaigns on critical social issues, including substance abuse prevention, child marriage awareness, garbage management, and the need for safe play spaces.

Sustainability and Long-Term Impact

The Dream Accelerator is more than a program—it is a movement. By fostering long-term engagement, empowering children with skills, and institutionalizing participatory governance mechanisms, Bal Raksha Bharat is creating a generation of confident, informed, and proactive young leaders, to pave the path for Viksit Bharat.

The journey of the Dream Accelerator is evidence to what can be achieved when children like Jasmeen and many others across India are given the opportunity, space and agency to shape their own futures. As the initiative moves forward, its impact will continue to grow, reinforcing the belief that children are not just beneficiaries but powerful changemakers in their own right.

Pradeep K Mishra, Head Program Implementation, Bal Raksha Bharat &

Soumi Halder, Senior Manager, Program Campaigns and Communication, Bal Raksha Bharat.



WHY THE GOD OF GITA INCARNATES HIMSELF



B.K. USHA

The Bhagavad Gita is accorded the highest status among Hindu scriptures, with its teachings regarded as the distilled wisdom of the Upanishads. The Gita explains the concepts of the soul, God, consciousness, the duties of an individual, the qualities that make one divine or evil, and the path to salvation. In effect, the Gita tells us how we should live, the qualities we should have, and how, on the basis of divine qualities, we can create an elevated state of mind and a happy future for ourselves.

The war in the Mahabharata, of which the Gita is

a part, is an allegory for the struggle between good and evil. It represents the battle that takes place in the mind when desires, expectations, and vices challenge the innate virtues of the soul. The Gita tells us how we can win this inner battle and ultimately overcome our weaknesses.

Chapter 16 of the Gita dwells at length on the qualities that make a person divine or demoniacal. It says that those of a divine nature are fearless, clean-hearted, steadfast in yoga and knowledge, truthful, peaceful, compassionate, modest, and free from crookedness and hatred.

Describing the qualities of those given to evil ways, the Gita cautions against hypocrisy, arrogance, self-conceit, harshness, and ignorance. Further, it says, anger, greed and lust are three gates to hell.

But despite these teachings in the Gita, and notwithstanding the reverence the pious have for it, we find that evil is on the rise in the



Souls can overcome the debilitating effect of vices only when they draw power from the Almighty.

world while righteousness seems to be in retreat. The

wisdom of the Gita, it appears, remains in the book

and fails to enter the minds of those who read it.

Chapter 16 of the Gita dwells at length on the qualities that make a person divine or demoniacal. It says that those of a divine nature are fearless, clean-hearted, steadfast in yoga and knowledge, truthful, peaceful, compassionate, modest, and free from crookedness and hatred.

In fact, God, represented by Shri Krishna in the Gita, knows that this will happen, and says in the Gita that no one can reach Him by reading scriptures or performing other religious rituals. He can be known only when He manifests Himself to humans, the Gita says. And this, the Gita says, happens when human souls have sunk to extreme depths of degradation and are completely in the grip of vices. Then, God incarnates Himself in this

world to remove all evil, end the suffering of His children, and restore them to their original state of purity, peace, and happiness. He does this by reminding human souls of their true identity and their relationship with Him – that they are His children and all that is His belongs to them. When human souls become aware that they are not bodies, the influence of vices, which are born of body-consciousness, begins to weaken. And

when they start to remember God, the souls draw power from Him, which enables them to resist and, ultimately, overcome their negative traits.

Souls can overcome the debilitating effect of vices only when they draw power from the Almighty. Reading scriptures may teach us what is right and what is wrong, but it does not empower us to tread the right path. In fact, merely reading scriptures empowers us no more than reading about medicines cures a patient of his illness.

Regular practice of soul-consciousness and remembrance of God empowers the souls and develops the virtues latent in them, so that from ordinary humans they are transformed into divine beings. When those of a demoniacal nature are thus transformed into divine beings, the world turns from hell to heaven.

B.K. Usha is a Rajyoga teacher at the Brahma Kumaris headquarters in Abu Road, Rajasthan.

Affirming our spiritual personality



JILLIAN SAWERS

When we have a deeper understanding of our own and others' personalities, then our relationships have the potential to be smoother and more rewarding. However, deeply understanding our personality has more far-reaching benefits than those. We can achieve a fully rounded and balanced personality, and enjoy the liberation of being able to truly express ourselves. It gives us the ability to behave in the truest way in whatever scenario we find ourselves in. Just considering one part of our personality as 'me' is simply one-dimensional

– true self-expression is vast.

As long ago as Hippocrates (460 BC), four main types of personality had been recognised, and in Hippocrates' case, medicine and treatment of illness were based on the four types. Although one's personality is a complex set of thinking and behavioural patterns, we can look at the four main types, for ease of analysis. The terminology has changed over time, but basically, and simplified:

- Extroverts who are task-oriented – Rulers
- Extroverts who are people-focused – Entertainers
- Introverts who are people-focused – Relators
- Introverts who are task-oriented – Analysts

Ideally, all teams would have all of these types, and within us, ideally these elements of personality would be balanced. Through life experiences, we have veered to one of these types in a more



Deeply understanding our personality enables us to truly express ourselves.

extreme way. This has occurred because of fear. We have looked outside for ways to achieve what we needed, because we could not find it within. The ruler is powerful, but when looking outside for

power, becomes rude, aggressive, pushy, a control freak. The entertainer can be warm and charismatic, but when looking outwards becomes impulsive, procrastinates, does not follow through,

becomes bored. The relator can be easy-going, diplomatic, calm, and a peacemaker. When fearful and looking outside, becomes a people pleaser, passive/aggressive, slow to lead. Their strength is

love, their weakness is attachment. The analyster wants to get things right, is thoughtful, pays attention to detail, is conscientious and a problem solver. When looking outside and fearful, becomes obsessive, fussy, difficult to please, sees only problems, and is suspicious.

The block to accessing the full spectrum and therefore a balance of the personality types, is the ego, or fear. We have played many characters in our lives. We may be dominantly a 'relator' in this lifetime, but we may have been a 'ruler' in many other lifetimes, and this is a lifetime for experiencing another shade of personality, with the aim of balancing the whole personality. It is in meditation that we can detach from the ego, from the fear, and from one idea of 'me'. We can experience that we are free of a limited personality and affirm our spiritual personality. Our spiritual personality is the same for all of us,

the pure essence:

- I am powerful
- I am truth
- I am loveful
- I am perfect

As we begin to experience the qualities or personality of the soul, we can begin to express it with spiritual strength, at the time it is needed. We can be powerful when needed, we can be warm and charismatic when needed, we can be the peacemaker when needed, and pay attention to detail when needed. We have all the shades of personality within us, and it is through meditation that we can bring our personality into balance and strength. There will be no fear because we are finding the strength from within.

Jillian Sawers is a professional self-development trainer and has a YouTube channel called 'The Department of Silence'. She is based in Mount Abu, Rajasthan, at the headquarters of the Brahma Kumaris.

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

When you build a house, every brick counts. When you build a character, every thought counts. Who I am comes from what I think. Thoughts that build the highest quality character are based on love, purity, peace, and wisdom. The more my thoughts are filled with these qualities, the more my character is shaped around them. Today let me think high-quality thoughts.

Spiritual ethics in life



SISTER JAYANTI

Following a chosen spiritual path and applying spiritual principles and ethics in a practical way in our lives has never been more bombarded by such huge external influences. The world is at a very critical point and the forces of negativity are very strong. On the other side, there is an awakening, and many are finding spiritual paths and living lives of goodness. Goodness always wins because the original state of the human soul is goodness. We have moved away from this goodness but people are now beginning to wake up, and the more we talk of this goodness and demonstrate

it, the more others will be influenced.

The problem is that our conscience today is influenced by so many external factors that few know what is right or wrong anymore. It is the conscience that has to be cleaned to be able to reveal the inner goodness, and the way to cleanse the conscience is through meditation. If we want to have peace in our hearts and good relationships with others, there are very simple and clear teachings that we can follow. We must fulfil all our familial responsibilities, but take time early in the morning for the self, spend time in silence and introspection, and study spiritual knowledge. This will bring the clarity we need to see the way forward.

I will know if the path I have chosen is the right one, firstly, by having all my questions answered. Secondly, the understanding that I gain will not remain theoretical but when put into practice will help me progress, and then I will have the authority of experience. Faith in what I follow cannot be blind faith. There must be faith in the intellect, not just the mind, that can swing this way and that in moments. I will see the proof in the lives of others on the same path, and in



To cultivate the strength and determination to be ethical, to do what we know to be right, we need meditation.

my own life. No matter what is happening externally – the deep divisions, climate change, the erratic economies – when I begin to see life from a spiritual perspective, then I understand what is happen-

ing. All the violence in many forms, is something within being expressed externally. Take climate change, for example; if I want to make a contribution, then I can simplify my needs, and bring about the awareness

of inner peace as I deal with family, neighbours, animals, and nature. This would be of great value and benefit. It has taken some time, but people are now beginning to talk about a change in lifestyle and personal transforma-

tion, and even spirituality is being taken very seriously. People are now beginning to understand that it is the move away from spirituality, and our inner values, that has caused the chaos. More and more people are interested in plant-based diets and in holistic approaches to medicine and alternative lifestyles. Hearts that had become cold are warming. The journey from head to heart is the longest journey we ever make. Where we feel love and compassion is in the soul, and so is the faculty to understand and reason, and so having the awareness of the soul, in terms of the self or others, makes that journey so much shorter.

Meditation and spiritual study are vital for us to remain uninfluenced by world events and the media onslaught. Gathering together with friends who share the spiritual path to talk of spiritual things, and meditate together, makes our awareness stronger. It may seem dark at the moment, but day always follows night, and the world of

the future is of truth, love, and harmony.

To cultivate the strength and determination to be ethical, to do what we know to be right, and stay strong and not give in to old habits, we need meditation. Meditation is not only about the soul, the inner being, but it is also about the Divine and connecting with that source. When I am in soul awareness, I am tuned in to the frequency of the Divine. This being is the source of all spiritual power, of love, peace, and truth. As I walk the path in this awareness, practising every day and throughout the day, a few moments each hour, then none of the destructive forces will pull me. This will first affect my own little world, but as we approach the time of critical mass together, cleaning the conscience, doing the right thing, bringing forth our natural goodness – the world will turn around.

Sister Jayanti is Additional Administrative Head of the Brahma Kumaris.

NO SIGNIFICANT INJURY CONCERNS: KL RAHUL AHEAD OF NEW ZEALAND CLASH

Team India aims to continue their strong performance in the CT 2025 tournament

AGENCIES
DUBAI

As Team India prepares to face New Zealand in their Group A encounter of the ICC Champions Trophy in Dubai on Sunday, wicketkeeper-batter KL Rahul has provided a reassuring update regarding the squad's fitness levels. Addressing the media during the pre-match press conference, Rahul stated that there are no significant injury concerns within the team. "Fitness-wise, I think there's no... I don't know too much, but from whatever I know, I think everything seems pretty okay. There's no real concerns about anyone missing games as far as I know. We'll probably know more in today's training," Rahul commented. He further mentioned that all players have been active-



ly participating in training sessions and gym workouts, indicating their readiness for the upcoming match. "Everyone's been in the gym, everyone's been at training the last time as well. So, yeah, little some concerns, but I don't think it's too much," Rahul added. This update comes as a

relief to fans, especially considering recent injury scares. Notably, during India's match against Pakistan, pacer Mohammed Shami left the field after bowling a few overs due to minor pain in his ankle. With the squad in good shape, Team India aims to continue their strong perfor-

mance in the tournament as they take on New Zealand in the crucial Group A fixture. Rahul revealed that Shami always finds a way to challenge wicketkeepers, often forcing him into full-length dives. "The tough thing against Shami while wicketkeeping is that in every game--fun-

nily somehow--he'll make sure that I'm diving full length. And then he gives me one or two opportunities to be brilliant behind the stumps or look stupid sometimes," Rahul said. He pointed out that Shami, along with Jasprit Bumrah, generates a unique wobble effect on the ball, making it even harder to predict and collect cleanly. "One of the few bowlers whose ball really wobbles--him and sometimes Bumrah, when he bowls in the second or third spell. I don't know what it has to do with anything, but he gets the ball to wobble behind the stumps as well. So that's been very challenging," he said. Beyond his natural seam movement, Rahul emphasized Shami's accuracy and sharpness, aspects that often go underappreciated.

CT 2025: Australia enter semifinals after washout against Afghanistan

AGENCIES
LAHORE

Australia entered the semifinals of the Champions Trophy after their crucial Group B clash against Afghanistan was called off due to rain here on Friday.

The match was halted by a downpour when Australia were 109 for 1 in 12.5 overs, chasing a target of 274.

Despite the ground staffs' efforts to clear the field, several pools of water remained on the pitch and the umpires ultimately declared the match abandoned after an inspection.

Afghanistan skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi won the toss and elected to bat first against Australia in their final group stage match at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium in the ongoing ICC Champions Trophy 2025 on Friday.

After Australia got their tournament off to a flying start by chasing down the highest-ever score in an ICC event against England, rain played spoilsport in their next, forcing them to share points with South Africa, who both are now on three points each and occupying the top two spots in Group B. Afghanistan, on the other hand, lost their opening game to South Africa by 107 runs but came back stun-



ningly to complete an incredible triumph against England to knock them out of contention for a semi-final spot. Today's match is a crucial one, with both teams vying for a spot in the semi-finals in a winner-takes-all contest in Lahore. "We will bat first because the wicket looks good. It's a used pitch, England and Australia already played on this pitch, so it will slow down in the second half.

We were happy with the performance in our last game, we also have made plans against Australia. We are going with the same team," Hashmatullah Shahidi said after winning the toss. Australia captain Steve Smith, on the other hand, stated that had he won the toss, he would have opted to bowl first. "We would have bowled

first, uncertain overhead conditions, and there's the dew factor as well. All the guys are doing well. It should be a good contest, looking forward to it. Coming here with good intent and aggression and ready to get started. Same team for us," Steve Smith said. Teams:

Australia (Playing XI): Matthew Short, Travis Head, Steven Smith (c), Marnus Labuschagne, Josh Inglis, Alex Carey (wk), Glenn Maxwell, Ben Dwarshuis, Nathan Ellis, Adam Zampa, Spencer Johnson. Afghanistan (Playing XI): Rahmanullah Gurbaz (wk), Ibrahim Zadran, Sediqullah Atal, Rahmat Shah, Hashmatullah Shahidi (c), Azmatullah Omarzai, Mohammad Nabi, Gulbadin Naib, Rashid Khan, Noor Ahmad, Fazalhaq Farooqi.

Jos Buttler steps down as England white-ball captain after CT debacle

AGENCIES
KARACHI

Jos Buttler has announced his decision to step down from England's white-ball captaincy duties in the aftermath of their group-stage exit at the ongoing ICC Champions Trophy. England will conclude its campaign in the Champions Trophy on Saturday against South Africa in Karachi.

Irrespective of the result, the Three Lions will pack their bags and return home after their run was shortened after losing two games on the trot. The English players bolstered their preparations during a white-ball tour of India, during which they won just one game out of eight fixtures, the first with under head coach Brendon McCullum. "I'm going to stand down as England captain. It's the right decision for me and the right decision for the team. Hopefully, somebody else



who can come in alongside Baz will take the team to where it needs to be," Buttler said, as quoted from ESPNcricinfo.

As McCullum's 'Baz-ball' era began on a catastrophic note, Buttler confirmed he will continue to play for England and look to enjoy his cricket. "The overriding emotions are still sadness and disappointment. I'm sure, in time, that will pass, and I can get back to really enjoying my cricket, and [will] also be able to reflect on what an

immense honour it is to captain your country and all the special things that come with it," he added. Buttler was handed the full-time responsibility of England's white-ball captaincy in June 2022, and they went on to win the T20 World Cup later in the year. However, since its moment of glory, England has sharply declined in white-ball cricket.

In the ODI World Cup 2023, England was knocked out in seventh place in the group stage.

My last ICC tournament: Dussen ahead of clash against England

AGENCIES
KARACHI

Ahead of their all-import clash against England at Karachi, South Africa's right-hand batter Rassie van der Dussen said that the ongoing marquee event will possibly be the last major ICC tournament of his cricketing career. The Proteas will lock horns with the Jos Buttler-led side in their last group stage match of the competition at the National Stadium in Karachi on Saturday. "It's definitely a possibility that it's my last ICC tournament.

I'm not saying that with any preconceived ideas that I'll call time on it, or management will call time on my career. It's just the reality," van der Dussen said, as quoted by ESPNcricinfo. Further, the experienced cricketer said that for him, playing for his country has always been his biggest and only goal. "My ultimate goal has always been to play for the Proteas. People are asking me, Are you going to play leagues afterwards? I don't know. I don't know if the prospect of not playing for the Proteas goes away, I'll have that hunger to play in the leagues.



Bracewell emphasizes adaptability ahead of match against India

AGENCIES
DUBAI

New Zealand all-rounder Michael Bracewell highlighted the importance of adapting to different playing conditions as the team gears up for their upcoming ICC Champions Trophy match against India in Dubai on Sunday.

Speaking to reporters, Bracewell noted that the wickets have shown signs of assisting spin, making it crucial for the team to adjust quickly. "The wickets here have looked like they've taken a bit of spin. We have our first training session today, so it'll be good to get used to the wickets as quickly as we can," Bracewell said. He stressed that one of the key challenges of international cricket is learning to perform in different venues and conditions around the world. "That's the challenge of international cricket--playing in different venues in different parts of the world and trying to adjust as quickly as possible. We've enjoyed the pitches



Speaking to reporters, Bracewell noted that the wickets have shown signs of assisting spin, making it crucial for the team to adjust quickly.

in Pakistan, and I think we have a pretty well-balanced side that can play in any condition.

Hopefully, we can continue to do that and adjust to what's in front of us," he said. Bracewell also pointed out that New Zealand's strength lies in their adaptability, which allows them to take on different teams by playing to the conditions. "I think the strength of our side has been our ability to adjust to the surface and really throw different looks at teams that are

suiting to that surface. Hopefully, we continue to do that as a side," he added. Reflecting on their matches in Pakistan, Bracewell expressed his appreciation for playing there and looked forward to returning. "We've really enjoyed our time in Pakistan and are looking forward to going back.

It's been a happy hunting ground for us as a team. We're excited to be here, but we also thoroughly enjoyed our time in Pakistan as well," he said.

Toughest bowler to keep wicket to: KL Rahul on Shami

AGENCIES
DUBAI

India's wicketkeeper-batter KL Rahul has hailed Mohammed Shami as one of the toughest bowlers to keep wicket to, highlighting his accuracy, pace, and ability to generate movement. Speaking at the pre-match press conference ahead of India's ICC Champions Trophy Group A clash against New Zealand in Dubai on Sunday, Rahul shared his expe-

riences of keeping to Shami and the challenges that come with it. Rahul revealed that Shami always finds a way to challenge wicketkeepers, often forcing him into full-length dives.

"The tough thing against Shami while wicketkeeping is that in every game--funnily somehow--he'll make sure that I'm diving full length. And then he gives me one or two opportunities to be brilliant behind the stumps or look stupid sometimes," Rahul said.

He pointed out that Shami, along with Jasprit Bumrah, generates a unique wobble effect on the ball, making it even harder to predict and collect cleanly. "One of the few bowlers whose ball really wobbles--him and sometimes Bumrah, when he bowls in the second or third spell. I don't know what it has to do with anything, but he gets the ball to wobble behind the stumps as well. So that's been very challenging," he said. Beyond his natural seam move-

ment, Rahul emphasized Shami's accuracy and sharpness, aspects that often go underappreciated.

"Everyone talks about how he's gifted, how he can get the ball to seam in any condition, and how upright his seam is. But not many people talk about how accurate he is and how sharp he is. He can actually surprise you with his pace," Rahul praised. Rahul recalled a recent net session where Shami's express pace caught him off guard.

WPL: Clinical Delhi Capitals move to top with 9-wicket win over Mumbai Indians

AGENCIES
BENGALURU

Delhi Capitals reclaimed its spot at the summit with utter dominance against Mumbai Indians in the ongoing Women's Premier League at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium on Friday.

Jess Jonassen and Minnu Mani played a starring role with the ball, while Meg Lanning and Shafali Verma's opening blitz raised Delhi Capitals to an emphatic 9-wicket win in a low-scoring affair. Jonassen's spin attack shattered MI's hopes of

asserting control in the first innings itself. She returned with figures of 3/25 and was crowned with the Player of the Match award. Lanning and Shafali broke the back of MI's defence of 123/9 with their ruthless approach.

In pursuit of a paltry 124-run target, the formidable opening pair of Lanning (60* off 49) and Shafali Verma (43 off 28) raised the bar. The young Indian played the aggressor's role. She got to business without wasting any time and hammered 16 runs in the fourth over. Lanning's masterclass complemented Shafali's



However, Shafali ruined the MI skipper's blueprint by launching two towering sixes to push Delhi closer to victory.

fearless and aggressive stroke play. The DC skipper showcased her trademark composure as the duo brought up a fifty-run opening stand, propelling DC to 56/0 in the powerplay. MI desperately hunted

for a breakthrough, and to push for it, skipper Harmanpreet Kaur introduced Amelia Kerr into the attack. However, Shafali ruined the MI skipper's blueprint by launching two towering sixes to push Delhi closer to victory. By the ninth over, the game was close to its conclusion as DC had raced to 82/0. Shafali looked bound for a well-deserved fifty, but Amanjot Kaur broke the stand with a stunning boundary catch by Kerr. The wicket that MI needed came quite late. Lanning stayed at the crease,

brought up her second fifty of the season and steered DC to a nine-wicket win. Earlier in the match, after DC put MI to bat, openers Yastika Bhatia and Hayley Matthews showed positive intent.

Matthews relentlessly attacked Jonassen early, hitting back-to-back boundaries, but Shikha Pandey provided the breakthrough by removing Yastika for 11(10). The floodgates opened, and Annabel Sutherland capitalised on the opportunity by removing Matthews on 22(25).