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RUCKUS IN RAJYA SABHA OVER MUSLIM QUOTA IN KARNATAKA

■ Rijju: Karnataka Deputy CM said Constitution will be changed
■ DK Shivakumar: BJP is misquoting him and spreading fake news

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A fierce debate between the Treasury and Opposition benches broke out on Monday in the Rajya Sabha over the Karnataka government granting 4 per cent reservations to minorities in contracts, with Union Minister J P Nadda demanding the withdrawal of the law and demanding an answer from Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge.

JP Nadda, while speaking in Parliament, said that Congress falsely claims to be "protectors of the Constitution."

"I am saying this with a lot of sadness, the way Congress claims to be a protector of the Constitution but the way they have tried to destroy it. Dr BR Ambedkar had himself said, that reservation would not be done on the basis of religion, this is an acceptable provision of the Constitution of India. But in Karnataka, there is a talk of giving reservation of 4 per cent, in contracts," Nadda said in Rajya Sabha.

This statement was met with fierce objections from



Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh Narayan Singh conducts the proceedings of the House during the Budget Session of Parliament, in New Delhi on Monday. ANI

the Opposition benches asking him to authenticate his remarks.

Rajya Sabha Chairman and Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar also asked Nadda to authenticate his remarks and put it on the floor of the House.

"The statement to which reference has been made by the Parliamentary Affairs minister, that a functionary of the political party has made a statement on con-

tract for Muslim community, please authenticate and put it on the table of the House," Dhankar said.

Amid the shouting from the Opposition benches Nadda continued, "I will authenticate, The Karnataka government has passed a bill granting 4 per cent of reservation to minorities in public contracts, apart from that, the Deputy Chief Minister has also given a statement on the House that if needed

we will change the Constitution too, this is a very serious matter, and these people call themselves the protectors of the Constitution."

Replying to Nadda's remarks, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said that Congress has proven itself to be protectors of the Constitution, referencing the party's "Bharat Jodo Yatra."

"I just want to say, that the

Congress gives privilege notice against Nadda, Rijju

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Congress's chief whip in the Rajya Sabha, Jairam Ramesh, on Monday gave notices against the leaders of privilege against Leader of the House J P Nadda and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju for "misleading" the House on alleged statements made by Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar.

Ramesh gave two separate notices against the leaders under Rule 188 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States (Rajya Sabha).

In his notice submitted to Chairman Jagdeep Dhankar, the Congress member said shortly after the Rajya Sabha met on March 24, Rijju "blatantly misled" the House by attributing some "false statements" purportedly made by Shivakumar.

SC collegium recommends transfer of Justice Varma

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court collegium on Monday recommended the transfer of Justice Yashwant Varma, Judge of the High Court of Delhi, back to the Allahabad High Court, his parent court.

"In its meetings held on 20th and 24th March 2025, has recommended repatriation of Justice Yashwant Varma, Judge, High Court of Delhi, to the High Court of Judicature at Allahabad," the collegium resolution said.

Hours after the transfer recommendation to the Centre was made public in a resolution uploaded on the website of the top court, the president of the Allahabad High Court Bar Association (AHCBA) Anil Tiwari said the high court



lawyers will go on an indefinite strike from Tuesday in protest against this move.

Justice Varma's proposed transfer could come into effect after the Centre accepts the recommendation, which came on a day when the Delhi High Court in a notice withdrew judicial work from Justice Varma "with immediate effect".

The AHCBA last week voiced its opposition to any such move, saying the high court is not a "trash bin".

In a series of resolutions,

Dhankhar calls meeting to discuss judicial accountability

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Vice President and Rajya Sabha chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar has called for a meeting on Monday to deliberate on his observations made in the Upper House on March 21 following concerns over the alleged discovery of cash at the residence of Delhi High Court judge Justice Yashwant Varma.

The meeting has been scheduled for 11.30 am with the Leader of the House, JP Nadda and the Leader of Opposition, Mallikarjun Kharge.

The meeting aims to discuss the constitutional and legislative issues he raised in response to points brought up by Congress leader Jairam Ramesh.

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh had on March 21 raised the alleged recovery of cash from the residence of a sitting judge of the Delhi High Court, to which Jagdeep Dhankhar said that

Haryana eyes bumper harvest, to procure 75 lakh tonnes of wheat

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

Eyeing a bumper wheat harvest this year, the Haryana government has set a target of procuring 75 lakh tonnes of wheat for the coming Rabi Marketing Season.

While giving this information Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini has directed officials to ensure smooth arrangements for the procurement of wheat, mustard, barley, chickpeas, lentils, and sunflower. With an expected bumper wheat harvest, the Chief Minister stressed the need for solid preparations to avoid any inconvenience for farmers in



selling their crops at mandis.

Chairing a review meeting at Haryana Niwas in Chandigarh, Saini instructed the Marketing Board officials to construct large sheds in mandis to meet future requirements. He also emphasized extending the procurement period by 15 to 20 days on a pilot basis to

ensure farmers have ample time to sell their produce.

The government has set a target to purchase 75 lakh metric tonnes of wheat this season. Procurement of mustard began on March 15, and lentils on March 20, with both continuing until May 1. The procurement of

Russia for developing 'privileged strategic ties' with India: Lavrov

AGENCIES
MOSCOW

Russia is developing "privileged strategic partnership" with India, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Monday.

Lavrov said at an event that Russia is actively expanding ties with countries like China, India, Iran, North Korea and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, the state-run TASS news agency reported on Monday.

"We prioritize boosting ties with the majority of global states," he said at a meeting of the board of trustees of the Alexander Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Fund.

"The relations of comprehensive partnership and strategic cooperation with the People's Republic of China boast an unprecedented

level of mutual trust. Particularly privileged strategic partnership is developing with India," the top Russian diplomat said.

Lavrov added that serious progress has been reached in expanding and deepening of friendly ties with such states as Iran and North Korea.

Moscow puts special emphasis on strengthening of all areas of cooperation with allies and partners among CIS member states, including within the framework of the Commonwealth, as well as the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Eurasian Economic Union, Lavrov said.

In his congratulatory message to President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the occasion of India's 76th Republic

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Monday sought stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra's apology for "insulting" Deputy CM Eknath Shinde, while police arrested 12 workers of the Shinde-led Shiv Sena for ransacking the venue in Mumbai where Kamra made the 'traitor' jibe.

A local court later released Shiv Sena functionary Rahul Kanai and 11 others on bail.

Slamming Kamra's remarks against Shinde, Fadnavis asserted that "urban Naxals" and "Left liberals"

Power shock: Delhi electricity cost may go up

NEW DELHI: Delhi Power Minister Ashish Sood on Monday indicated a potential rise in electricity prices, attributing it to a Rs 27,000 crore debt left by the previous AAP government with power distribution companies (Discoms) through the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC).

DETAILS ■ P5



supporting such acts will be taught a lesson.

"There is freedom to do stand-up comedy, but he cannot speak whatever he wants. The people of Maharashtra have decided who the traitor is. Kunal Kamra should apologise. This will not be tolerated," he asserted.

Fadnavis criticised Kamra's actions as an inten-

Sensex surges over 1,000 pts

MUMBAI: The stock markets witnessed a strong rally on Monday, driven by positive economic indicators and improving global sentiment. The Nifty 50 of NSE surged by 307.95 points, or 1.32 per cent, to settle at 23,658.35, while BSE Sensex rose 1,078.87 points, or 1.4 per cent, to close at 77,984.38. Experts attributed the rally to better government capital expenditure among other reasons.

DETAILS ■ P7

MPs' salary hiked 24%

NEW DELHI: The Central Government has notified a 24 per cent increase in the salaries of MPs, effective from April 1, raising their monthly salary from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 1.24 lakh. The notification has also increased daily allowances of sitting MPs from Rs 2,000 a month to Rs 2,500 and the pension and additional pension for every year of service in excess of five years of ex-MPs.

DETAILS ■ P2



A girl takes a selfie with the blooming tulips in Asia's largest tulip garden which is scheduled to be open for visitors from Mar 26 at the foothills of Zabarwan, in Srinagar on Monday. ANI

Haryana plans law against songs that promote gun culture

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

Reacting to the controversy over removal of controversial songs of a popular Haryanvi singer Masoom Sharma by the state government, Haryana chief minister Nayab Singh Saini said that the state government may also bring a law against such songs which promote gun culture and hoolliganism.

"We will bring a law

whenever required and good songs will give direction to the society as people get inspired by movies and songs", the chief minister said replying to a question over regarding the controversy over banning of songs.

Sharma's live concert in Gurugram turned controversial when police intervened and stopped the show over the banned song 'Khattola.' The event, held at Leisure Valley Ground



in Sector 29, was brought to an abrupt halt after Sharma made a statement encouraging fans to sing

the song which was removed from social media by the government.

According to reports, the concert had a large gathering of fans and a strong police presence. During the performance, audience members requested Sharma to sing 'Khattola.'

In response, he told them, "I have signed an agreement not to sing this song, but you can sing it." This statement triggered an immediate reaction from the

police. Officers quickly stepped in, took away Sharma's microphone, and stopped the music.

A video of the incident has gone viral on social media, showing the moment police officials interrupted the performance.

The Gurugram Police later issued a statement explaining their actions. Sandeep Kumar, the police spokesperson, stated that the concert was permit-

■ P3

CENTRE NOTIFIES 24 PER CENT HIKE IN SALARIES FOR MPs

From April, MPs salaries per month will now be raised to Rs 1.24 lakh besides allowances, perks even as pensions of ex-MPs also raised

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The Central Government has notified a 24 per cent increase in the salaries of Members of Parliament (MPs), effective from April 1, raising their monthly salary from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 1.24 lakh.

The notification, issued by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, also increased daily allowances of the sitting MPs from Rs 2000 per month to Rs 2,500 per month and the pension and additional pension for every year of service in excess of five years of ex-MPs.

The pension for former MPs has been raised from Rs 25,000 per month to Rs 31,000, while the additional pension for each year of service beyond five years



Rajya Sabha during the Budget Session of Parliament, in New Delhi on Monday. ANI

has been increased from Rs 2,000 per month to Rs 2,500.

This revision has been made under the powers granted by the Salary, Allowances, and Pension of Members of Parliament Act, 1954, and is linked to

the Cost Inflation Index as specified in the Income-tax Act, 1961.

In 2018, the then finance minister Arun Jaitley increased the salaries of MPs from Rs 50,000 to Rs 1 lakh.

Jaitley had also put a mechanism for automatic

revision of salaries and allowances every five years by indexing it to inflation, thus doing away with the practice of MPs making recommendations for fixing their salaries.

A member of Parliament will now get Rs 1.24 lakh per

month as salary, Rs 87,000 per month as constituency allowance as against Rs 70,000 earlier, Rs 75,000 towards office expenses as against Rs 60,000 earlier.

The office expenses of Rs 75,000 include Rs 50,000 to hire the services of a computer literate person and Rs 25,000 towards stationery items. The MPs are also entitled to purchase durable furniture worth Rs 1 lakh and non-durable furniture of Rs 25,000 once during their tenure.

Earlier, these entitlements were capped at Rs 80,000 for durable furniture and Rs 20,000 for non-durable furniture. The MPs get accommodation, varying from a hostel in Vitthalbhai Patel House to two-bedroom flats and bungalows in central Delhi.

Irrelevant, it's a state subject: Tharoor slams Parl disruption

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor attacked the ruling government on Monday for disrupting the Parliament and said that the issue the government raised is "irrelevant" as it is a state subject.

"It is utterly shocking when you see that the ruling party, essentially the Government whose responsibility it is to run the House, has chosen to disrupt the Parliament in this way. It is deeply disappointing. To my mind, the issue they have raised is also irrelevant because it is State subject...It has nothing to do with the Central Parliament. Why are they trying to disrupt the House on the basis of that?" said Tharoor.

"Honestly, we are reducing Parliament to a farce. If we don't function properly, why will the voters want to entrust their precious tax money to running this institution which we used to hail as the temple of democracy? Instead of prayers here, we are having shouting match-



es, it's really a disappointment," he added.

A ruckus erupted within a few minutes of the proceedings in Rajya Sabha over Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar's reported remarks about "changing the Constitution".

Union Minister Kiren Rijju demanded an explanation from the Leader of Opposition, Mallikarjun Kharge, regarding the Congress' position on reservation for Muslims, whereas the Congress chief said that nobody can change the Constitution.

Speaking in the Rajya Sabha, Kiren Rijju termed

the Shivakumar's statement "extremely serious."

"It is not our intention to disrupt this zero hour why I am standing here because an extremely sensitive matter come to our notice. One of the very responsible leaders of the Congress party, who is holding a constitutional post. They have made a statement that they are going to change the Constitution to provide reservations in contract to the Muslim community. We cannot take this statement lightly. It is an extremely serious matter we cannot tolerate, and this an assault on the Constitution of India.

133 aircraft of various airlines out of 813 grounded: MoS Civil Aviation to RS

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

A total of 133 aircraft are grounded of the total 813 aircraft in the fleet of various domestic airlines, Parliament was informed on Monday.

Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha also said that of the remaining 680 opera-



tional aircraft, 319 belong to IndiGo while 198 planes are in the fleet of Air India and

101 with Air India Express. The rest planes are spread across other airlines, the Minister said.

He also said that Indian carriers have placed orders for a total of 1,359 new aircraft in the previous two years, of which 999 new aircraft orders were placed in 2023 and 360 new orders in 2024.

Currently, 680 aircraft are

operational for passenger travel and 133 are grounded spread across various airlines, Mohol said.

Regarding regulations for maximum permissible age for aircraft, the Minister said that the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has not prescribed guidelines specifying life for an aircraft to fly in India.

Cong MP moves adjournment notice over escape of 13 minor girls from Bihar shelter home

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Congress MP Ranjeet Ranjan on Monday gave Adjournment Motion notice in Rajya Sabha demanding a discussion on the 13 minor girls who escaped from a Balika Griha in the Siwan district of Bihar.

The notice reads, "According to the information received, 13 minor girls escaped from a Balika Griha in Siwan district of Bihar on the night of 19.03.2025. It is being told that the girls took advantage of the darkness and escaped from the Balika Griha by scaling a 30-foot-high wall with sharp wires."



"This case not only reflects a serious lapse in security but also highlights wider issues related to women and child safety. Such incidents raise serious questions on the credibility of our law and order and child protection institutions," the notice further reads.

Earlier, Congress MPs

Manickam Tagore and Renuka Chowdhury on Monday gave Adjournment Motion notices in Parliament demanding a discussion on the Delhi High Court judge Justice Yashwant Varma who is facing a probe over cash allegedly recovered from his residence.

In their notice, they urged that the government must provide an explanation and assurances regarding the matter. "It is essential that this issue is thoroughly discussed and the truth be laid bare for the people of India," the notice further reads. This came after a fire at the residence of a Delhi High Court judge Justice Yashwant Varma inadvertently led to the discovery of a large amount of cash.

The cash was found initially by fire tenders when a fire broke out in the judge's residence on March 14. While, the judge was not present at his house.

Par panel recommends expert committee to study RTE implementation in Delhi schools

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

A parliamentary committee on the welfare of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) has strongly recommended setting up an expert committee to study the efficacy and implementation of free education in private schools in Delhi under the Right to Education Act, 2009.

The committee, headed by

BJP member Fagga Singh Kulaste, took a serious note of the previous Delhi government "casually" submitting before the panel that private unaided recognised schools, which are situated on private land or government land but do not have a land obligation, are only mandated to provide free education to the economically weaker sections, disadvantaged groups and children with special needs

children till completion of elementary education.

Thereafter, the Delhi government told the panel that such children may be admitted to government schools to complete school education after elementary education.

The committee strongly recommended setting up an expert committee to study the efficacy and implementation of the Right to Education (RTE) Act and free education in private schools,

the report of the committee submitted to Parliament observed.

The panel said it feels that the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD) should work on modalities for formulating policies whereby the children belonging to disadvantaged sections including those from SC/ST categories be ensured education in private schools post Class 8.

91.50 lakh houses delivered under PMAY-U, minister tells Rajya Sabha

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Minister of state for housing and urban affairs Tokhan Sahu said in Parliament that 'the schemes related to housing and slum rehabilitation are implemented by State/Union Territory (UT) Governments in their respective regions.

The Minister informed the Rajya Sabha that based on the project proposals submitted by States/UTs, as on 17.03.2025, a total of 118.64 lakh houses have been sanctioned under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban (PMAY-U), out of which 112.73 lakh have been grounded, of which 91.50 lakh are completed/delivered to the beneficiaries including slum dwellers.

He further said in reply to the question by Rajya Sabha MP Kartikeya Sharma that



out of a total of 118.64 lakh houses sanctioned under the scheme as on 17.03.2025, about 29 lakh houses have been sanctioned to slum dwellers under AHP/BL/ISSR verticals of PMAY-U. The State/UT-wise and vertical-wise details of houses sanctioned, grounded and completed/delivered to the slum dwellers under the scheme since inception along with Central Assistance sanctioned have been shared with MPs, he said.

Further, based on the learning from the experiences of 9 years implementation of PMAY-U, MoHUA has revamped the scheme and launched PMAY-U 2.0 'Housing for All' Mission with effect from 01.09.2024 for implementation in urban areas across the country to construct, purchase and rent a house by 1 crore additional eligible beneficiaries at affordable cost through four verticals i.e., Beneficiary Led Construction (BLC), Affordable Housing in Partnership (AHP), Affordable Rental Housing (ARR) and Interest Subsidy Scheme (ISS).

Moreover, in-principle approval of 6.77 lakh houses have been provided to 30 States/UTs which have signed Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) to implement PMAY-U 2.0 for eligible beneficiaries

GLIMPSES FROM PARLIAMENT



Congress MPs Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Sudha Ramakrishnan at Parliament House. ANI



SP's Akhilesh Yadav in a conversation with BJP MP Jagdambika Pal at Parliament House. ANI



Union Home Minister Amit Shah at Parliament House premises on Monday. ANI Photo



Rajya Sabha MPs Sudha Murty and Swati Maliwal at Parliament House on Monday. ANI



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman speaks in the LS. ANI

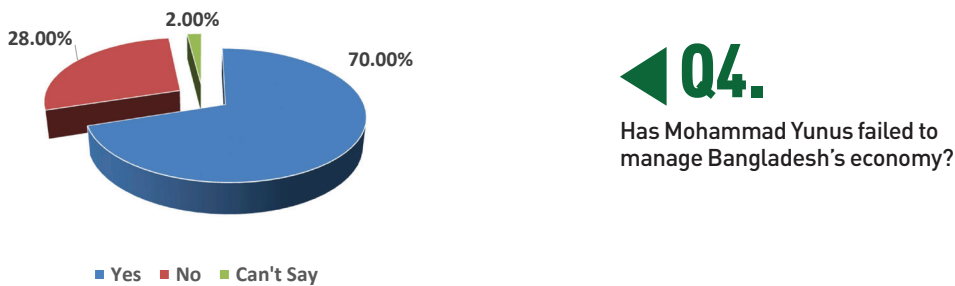
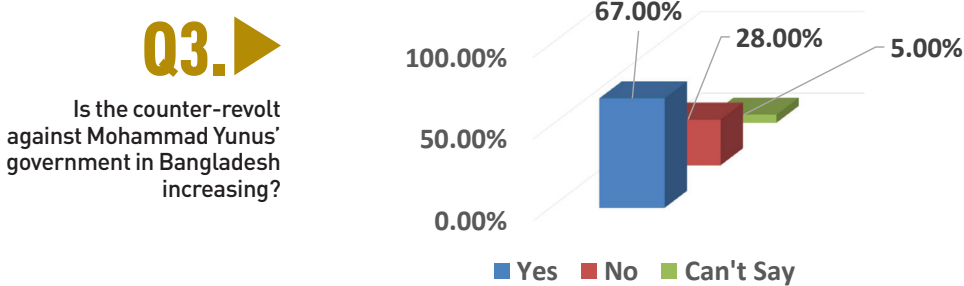
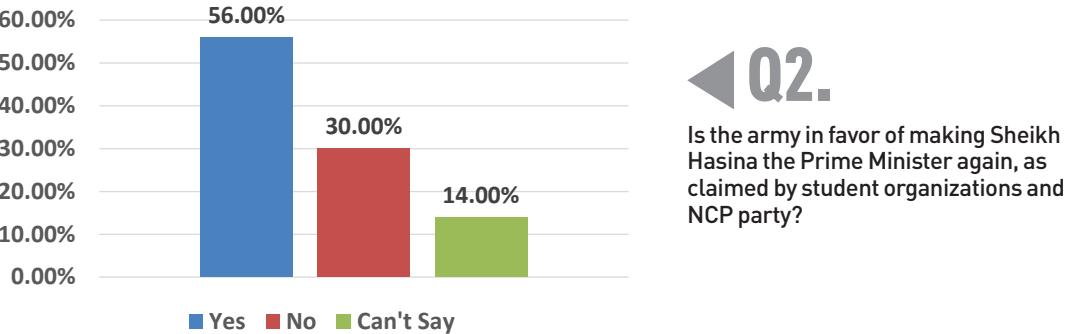
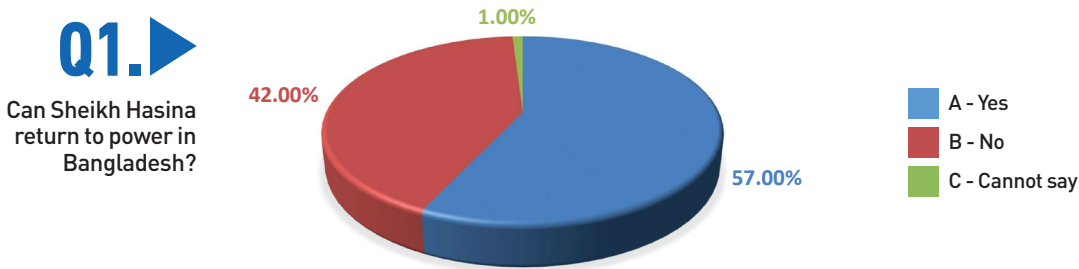


TMC MP Mahua Moitra speaks in the LS during the Budget session of Parliament. ANI

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON BANGLADESH POLITICAL CRISIS

57% say Sheikh Hasina can return as Bangladesh PM.

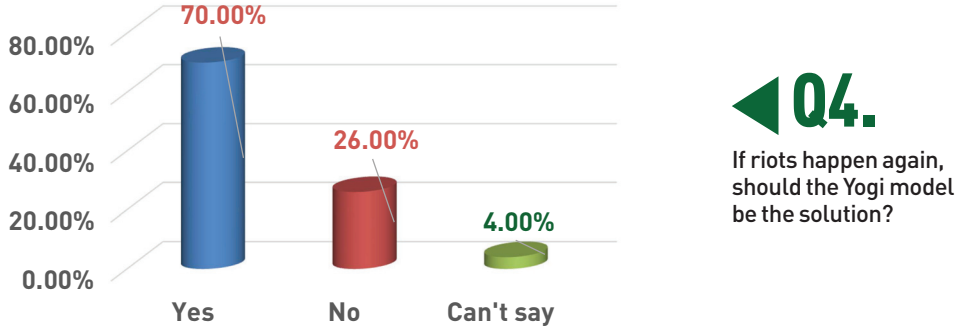
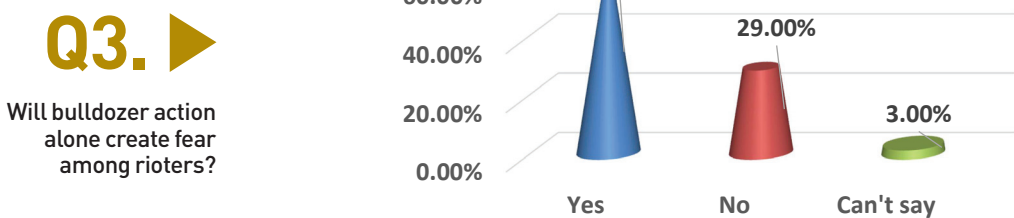
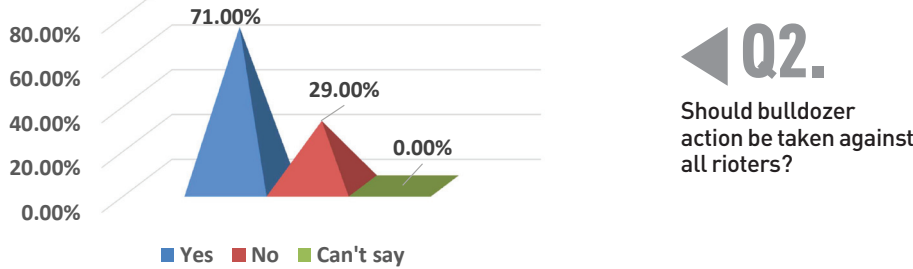
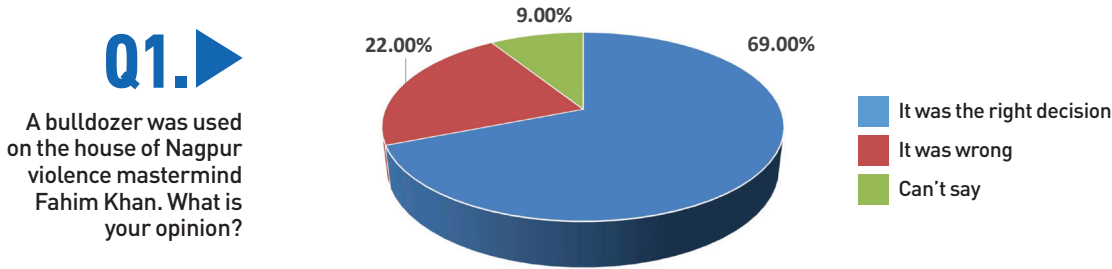
According to the survey, 57% of respondents believe Sheikh Hasina can return to power in Bangladesh, while 42% disagree, and 1% remains uncertain. This indicates a majority viewpoint in favor of her political leadership, though a substantial minority expresses doubt about her likely future comeback.



THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON NAGPUR VIOLENCE ACCUSED ACTION

69% support bulldozer use on Fahim Khan's house was right decision.

According to the survey, 69% of respondents believe that using a bulldozer on the house of Nagpur violence mastermind Fahim Khan was the right decision, while 22% think it was wrong. Meanwhile, 9% remain uncertain, reflecting a strong majority in favor of the action.



Ruckus in Rajya Sabha

CONTINUED FROM P1

person that said that we will change the Constitution, the one made by Dr BR Ambedkar, cannot be changed by anyone. In fact, for its protection, we are the one who took out a Bharat jodo Yatra from Kanyakumari to Kashmir," Kharge said. Pointing towards the government MPs, he added, "These people, they want to do Bharat todo (breaking up India)." These remarks by Kharge were met by loud objections from the Treasury benches, prompting Parliamentary Affairs minister Kiren Rijiju to reply, "I want to say on record, that their own sitting Deputy Chief Minister, and state's congress president has officially said that, and I can authenticate it too." Earlier, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar had alleged that the BJP is misquoting him and spreading fake news. "Whatever they are quoting is wrong. They are misquoting me. We are a national party--it is our party that brought the Constitution to this country," he emphasised. He further accused the BJP of a deliberate campaign to mislead, stating, "The BJP always tries to misguide the country... They are peddling fake news."

Meet on judicial accountability

CONTINUED FROM P1

he would get in touch with the Leader of the House and Leader of the Opposition and find a mechanism for a structured discussion on the issue. Congress MP Jairam Ramesh sought the Chair's response on judicial accountability and reminded him about a pending notice regarding the impeachment of a judge of the Allahabad High Court. The Rajya Sabha Chairman said that he would now get in touch with the leader of the opposition in Rajya Sabha and the leader of the House as well to evolve a structured discussion. Dhankhar on March 21 had underscored the sanctity of constitutional amendments, emphasising that any changes to the Constitution must follow due parliamentary and legislative processes before receiving presidential assent under Article 111. "...The Leader of the House is not here. I had to reflect in a very focused manner that

what appears in the Indian Constitution has to emanate first from our founding fathers and then any change affected whatsoever has to be sanctified by the Parliament and in some cases by 50 per cent of the state legislatures and then finally it gets constitutional sanction with the Hon'ble President signing it under article 111 and therefore I had pleaded with the leader of the house that the House needs to know that Constitution which according to this directive holds the field today," Dhankhar said earlier. "You all will recollect if the mechanism which was passed by this house with near unanimity, with no dissension, only one abstention in Rajya Sabha, all political parties converging, going in for the initiative of the government. I wish to find out the status of that which emanated from the Indian Parliament made sacrosanct by the endorsement of 16 state assemblies in the country and signed by the President under Article 111 of the Constitution," he added.

Fadnavis slams Kamra

CONTINUED FROM P1

is located. They allegedly ransacked the studio and the hotel premises, the police said. The CPI (M) condemned the targeting of Kamra and the vandalism of the studio over his alleged defamatory remarks against Shinde. The CPI (M) said this demonstrates that "mob violence is the only law" for BJP-led alliance regimes. The Left party said it stood with Kamra and his right to freedom of expression. The studio in which Kamra filmed his show was on Monday demolished by Mumbai's civic body for alleged building violations. A Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation official said the temporary shed and other structures comprising the studio, which was created in the basement of the hotel, have been razed. "It was removed as there is no civic permission to create a studio in the basement. The BMC will check

the hotel to see if everything is as per the allowed plan," the official said. Earlier in the day, Habitat Studio announced they were shutting down after Shiv Sena workers vandalised its premises. In an Instagram post, the studio said, "We are shocked, worried and extremely broken by the recent acts of vandalism targeting us." The studio said artists are solely responsible for their views and creative choices.

Collegium recommends transfer of Justice Varma

CONTINUED FROM P1

it also urged the CJI to allow investigating agencies to take action against Justice Varma besides calling for impeachment proceedings against the judge. The lawyers also abstained from judicial work after the lunch break. The association further demanded a review of judgements delivered by the judge. "All the judgements delivered by Justice Yashwant Varma during his tenure of a judge at Allahabad High Court and Delhi High Court be reviewed in order to inspire confidence

of people at large to regain public faith in the judicial system." But some legal experts termed the demand as "preposterous", "premature" and "unjustified". Justice Varma has been in controversy since a stash of cash was allegedly recovered from his official residence here. As per the media reports, a fire at the judge's house had inadvertently led to the recovery of cash by the firefighter. Media reports said the cash was found initially by fire tenders when a fire broke out in the judge's residence on March 14. The

judge was not present at his house. The Chief Justice of India, Sanjiv Khanna, on Saturday constituted a three-member Committee consisting of High Court judges for conducting an inquiry into the allegations. The committee consists of Justice Sheel Nagu, Chief Justice of the High Court of Punjab & Haryana, Justice GS Sandhawalia, Chief Justice of the High Court of Himachal Pradesh, and Anu Sivaraman, judge of the High Court of Karnataka. The Chief Justice of the High Court of Delhi, Devendra Upadhyaya, for the time being has been asked

not to assign any judicial work to Justice Varma. The Supreme Court had also released the inquiry report of the High Court Chief Justice into the controversy relating to Justice Varma. In his report, the Delhi High Court Chief Justice said that he is of the prima facie opinion that the entire matter warrants a "deeper probe." It also released the response of Justice Varma, who has denied the allegations and said that it clearly appeared to be a "conspiracy to frame and malign" him. Justice Varma had said that no cash was ever

placed in that storeroom either by him or any of his family members and said he strongly denounce the suggestion that the alleged cash belonged to them. Justice Verma had also stated that the room which caught fire and where cash was allegedly found was an outhouse and not the main building where the judge and family resides. On Friday, the Supreme Court brushed aside any connection between the transfer of Justice Varma to his parent Allahabad High Court and the alleged recovery of a stash of cash from his official residence here.

Russia-India partnership

CONTINUED FROM P1

Day in January, Putin said that Russian-Indian relations are based on "special and privileged strategic partnership". President Putin is expected to travel to India this year as part of the established framework for reciprocal annual engagements between the leaders of the two nations. Putin and Modi maintain

regular contact, holding telephone conversations once every couple of months. The two leaders also hold in-person meetings, particularly on the sidelines of international events. In July last, Prime Minister Modi made a two-day visit to Moscow to attend the 22nd Russia-India summit. In October, he visited the Russian city of Kazan for the BRICS summit.

Haryana plans law

CONTINUED FROM P1

ted under the condition that banned songs would not be performed. However, as soon as fans began singing the song, police officials at the venue took control of the situation and halted the performance. Following the interruption, some of Sharma's fans attempted to reach the stage, leading to a confrontation with security personnel leading to the detention of a few individuals. Meanwhile, in a related development, the Haryana government in a late night order on Sunday issued directions to vacate the office of Officer on Special Duty (Publicity) Gajendra Phogat from the 8th floor of Civil Secretariat. Masoom Sharma accused Phogat of playing a role in getting several songs, including seven by Masoom Sharma, deleted from social media. The actions sparked outrage among Haryanvi singers and their supporters. Phogat, who held Office No. 50 on the eighth floor of the Haryana Civil Secretariat, was asked to vacate his office.

Haryana eyes bumper harvest

CONTINUED FROM P1

wheat, barley, and chickpeas will commence on April 1, while sunflower procurement will begin on June 1. The procurement responsibilities will be shared among different agencies: HAFED will procure 40% of Rabi crops, the Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department will handle 30%, the Haryana State Warehousing Corporation will manage 20%, and the Food Corporation of India (FCI) will take care of the remaining 10%. He said that to facilitate smooth payments to farmers, officials informed the Chief Minister that the Finance Department and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have approved a credit limit of Rs 6653.44 crore for the Rabi procurement season. Also the directions have been issued to the concerned banks to ensure direct payments to farmers' accounts within 48 to 72 hours after the exit gate pass is issued from the mandis. Haryana ranks second in wheat production in India

The chief minister instructed officials to ensure an adequate supply of gunny bags in mandis and to ask commission agents to arrange seating for farmers.

and contributes about 25% of the total wheat to the central pool. A total of 415 mandis will be operational for wheat procurement, along with 25 for barley, 11 for chickpeas, 7 for lentils, 116 for mustard, and 17 for sunflower. Even, 108 mandis in the state are now linked to the e-NAM platform for better market access. The minimum support price (MSP) for various crops has been set as follows: wheat at Rs 2425 per quintal, barley at Rs 1980 per quintal, chickpeas at 5650 per quintal, lentils at 6700 per quintal, mustard at 5950 per quintal, and sunflower at Rs 7280 per quintal. Haryana is the only state in India where all crops are procured at 100% MSP. The chief minister also instructed officials to ensure an adequate supply of gunny bags in mandis and to ask commission agents to arrange seating for farmers. To address the needs of farmers and laborers, 53 Atal Kisan Mazdoor canteens are already functional in the mandis. The chief minister said that to ensure round-the-clock assistance to the farmers a toll-free Kisan Call Centre will be operational to handle any complaints from farmers and traders and all Deputy Commissioners have been directed to form teams to monitor the procurement process throughout the season. Last year the government agencies had procured nearly 73 lakh metric tonnes (MT) of wheat, exceeding 2023's figure of 70.3 lakh MT, Haryana Sets Target to Procure 75 Lakh Metric Tonnes of Wheat on MSP, Procurement to start from April 1.

SHINDE JIBE ROW: FIR AGAINST KAMRA, 11 SENA WORKERS HELD FOR VANDALISM

Shiv Sena (Shinde) workers barge into live show in protest over comedian Kamra's remarks on Maha Deputy CM Eknath Shinde

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI


The Mumbai police arrested 11 members of the Yuva Sena, the youth faction of Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena on Monday for vandalising the Habitat comedy venue.

The group was protesting against the alleged derogatory remarks made by standup comedian Kunal Kamra on his recent comedy special, ‘Naya Bharat,’ uploaded on Youtube. According to police, the youth group went inside the venue while a live show of comedian Rajat Sood was going on, forcing it to stop and vandalised it.

Shiv Sena has strongly objected to the comments made by Kamra, meanwhile the Opposition alliance in Maharashtra has criticised the Mahayuti government for the “break down of law and order”, which UBT’s Arvind Sawant saying that every word spoken by Kamra is correct.

Earlier, Officials had registered a FIR in under Sec-

OPPN SLAMS VANDALISM, SUPPORTS KAMRA



- Opposition alliance in Maharashtra has criticised the Mahayuti government for the “break down of law and order”.
- “The Constitution has provided freedom of speech. It doesn’t give you the right to insist those occupying Constitutional positions,” Maharashtra MoS Home said.
- UBT’s Arvind Sawant says every word spoken by Kamra is correct.

tions 132, 189(2), 189(3), 190, 191(2), 324(5), 324(6), 223, 351(2), 352, 333, 37(1), and 135 of the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS), 2023 and also under sections 37 (1) and 135 under the Maharashtra Police Act.

Shinde Sena’s Sanjay Nirupam alleged that the booking money for the show

came from Matoshree, the residence of former Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.

“The place where this show was recorded, the booking money for it came from Matoshree from Uddav Thackeray and that is why Eknath Shinde has been targeted,” Nirupam

said during a press conference in Mumbai.

He further alleged that Kamra is part of the “Rahul Gandhi and Congress ecosystem.”

An FIR has also been registered against Kunal Kamra for his alleged derogatory remarks. However, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Arvind

Sawat backed the comments made by Kamra, saying that every sentence he made was correct.

Speaking to ANI, Sawant emphasized that if democracy truly exists in the country, Kamra’s remarks must be respected.

“As far as what Kunal Kamra did, I think every word, every sentence said by him is correct.

That is what everyone in opposition is alleging against him. He said that in the form of a poem. If we say there is democracy in this country and we believe in that, then we must accept all of this,” Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Arvind Sawant said.

He added, “Criticism is criticism. Sometimes, someone does mimicry. Balasaheb Thackeray was a renowned cartoonist; he made caricatures of Sharad Pawar, Sonia Gandhi, Indira Gandhi and Nehru. Had it been the present time, they would have filed cases against him every day... FIR should be registered against those who vandalized... Can’t they accept criticism?”

TN MPs to meet PM, press for fair delimitation: Stalin

TDG NETWORK
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Monday announced that all-party parliamentarians from the state will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi to push for their demand for fair delimitation.

Stalin emphasised that Tamil Nadu had led the charge on the issue by passing a legislative resolution, holding an all-party meeting, and forming an all-India Joint Action Committee, making a significant impact at the national level.

“The demand made by Tamil Nadu is for fair delimitation. It is the first state in India to pass a legislative resolution.

BJP trying to twist my remarks, consulting legal experts: DKS

TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Monday slammed the BJP over its protest on his purported remarks relating to the Constitution and said Bharatiya Janata Party is trying to twist his remarks and he is consulting his legal team.

“I don’t want to comment much on it. There is no hide and seek in this issue. On quota, there are several judgments which have come, and after every judgment, amendments have been made to the Constitution; there is nothing else. So they (BJP) are trying to twist it. They don’t have any issues. I am happy that Jairam Ramesh has moved privilege motion. I am also consulting legal experts,” the Karnataka Dy CM said.

Earlier, speaking to reporters at his residence, Shivakaumar said he “never stated we would change the Constitution”.

“The BJP is carrying out



propaganda. I will fight it legally,” he said.

Asked about the BJP’s criticism of his remarks to a private TV channel on changing the Constitution, Shivakumar said the BJP is twisting his statement.

“I have been in public life for 36 years and have basic common sense. But the BJP is misleading people. My name is being dragged into BJP’s disinformation campaign,” he said.

“All I said was that there is a precedent for changing the Constitution based on the Court’s orders. I have never said we will change the Constitution. The Congress is a

national party that brought the Constitution in the first place. We understand its importance better than others. The Centre has failed the people in the recent Budget and is now trying to rake up other issues. This is part of the BJP’s continued political conspiracy,” he added.

Asked about Amit Malviya’s post on X, Shivakumar said he is misleading. “The BJP has always tried to take the country down the wrong path. Let them show proof of me saying the Constitution needs to be changed. This is cheap politics from the BJP. They don’t get sleep if they don’t take the names of Sonia Gandhi, her family, and the Congress party. The BJP is an expert in falsifying information and carrying out propaganda campaigns.”

“I will take legal action against those twisting my statements. It would be difficult if these statements were made within the House, but I will surely pursue legal action if they were made outside Parliament,” he added.

Shah postpones Bengal visit amid state chief selection limbo

SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA

Union Home Minister Amit Shah’s visit to West Bengal scheduled in the last week of March 2025 has been postponed. Shah was scheduled to visit the State on March 28 and 29 when he was supposed to hold an organisational meeting in the State.

West Bengal BJP president and Central Minister Sukanta Majumdar said that the visit had been postponed because it was coinciding with the Eid-ul-Fitr festivities.

The proposed visit was scheduled at a time when West Bengal BJP leadership is looking for a new State BJP president. While there were reports that the new State BJP president will be announced before the Home Minister’s visit, there has been no such announcement.

Sukanta Majumdar had become State president in November 2021 and his three-year term concluded in No-



vember last year. Moreover, the party follows the principle of one person and one post, and the BJP MP has been appointed Minister of State for Education after the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Recently, a number of new presidents of BJP’s organisation districts in West Bengal were elected.

With an eye on the Assembly polls of 2026, the appointment of new BJP president assumes a lot of political significance. There are some speculations that the party may maintain the status quo and continue

with Sukanta Majumdar as the State president till the Assembly polls scheduled next year.

Meanwhile, former West Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh held a meeting with senior BJP leaders Suwendu Adhikari. Ghosh, who was the state president from 2015-2021, has also become active in political circles.

Dilip Ghosh has been the most successful State BJP president. Under his leadership, the BJP won 18 of the 42 seats in 2019 Lok Sabha polls. In 2024, the number of seats won by BJP had dropped to 12. Since 2021, Suwendu Adhikari has emerged as the most vocal voice of the West Bengal BJP taking on the West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee.

On Sunday, Adhikari once again set the target of winning 180 seats in the 2026 Assembly polls. He said no force would be able to stop the BJP from coming to power.

Karnataka honey trap row: PIL in SC for CBI probe into allegations

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to hear a PIL seeking an independent probe by the CBI or SIT into the alleged honey-trapping of legislators, public servants, and judges in Karnataka.

The matter was mentioned by the advocate of the petitioner for early listing of the case before a bench headed by Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, which agreed to list it for hearing today or tomorrow.

The plea filed by a Jharkhand resident, Binay Kumar Singh, sought an in-



dependent probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) or a Special Investigation Team (SIT) comprising police officers who are not subject to the control or influence of the State of Karnataka.

The petition, filed through advocate Barun Sinha, urged the apex court to

monitor the investigation either by the apex court or by a monitoring committee headed by a retired Supreme Court judge.

“The monitoring committee should also inquire into the role played by all authorities/persons who directly or indirectly benefitted from the incident. To direct pros-

ecution of the person found guilty upon investigation”, the plea stated.

Last week, cooperation minister KN Rajanna alleged that 48 people have fallen victim to “honey traps” in the state, and their obscene videos have been circulated. The Congress MLA claimed that the list was across party lines, including state and national leaders.

“There were very serious and troubling allegations made on the floor of the Karnataka state legislature that a person aspiring to be the chief minister of the state has been successful in honey-trapping several persons, amongst whom are judges.

MP Cong to move SC over transport scam, ex-constable corruption case

TDG NETWORK
BHOPAL

Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Madhya Pradesh Assembly and Congress leader Umang Singhar on Monday announced that the party would approach the Supreme Court over the alleged state transport department scam and the corruption case involving former department constable Saurabh Sharma.

Singhar’s statement came a day after Jaideep Prasad, the in-charge Director General (DG) of Lokayukta, who was investigating the case,



was transferred. According to an order issued by the state government on Sunday, Prasad has been reassigned as Additional Director General (ADG) of the State Crime Record Bureau (SCRB) at the police headquarters in Bho-

pal.

Speaking to ANI in the state assembly, Singhar said, “The way DG Lokayukta, Jaideep Prasad, who was investigating the case of Saurabh Sharma, has been removed (referring to transfer) it is clear that the government wants to suppress the whole matter.

In our next step, we will move to the Supreme Court in connection with the Saurabh Sharam corruption case and transport department scam.”

Reacting to the LoP’s remarks, Madhya Pradesh

Transport Minister Uday Pratap Singh said that in a democracy, everyone has the right to address their concerns. “I think they (the opposition) should go. Everyone has the right to be heard in a democracy, and they should exercise their rights,” the Minister told reporters.

Madhya Pradesh Congress legislators have repeatedly raised the Saurabh Sharma corruption case in the state assembly during the budget session. They also staged a walkout, demanding a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) inquiry into the matter.

Bulldozer action against accused in Nagpur violence

TDG NETWORK
NAGPUR

The bulldozer action against the Nagpur violence accused Faheem Khan began as the police with a bulldozer arrived at his residence on Monday. The machines were seen demolishing parts of the accused’s home.

This comes after violent clashes erupted in Nagpur on March 17 over the demand for the removal of Aurangzeb’s grave, with stones hurled at police amid rumours that a holy book of a community was burnt during an agitation.

Earlier on March 22, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said that 92 people have been arrested in connection with the March



17 Nagpur violence, which involved incidents of stone pelting and vehicles being torched.

Speaking at a press conference after the meeting, CM Fadnavis, who also serves as the state’s Home Minister, said that the violence was triggered by rumours spread on social media alleging that a holy ‘chadar’ had been burnt

on that day.

“I chaired a high-level meeting regarding the violence, which was also attended by state minister Chandrashekar Bawankule. I reviewed every detail and shared my thoughts... The tomb of Aurangzeb was burnt that day when this incident occurred. Following the incident, a case was registered with the police. However, some people spread a rumour via podcasts and social media posts that a holy ‘chadar’ was burnt. This led to rioters pelting stones, torching vehicles and attacking shops in Nagpur,” CM Fadnavis said.

He also said that damages caused during the violence would be recovered from the rioters. “Whatever damage

has happened will be recovered from the rioters. If they do not pay the money, their property will be sold for the recovery. Bulldozers will also be used wherever required,” CM Fadnavis added.

Earlier, Maharashtra Police’s Cyber cell said that one of the accused in the Nagpur violence “edited and circulated videos” and “glorified violence” on social media, which led to the riots spreading in various parts of the city.

“He (Faheem Khan) edited and circulated the video of the protest against Aurangzeb due to which the riots spread. He also glorified violent videos,” cyber cell’s Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Lo-hit Matani said.

Only one community being targeted, bound to be tension: Omar on Waqf Bill

TDG NETWORK
JAMMU

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday stated that targeting a single community would only escalate tensions.

Speaking to the media regarding protests against the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, Abdullah explained that the charitable activities of the Muslim community are carried out through the

Waqf Board.

“There is no religion that does not do charitable activities. The charitable activities of the Muslim community happen through Waqf... Only one community is being targeted. It is obvious there would be tensions surrounding it,” Abdullah said.

A day earlier, the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) announced a nationwide agitation against the proposed Waqf Amendment Bill.

A statement issued by Mohd Vaquar Uddin Latifi, Office Secretary of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), said, “Following a massive and successful protest in Delhi on March 17, the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) has announced a nationwide agitation against the proposed Waqf Amendment Bill.

SQR Ilyas, spokesperson of AIMPLB and Convener of the Action Committee



Against the Waqf Bill, expressed gratitude on behalf of the Board to all Muslim organizations, civil society groups, and leaders from

Dalit, Adivasi, OBC, and other minority communities.

“Without the grace of Allah and the united support of these groups, the success of the Delhi demonstration would not have been possible,” he said. He also extended thanks to the opposition parties and Members of Parliament who not only participated in large numbers but also firmly rejected the proposed legislation.

The statement stated that

the AIMPLB’s 31-member Action Committee has resolved to adopt all constitutional, legal, and democratic means to “oppose” what it has termed a “controversial, discriminatory, and damaging” bill. “As part of the first phase of the agitation, large protest sit-ins have been planned in front of the state assemblies in Patna on March 26 and Vijayawada on March 29.”

Public conferences, seminars, symposiums, and

dharnas will be organized at the district level, and memorandums will be submitted to the President of India through District Magistrates, the statement added. However, reacting to the protests, Waqf JPC Chairman and BJP MP Jaagdam-bika Pal on Monday said that they are trying to create “instability” in the nation.

“Whether it is Imran Masood or AIMPLB, they are trying to misguide the minorities. They are trying

to create instability in the nation through their protests... We had called AIMPLB in front of the Waqf JPC. We recorded and incorporated their views... What is the AIMPLB protesting against when the government has not even brought the amended bill yet?” the Waqf JPC Chairman told ANI.

“The law has not even been made yet, so why are they warning for a nationwide protest?

BRACE FOR POWER BILL SHOCK THIS SUMMER AS MINISTER HINTS AT PRICE HIKE

Sood said the AAP govt in Delhi left behind Rs 27,000 crore debt of regulatory assets of Discoms

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Power Minister Ashish Sood on Monday indicated a potential rise in electricity prices, attributing it to a Rs 27,000 crore debt left by the previous AAP government with power distribution companies (Discoms) through the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC).

Responding to a question by AAP MLA Imran Hussain in the Delhi Assembly on the expected increase in electricity tariffs, Sood stated that Discoms are authorised to hike rates to recover the outstanding amount.

He noted that during the previous government's tenure, the Delhi High Court had directed DERC to issue a tariff order, but the administration failed to safeguard public interests.

"The previous government has left a debt of Rs 27 thousand crores of regulatory assets with the discoms through DERC. To recover this, the companies are authorised to increase the electricity rates. During the tenure of the previous government, on the orders of the High Court, DERC was ordered to bring tariff orders," he said.

"That government could not protect the interests of the public. In the coming time, electricity prices will rise, and perhaps some people even want this for their political gains. However, the government remains in touch with DERC and is



closely monitoring the situation," Sood added.

"The Delhi government will not let the people of Delhi face any additional burden regarding electricity rates," he said in a statement.

AAP MLA and former minister Imran Hussain during the Question Hour sought to know whether electricity rates in Delhi are going to be raised since regulatory assets of the discoms require to be liquidated in three years.

Replying to the question, Sood said the previous AAP government in Delhi left behind Rs 27,000 of regulatory assets of the discoms.

"The power discoms are authorised to recover this amount from people through hike in power tariff," he said.

Regulatory assets of a power distribution company (discom) refer to any costs incurred by it that can be recovered from the consumers in future through tariff

revisions.

The regulatory assets are accumulated when a power regulator (DERC in case of Delhi) defers the recovery of the amounts incurred by the discoms through future rate hike.

No hike in electricity rates took place during 10 years rule of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Delhi.

"During the tenure of the previous government, tariff orders were to be issued according to a High Court order and the previous government could not protect the interests of the people of Delhi in the court," Sood claimed.

The minister said the BJP government is looking into the matter and it is in touch with the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC).

Sood charged that there is a debt of Rs 27,000 crore on the people of Delhi in the form of regulatory assets due to the previous govern-

ment's "inefficiency".

He said some people wanted the electricity rates to hike so that they can do politics over it.

"The previous AAP government gave the right to the discoms to realise the Rs 27,000 from Delhi people," he said. The DERC has already started the process for tariff revision through consultations with various stakeholders. The Commission had in December 2024 invited suggestions from stakeholders on tariff petitions filed by the power companies, including the discoms BRPL (BSES Rajdhani Power Limited), BYPL (BSES Yamuna Power Limited) and TPDDL (Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited), for true up of expenses of 2022-23 and aggregate revenue requirement (ARR) and tariff for 2024-25.

A public hearing on the petitions is scheduled to be held by the DERC on March 27.

DTC's liabilities rose to Rs 37K cr in 5 yrs: CAG report

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report on the DTC triggered a heated debate in the Delhi Assembly on Monday, with the BJP leaders alleging corruption and financial mismanagement during the AAP's tenure.

Delhi Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa claimed that the report exposed large-scale corruption by the previous Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government.

"Arvind Kejriwal came to power promising to end corruption, but every CAG report reveals more mismanagement under his rule. The number of DTC bus routes has declined from 814 to 468, leaving poor commuters stranded," he said.

Sirsa claimed that the operational cost of the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) buses had risen sharply.

"Earlier, DTC operated at



Rs 213 per kilometre, but now the cost has more than doubled to Rs 487 per kilometre," he said.

BJP MLA Harish Khurana alleged that DTC's operating cost had skyrocketed to Rs 544 per kilometre, compared to Rs 54 per kilometre for Delhi Integrated Multi-Modal Transit System (DIMTS) cluster buses.

Khurana also highlighted a decline in the number of DTC buses.

"In 2015, there were 4,344

buses in the fleet, but by 2022, the number had dropped to 3,937 despite a growing population. Meanwhile, DTC's losses have ballooned to Rs 8,498 crore as of 2022-23," he said.

Another allegation raised was regarding pending dues from private bus operators.

"The government rented out spaces to private cluster bus operators, but Rs 225 crore in rent remains unpaid. No action was taken to recover this amount," Khurana added.

Govt to procure more CATS ambulances soon

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government will improve the city's healthcare infrastructure by adding more CATS ambulances, ICU beds and ventilators in the next few months, Health Minister Pankaj Singh said on Monday. The shortage of medical staff and facilities will also be addressed soon, he said during Question Hour in the assembly. Delhi had 155 ambulances with an average response time of 13 minutes in 2014. As of February 19 this year, the number of ambulances had risen to 261 but the response time had fallen to 17.4 minutes, Singh said.

Will bring white paper on AAP govt's tenure: CM

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta announced on Monday that her government will present a "white paper" on the tenure of the previous Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) regime in the national capital.

She said this during a discussion on the Comptroller and Auditor General's (CAG) report on the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) in the Assembly.

The first budget session of the eighth Delhi Assembly is underway. Earlier in the day, Gupta tabled the CAG report, which is expected to shed light on the financial and operational aspects of the DTC. She also said the economic survey will be tabled soon, as audits in dif-



ferent departments are still ongoing. Gupta, who also holds the finance portfolio, will present the first budget of the BJP government in Delhi in more than 26 years on Tuesday. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) returned to power in the capital last month, after defeating the AAP in the Assembly polls. The five-day budget session began on Monday morning with a traditional "kheer" ceremony. "Rekha Gupta, Chief

Does BJP even know how to run a government?: Atishi

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the Delhi Assembly, Atishi, demanded that the discussion on the CAG report be held on Wednesday, arguing that the opposition needed time to review it.

"The report was presented today, so everyone should have time to study it. All members, whether ruling or opposition, should get time to read the report," Atishi said. However, Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta refused to delay the discussion, stating, "We will continue the discussion on this CAG report the day after tomorrow as well. But today, some members wanted to speak on it." Meanwhile, Atishi, criticized the BJP-led Delhi government for not presenting the Economic Survey ahead of the budget.

Delhi records max temp 34°C, AQI dips to poor



TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The maximum temperature in Delhi settled at 36 degrees Celsius, 4.5 notches above the season's average, on

per cent.

The weather department has predicted clear skies on Tuesday, with the maximum temperature likely to settle at 37 degrees Celsius and the minimum at 16 degrees Celsius. After a few days of relaxation, Delhi's pollution levels returned to the 'poor' category with the Air Quality Index (AQI) reading 206 at 4 pm, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). An AQI between 0 and 50 is considered 'good', 51 to 100 'satisfactory', 101 to 200 'moderate', 201 to 300 'poor', 301 to 400 'very poor', and 401 to 500 'severe'.

Monday, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). The minimum temperature was 15.2 degrees Celsius while the humidity levels oscillated between 81 per cent and 17

Police arrests second accused in elderly couple's murder

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The police have solved the robbery cum murder case of an elderly couple in northwest Delhi with the arrest of the second accused, an official said on Monday.

The arrested persons have been identified as Ravi (27), a resident of Uttam Nagar, and Deepak alias Pankaj (41), a resident of Karan Vihar, the police official said.

While Ravi was arrested earlier on March 19 from his residence, Deepak was arrested on March 22 from an old-age home in Dwarka.



Police have also recovered Rs 30,000 in cash, a stolen gold bangle, a

hammer and a dupatta, used in the crime, and country-made pistol

with three live cartridges from the possession of the accused, he said.

On March 18, an elderly couple, Mohinder Singh (70) and his wife Diljeet Kaur (71), were found murdered in their house at Kohat Enclave with their caretaker, Deepak, missing.

During the probe, it was found that the elderly couple had been living alone.

Further, their son, Manpreet, told police that Ravi, who had earlier worked as an attendant for his parents, recently sent Deepak in his place.

Police then conducted

a raid and apprehended Ravi from his residence.

During interrogation, he revealed that he and Deepak had conspired to send Deepak as an attendant to gain access to the victims' house and steal money, the official said.

Further investigation led to the arrest of Deepak. Police registered a separate case under the Arms Act against him upon the recovery of the pistol and cartridges.

Police said the duo have confessed to committing the crime.

The probe is still underway to ascertain their involvement in other criminal cases, he said.

Dip in road mishaps by 4.6% till March 15

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The number of road accidents reported till March 15 this year has declined by 4.6 per cent compared to the same period last year, with a notable 16 per cent drop in fatalities, according to an official data. A total of 1,094 accidents were recorded in 2025 till March 15, down from 1,147 in the corresponding period in 2024, the data revealed.

The fatal accidents saw a significant reduction, dropping from 320 in 2024 to 263 in 2025 in the same period, marking an 18 per cent decline.

The number of people killed in road crashes also



fell from 324 last year till March 15 to 271 this year, a decrease of 16 per cent.

Meanwhile, the number of injured persons saw a slight drop of 2 per cent, with 1,032 cases reported till March 15 in 2025 compared to 1,049 in 2024 in the corresponding period.

However, incidents of

simple accidents increased marginally from 800 last year to 815 this year, registering a 1.9 per cent rise, the data revealed.

On the other hand, non-injury accidents declined by 40.7 percent, from 27 in 2024 to 16 till March 15 in 2025.

A senior police official at-

The fatal accidents saw a significant reduction, dropping from 320 in 2024 to 263 in 2025 in the same period, marking an 18 per cent decline.

tributed the decline in overall accidents and fatalities to increased enforcement measures and awareness campaigns.

He, however, emphasised the need for continued vigilance to further reduce road crashes and ensure safety.

Forest land larger than Delhi's area diverted for development in 10 years

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India has diverted 1,734 square kilometres of forest land, significantly larger (much more) than the total geographical area of Delhi, for development activities in 10 years, according to government data. In response to a question in the Lok Sabha, Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav said 1,73,396.87 (1.73 lakh) hectares of forest land had been approved for non-forest use, including infrastructure projects, under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980, between 2014-15 and 2023-24.



Madhya Pradesh, which has the largest forest cover in the country at 77,073 square kilometres, diverted the most forest land -- 385.52 square kilometres -- during this period. Odisha diverted around 244 square kilometres, followed by Telangana at

114.22 square kilometres, Gujarat at 99.85 square kilometres and Arunachal Pradesh at 94.95 square kilometres. Rajasthan, which has one of the lowest forest covers, diverted 87.96 square kilometres of forest land for non-forest use during these 10 years.

Maharashtra diverted around 85 square kilometres, Jharkhand 83.53 square kilometres, Chhattisgarh 79.25 square kilometres and Uttar Pradesh 70.59 square kilometres.

Uttarakhand diverted 64.71 square kilometres of forest land during this period for non-forest use while Andhra Pradesh diverted 54.55 square kilometres.

According to the biennial India State of Forests Report, the country's forest cover rose from 6,98,712.36 (6.98 lakh) square kilometres in 2013 to 7,15,342.61 (7.15 lakh) square kilometres in 2023.

SC SEEKS RESPONSE OF MAHA AUTHORITY ON DEMOLISHING HOUSE OVER ‘ANTI-INDIA SLOGAN’

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday issued notice to the Maharashtra civic authority on a petition seeking initiation of contempt proceedings for demolishing a house and shop in Sindhudurg district over alleged ‘anti-India’ slogan during a recent cricket match between India and Pakistan in Champions Trophy 2025.

A bench of Justices BR Gavai and Augustine George Masih sought a response from the Maharashtra authority and posted the matter for hearing after four weeks.

The petition has alleged violation of the Supreme Court’s November 13, 2024 verdict restraining demolition actions across the country without prior notice and opportunity of hearing.

The petitioner claimed that the demolition was con-

WHAT COURT SAID

- Petition seeks contempt proceedings for violation of court procedures.
- Alleged violation of the SC’s 2024 ruling requiring prior notice before demolitions.
- Petitioner claims demolition was arbitrary and under pressure from local authorities.
- Magistrate found no evidence linking the alleged slogan to national harm.



ducted by the authorities after a “frivolous complaint” was filed about alleged raising of an anti-India slogan by his 14-year-old son during a cricket match played between India and Pakistan in Dubai on February 23.

Kitabullah Hamidulla Khan, a 40-year-old scrap dealer, said an FIR was registered against his family, and his wife and minor son were taken to a police sta-

tion in Malvan at midnight and locked up.

He said though the boy was allowed to go after 4-5 hours, Khan and his wife remained in police custody for two days till February 25 when they were granted bail by the judicial magistrate.

The magistrate noted in an order there was nothing on record which prima facie shows the alleged act of the accused person was

detrimental to the nation’s integration, he said.

The petitioner alleged people were mobilised by the local MLA, and local authority was pressured to undertake the demolition exercise, which was done a day after the match on February 24 in the presence of many people.

The authority demolished the petitioner’s tin-shed shop and house on the al-

leged ground of it being an illegal structure, he said.

The action of the civic authorities was arbitrary, illegal and malafide, and done in violation of the Supreme Court’s direction issued last year, said the petitioner urging the apex court to initiate contempt proceedings.

On November 13 last year, the top court delivered a judgement and laid down pan-India guidelines saying no property should be demolished without a prior show cause notice and the affected must be given 15 days to respond.

It passed a slew of directions in its November 2024 verdict and made clear that they would not be applicable if there was an unauthorised structure in a public place such as road, street, footpath, abutting railway line or any river or water bodies and also in cases where there was an order for demolition made by a court of law.

RG Kar case: Was it rape or gang-rape? Calcutta HC asks CBI

SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court asked the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Monday to clearly spell out whether the 31-year-old trainee doctor killed at Kolkata’s RG Kar Medical College and Hospital on August 9 last year was raped by a single person or gang-raped.

The Court was hearing a plea filed by the parents of the deceased doctor, seeking a fresh investigation into the incident. The parents sought a probe into the larger conspiracy around the rape of the victim and subsequent cover-up by the college authorities.

The High Court, which has also asked the agency if there was a conspiracy behind the crime, also ordered CBI to produce the case diary related to its investigation on the next date of hearing on March 28.

Justice Ghosh asked CBI if it ever found reasons to believe that the crime was committed by more than one person and not just just Sanjoy Roy, a former Kolkata police civic volunteer who was convicted for her rape and murder in January and handed down a life term by the Sealdah trial court.

Justice Ghosh also directed the CBI to explain the suspected conspiracy to cover up the crime.



“You must tell me if at any time you took into consideration an investigation under section 70 of BNS (gang rape)? The accused was convicted. What was the nature of your charge? Was it a sole accused or a gang rape? You must make it clear,” justice Ghosh told deputy solicitor general Rajdeep Majumder who appeared for CBI.

The High Court had taken the case from the Kolkata Police which had arrested Sanjoy Roy, and handed it over to the CBI on August 13, days after protests across the country.

On September 14, CBI arrested Sandip Ghosh, the then principal of the medical college and Abhijit Mondal, the then officer-in-charge of Tala police station on charges of tampering with the evidence.

But the CBI did not file a charge sheet against them in connection with the doctor’s murder. A charge sheet was,

however, filed against Ghosh in November last year accusing him of corruption at the hospital.

Justice Ghosh said: “If you ever believed more than one person was involved, who were the people in your mind? You must tell the court. Was it gang rape or destruction of evidence where multiple people were involved?”

Lawyer Sudipta Moitra, who represented the petitioners, told the court that there is no evidence that the CBI formed a special investigation team (SIT) for the case.

Lawyer and Trinamool Congress MP Kalyan Banerjee, who appeared for the State Government, told the court that the Government did not have any objection to further investigation but asked if there was any legal provision for it since the Sealdah court proceedings ended with Roy’s conviction after a 57-day in-camera trial.

PM Modi’s Nagpur visit sparks speculation on BJP’s new National President

AJIT MAINDOLA
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has yet to announce the name of its new National President, and the matter is taking longer than expected. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has clarified that they will offer their opinion when asked, but for now, they are not involved in the selection process of the new BJP President. After this statement, it is speculated that the BJP may finalize the new president’s name during Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Nagpur at the end of March. Modi is scheduled to visit Nagpur on March 30, where he is expected to meet RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat.

Several names have been discussed for the post of National President. One prominent name that emerged earlier was that of Finance Minister Nirmala Sithara-



man. She is seen as a strong contender due to her leadership as the finance minister, a position she has held for years. Sitharaman has also made history by presenting the Union Budget for eight consecutive years. Being from the South, she could potentially unite the northern and southern regions of India. If she becomes the president, she would make history as the first woman to hold the position in BJP. As a member of the BJP, her profile aligns well with the current political climate.

However, there is now

growing speculation that Union Minister Bhupendra Yadav is leading the race for the post. If Yadav were to become president, it would send a strong message to crucial states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, which are important for the BJP. Both Yadav and Sitharaman are considered capable leaders who suit the party’s current needs.

In addition to these two, other BJP leaders are also in the mix, including Union Ministers Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Prahlad Joshi, G Kishan Reddy, Dharmen-

dra Pradhan, and Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar. Despite these speculations, it is widely believed that the final decision will be made with the consent of Prime Minister Modi and RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat.

Prime Minister Modi is set to meet Bhagwat after a long gap, and it is anticipated that their meeting will play a key role in finalizing the new BJP president. The BJP’s poor performance in the recent Lok Sabha elections has given the RSS more influence, especially in states like Haryana, Maharashtra, and Delhi, where the RSS has been active in ensuring the party’s success. The growing role of the RSS in the BJP’s decision-making process makes it likely that they will have a significant say in selecting the new president.

Even though RSS General Secretary Dattatreya Hosbol

had previously stated that the party was not involved in the president selection process, it is clear that the RSS will still play an important role in the final decision.

The BJP has a deadline for electing its new National President. The election process must be completed before the party’s National Council meeting on April 18, where the new president will be formally appointed. This delay in finalizing the president’s name has also been accompanied by delays in electing state-level party presidents. In crucial states like Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, the new state presidents have yet to be announced, and the party has not disclosed the number of states where elections have been completed. However, it is believed that in more than half of the states, new presidents have already been elected.

Bengaluru techie accuses wife of demanding cash for intimacy; she alleges domestic abuse

TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

A high-profile legal battle has unfolded between tech entrepreneur Prasanna Sankar and his estranged wife, Dhivya, over the custody of their nine-year-old son. The case, which involves allegations of harassment, false accusations, and police extortion, has garnered widespread attention after Sankar took to social media to share his ordeal.

Sankar, a co-founder of the billion-dollar HR-tech startup Rippling, claimed in a series of posts on X that he was being unfairly pursued by Chennai police over a “kidnapping” complaint filed by his wife. He alleged that law enforcement officials were attempting to extort Rs 25 lakh from him to release his friend, Gokul, who was detained for allegedly assisting him in the custody dispute.

Allegations by Sankar According to Sankar, his troubles began when he discovered that his wife was having an extramarital affair. The couple entered into divorce proceedings, during which they negotiated a settlement agreement. However, Sankar alleged that Dhivya was dissatisfied with the terms and subsequently filed false police complaints, accusing him of domestic violence,



“She showed up at my hotel at 10 PM and called my son to the lobby for 10 minutes, luring him. I stopped this, after which she called the police and filed a kidnapping complaint against me,” Sankar wrote on X.

rape, and sharing her private videos. He claimed that Singapore police investigated these accusations and found them to be baseless.

Sankar further stated that Dhivya had “abducted” their son and taken him to the United States, forcing him to file an international child abduction case. A U.S. court ruled in his favor, leading to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that granted him joint custody of the child while requiring him to pay his wife Rs 9 crore and Rs 4.3 lakh per month.

Despite this agreement, Sankar alleged that Dhivya

later refused to comply, particularly over the deposit of their son’s passport in a shared locker. This led to further legal disputes, with Sankar insisting that he would only share custody if the passport was secured. He claimed that Dhivya attempted to take their child away again, leading him to intervene.

“She showed up at my hotel at 10 PM and called my son to the lobby for 10 minutes, luring him. I stopped this, after which she called the police and filed a kidnapping complaint against me,” Sankar wrote on X.

K’taka collected Rs 421 cr in green tax, only Rs 51.66 cr spent on conservation

TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

The Karnataka Transport Department has collected an astonishing Rs.421.13 crore in green tax over the past five years. However, only Rs.51.66 crore—just 12%—has been allocated for environmental conservation and sustainable transport, raising concerns over fund mismanagement.

The green tax, meant to discourage old, polluting vehicles, applies to non-transport vehicles older than 15 years and transport vehicles over seven years. Two-wheeler owners pay Rs.250, personal vehicle owners Rs.500, and commercial vehicles Rs.200 annually. Despite a steady revenue flow, the state’s expenditure on green initiatives has been alarmingly low.

In 2021-22, the government collected Rs 91.31 crore but allocated a mere Rs 8.95

crore. The highest allocation came in 2022-23 when only Rs 22.82 crore was spent out of Rs 70.08 crore collected. This raises serious concerns over the actual usage of the funds meant for environmental conservation.

A senior transport official attempted to justify the spending, stating, “Various awareness campaigns have also been undertaken under this initiative.” However, no specific details were provided regarding how the funds were utilized.

Transport expert M.N. Srihari criticized the government, highlighting the clear disparity between tax collection and fund allocation. “If the government is serious about tackling pollution and promoting clean transportation, a higher proportion of the collected revenue must be invested in infrastructure, electric vehicle incentives, and pollution control measures,” he emphasized.



Rahul: Country will be destroyed if RSS controls education

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi on Monday joined the protest held by the National Students’ Union of India (NSUI) students against NEP 2020, UGC draft rules, and paper leaks at Jantar Mantar in the national capital.

Addressing students, the Congress leader said that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is attempting to destroy the Indian education system.

“See, one organization is trying to destroy the Indian education system, and that organization is the RSS. If our education system falls into their hands, the country will be destroyed, and employment will be finished,” Gandhi said.

“RSS-nominated candidates are now Vice-Chancellors in universities across India. Now, state universities’ Vice-Chancellors will be nominated by RSS. The biggest issue in the country is unemployment. A few days ago, the Prime Minister spoke about the Kumbh Mela. It is good that he spoke about



Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi addresses the Parliament March, at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi. ANI

Delhi Police on Monday detained National Students’ Union of India (NSUI) workers protesting against NEP 2020, UGC draft rules, and paper leaks at Jantar Mantar.

the Kumbh, but I wanted him to speak about employment,” he said.

“Your government has made the youth of this country unemployed and you should speak about that too. BJP-RSS model aimed to give all the wealth of the country to Ambani and Adani and hand over all institutional organizations

to the RSS,” the Congress leader said.

“We are all united, and we will fight together,” the Congress leader further added.

Delhi Police on Monday detained National Students’ Union of India (NSUI) workers protesting against NEP 2020, UGC draft rules, and paper leaks at Jantar Mantar.

Justice BR Gavai hopeful of quick solution after SC delegation’s Manipur visit

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Supreme Court Judge, Justice BR Gavai who led a delegation of SC judges to Manipur has expressed hope that a solution will come out very soon to the situation in the state which has been in the grip of ethnic violence for almost two years.

Justice Gavai stated that the affected people living in relief camps in Manipur are in a “good mood” and want to return to normalcy.

On the visit of the delegation of Supreme Court Judges to Manipur, Justice BR Gavai told ANI, “The people in the relief camps are in a good mood, and they all



want to return to normalcy and peace. I spoke to both the groups, and I am quite hopeful, that a solution will come out very soon.” Earlier, the delegation of Supreme Court judges, which was on

a visit in Manipur attended the duodecennial celebrations in Imphal on Sunday.

Supreme Court Judge Justice BR Gavai inaugurated the Secretariat of Chief Justice of the High Court of Manipur and other Court buildings and projects.

At the event, the delegation of the judges met and interacted with the officials present.

On Saturday, the five-member Supreme Court Judges’ delegation, arrived in Imphal, Manipur. The delegation comprising Justices BR Gavai, Surya Kant, Vikram Nath, MMSundresh, KV Viswanathan and N Kothishwar arrived in Manipur.

PRIVATE CAPEX SHARE FALLS TO DECADE-LOW OF 33% IN 2024: ICRA

GFCF, accounting for about 30% of India's nominal GDP, saw growth slow to 9% in 2024 from 20% in 2023.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The share of private capital expenditure (capex) in India's Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) has dropped to a ten-year low of 33 per cent in FY2024, according to a report by ICRA.

The report highlighted that while listed companies have increased their capex spending, a decline in investments by unlisted entities has led to an overall slowdown in private sector capital investments.

It said "While listed corporates increased their capex spending by 28 per cent in FY2023 and 12 per cent in FY2024, unlisted entities experienced a contraction in FY2024, dragging overall private capex growth".

As per report, GFCF, which includes the gross addition to fixed assets and intangibles, forms about 30 per cent of

QUICK VIEW

- Private capex share hits decade-low:** Fell to 33% in FY24 due to weak unlisted firm investments.
- Listed vs unlisted:** Listed firms' capex rose 28% in FY23, 12% in FY24; unlisted firms pulled back.
- GFCF growth slows:** Growth at 9% in FY24 vs 20% in FY23; forms 30% of GDP.
- Key sectors:** Oil & gas, power, autos, and telecom led; revival in unlisted capex crucial.

India's nominal GDP. It is the second-largest component after private final consumption expenditure.

Over the past decade (FY2015 to FY2024), GFCF has grown at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10 per cent. However, this growth has slowed down in recent years, with GFCF growth moderating to 9 per cent in FY2024 from a strong 20 per cent in FY2023.

The report pointed out that while the government's capex push and household investments in real estate supported GFCF growth in FY2024, private capex remained weak.

ICRA's analysis, which covers 4,500 listed entities and 8,000 unlisted entities, shows that the sluggishness in private investments is primarily due to unlisted firms scaling back on spending.

Despite this overall decline,

listed companies have continued to increase their capex. Their investments grew by 28 per cent in FY2023 and 12 per cent in FY2024. However, they account for only 16 per cent of total private sector corporate capex and 5 per cent of overall domestic capex (GFCF). From FY2015 to FY2021, the share of listed companies in total capex had declined, as their capex grew at a 10-year CAGR of 6 per

While listed companies increased their capex by 28% in 2023 and 12% in 2024, unlisted entities experienced a contraction, leading to an overall decline.

cent, compared to 9 per cent growth in the private sector, 11 per cent in public capex, and 10 per cent in overall capex. The sectors leading private investments include oil & gas, power, automobiles, iron & steel, and telecom. Post-Covid, corporate cash generation has consistently improved. The ratio of cash flow from operations to capex increased to 1.6 times in FY2024, compared to an average of 1.3 times between FY2014 and FY2020.

High-net-worth NRIs drive luxury real estate market boom: Report

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India's luxury real estate market is witnessing rapid growth, driven by strong demand from high-net-worth individuals (HNWIs), non-resident Indian (NRI) investors, and domestic buyers looking to invest in premium properties.

According to a report by GRI Club, an international real estate company, the sector is outperforming expectations and is set to record its third consecutive year of unprecedented sales.

"The sector is not only outperforming expectations but is on track to deliver its third consecutive record-breaking year in sales. In the top seven cities, total residential sales in 2024 are projected to exceed INR 5.1 trillion, with more than 300,000 units sold," it said.

This surge highlights the increasing dominance of the luxury real estate segment in the country's evolving property market.

The report stated that cities such as Mumbai, Gurgaon, and Bangalore have seen particularly high demand for ultra-luxury residences,



with absorption rates reaching new heights. The trend reflects a growing preference among buyers for high-end, amenity-rich homes that offer exclusivity and superior lifestyle features.

Apart from individual buyers, family offices and institutional investors are also expanding their investments in luxury real estate. Many are channeling funds into structured real estate investments and alternative financial instruments, viewing luxury properties as a stable and appreciating asset class, especially amid stock market fluctuations.

The report said "Many of these investors are deploying capital into structured real estate funds and alternative investment vehicles, viewing luxury properties as a stable, appreciating as-

set class amid stock market volatility. NRIs, in particular, are playing a key role in this expansion".

For many NRIs, luxury real estate in India is seen as a long-term wealth preservation strategy, aligning with global investment patterns. Indian investors are also showing a strong interest in luxury properties abroad, particularly in markets like Dubai and the UK.

The continued momentum in India's luxury housing market signals a shift in investment strategies, with high-value property transactions becoming increasingly popular. As demand for premium real estate continues to rise, the sector is expected to remain a key area of growth within India's broader economy.

EaseMyTrip acquires 49% stake in Big Charter Pvt Ltd

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

EaseMyTrip.com, one of India's premier online travel platforms, has received in-principle Board approval to acquire a 49 per cent stake in Big Charter Pvt Ltd, a prominent player in India's charter aviation sector.

This move marks a significant step for EaseMyTrip into the rapidly expanding charter and non-scheduled aviation market, enabling the company to offer more personalized, premium, and flexible air travel options to a wider customer base, a release said.

The Indian charter aviation industry, currently valued at approximately USD 650.5 million, is projected to grow to USD 1.14 billion by 2033. This growth is fuelled by increasing demand for regional connectivity, corporate travel, and private flying. Globally, the charter aviation sector is experiencing exceptional growth, with projections indicating a market value exceeding USD 33 billion by 2033.

Factors such as rising disposable incomes, an increasing need for privacy and flexibility, and heightened demand from busi-



Nishant Pitti, Chairman and Founder of EaseMyTrip. ANI

nesses and individuals for time-sensitive travel are driving the shift toward private aviation as a preferred mode of transport.

The release said that this strategic proposed acquisition strengthens EaseMyTrip's position as a comprehensive travel provider, enabling the company to capitalize on high-margin segments like charter services and Non-Scheduled Operator Permit (NSOP) operations.

"As corporate clients, high-net-worth individuals (HNIs), and event travelers increasingly turn to chartered flights for convenience and flexibility, EaseMyTrip is well-positioned to meet this demand. By integrating its state-of-the-art technology into Big Charter's existing operations, the company aims to enhance the charter

Sensex rallies over 1,000 points, Nifty up by 1.3%

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Indian stock markets witnessed a strong rally on Monday, driven by positive economic indicators and improving global sentiment.

Both key indices, Nifty 50 and BSE Sensex, registered impressive gains of over 1.3 per cent by the closing bell.

The Nifty 50 index surged by 307.95 points, or 1.32 per cent, to settle at 23,658.35, while the BSE Sensex jumped 1,078.87 points, or more than 1.4 per cent, to close at 77,984.38.

Experts attribute the rally to improving government capital expenditure, positive GDP growth trends, and stable trade conditions.

Ajay Bagga, a banking and market expert, told ANI that the markets are benefitting from a couple of factors including RBI decision, which has led to cut in interest rates.

"Domestically Indian markets are benefitting from a recovery in government capex, a positive turn to the GDP growth, contained trade gap, lower global crude prices, sustained

government revenues with tax collections being robust and the triple action taken by the RBI on cutting interest rates. As against elevated valuations in September 2025 at all-time high markets, the valuations have reached or come below the median valuations for the last 10 years, which gives further confidence to incremental flows," he said.

He also pointed out that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has taken three key actions--cutting interest rates, injecting liquidity, and easing macro-prudential lending norms--to boost credit growth.

Additionally, market valuations, which were at an all-time high in September 2025, have now come down to or below the 10-year median, increasing investor confidence.

Among sectoral indices on the NSE, Nifty PSU Bank stocks saw strong growth of over 3 per cent, while Nifty IT gained 1.42 per cent. The Nifty Realty index rose by 1.34 per cent, and Nifty Oil & Gas surged by 1.44 per cent, reflecting broad-based buying across

industries

Akshay Chinchalkar, Head of Research at Axis Securities, highlighted that both global and domestic factors played a role in Monday's rally. "So the rally we have seen is courtesy of a combination of global and domestic factors. Globally, expectations are that the next round of tariffs will be more measured while domestically, there is hope that earnings are bottoming out and that valuations are more aligned with the longer term averages, offering attractive opportunities," he said. Among the top gainers in the Nifty 50 index were Kotak Bank, NTPC, and SBI, which saw significant gains. On the other hand, IndusInd Bank, Titan, Trent, and Mahindra & Mahindra were among the top losers of the session.

On the global front, as per experts' foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) are gradually shifting funds away from the U.S. markets into Europe, Japan, China, and India. FPI outflows are slowly converting into net inflows, boosting market sentiment.

This move marks a significant step for EaseMyTrip into the rapidly expanding charter and non-scheduled aviation market.

significant growth potential as the demand for regional and charter services continues to rise. With this partnership, both companies aim to unlock new growth opportunities and deliver enhanced services to meet the evolving needs of the Indian aviation market.

Nishant Pitti, Chairman and Founder of EaseMyTrip, expressed his excitement about the acquisition. "This partnership is a crucial step towards making charter air travel more accessible across India. By combining EaseMyTrip's cutting-edge technology with Big Charter's established expertise, we are poised to revolutionize the way air travel is experienced. The integration of their NSOP operations will allow us to cater to a wider range of premium custom-

ers, further solidifying our commitment to driving the growth of India's charter aviation market."

Sanjay Mandavia, Director of Big Charter Pvt Ltd, echoed this sentiment. "Partnering with EaseMyTrip marks a transformative moment for us. Leveraging EaseMyTrip's technological expertise and vast customer base will accelerate our growth, expand our reach, and enhance the efficiency of our services. Together, we are positioned to offer a more accessible and seamless travel experience, strengthening our mission to provide affordable, reliable, and high-quality travel options across India," he said.

The release said that with this strategic acquisition, EaseMyTrip is set to become a formidable player in the Indian charter aviation market, offering an expansive suite of travel services that cater to the diverse needs of businesses, individuals, and event travellers.

This move not only positions EaseMyTrip for long-term growth but also contributes to the broader development of the charter aviation sector in India,

NITI Aayog organizes workshop on 'Building Synergies in Indian Innovation Ecosystem'

TDG NETWORK
GANDHINAGAR

NITI Aayog organized a National Workshop on "Building Synergies in Indian Innovation Ecosystem" at GIFT City, Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

According to a statement by NITI Aayog on Monday, that the workshop was organized to strengthen India's innovation landscape. The event was hosted by the Gujarat Council on Science & Technology (GUJCOST), Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of Gujarat.

The workshop brought together key stakeholders, including government officials, academic leaders, industrial experts, startup founders, and international representatives. It focused on important topics such as R&D investments, state policies on innovation, global in-



novation trends, and grassroots entrepreneurship to create a strong synergy between different sectors.

The event was attended by V.K. Saraswat, Member (Science & Technology), NITI Aayog, and Mona Khandhar, IAS, Principal Secretary, Department of Science and Technology, Government of Gujarat.

In his inaugural address, V.K. Saraswat emphasized the need for collaboration between government, academia, and industry to drive India's innovation forward.

He stressed the importance

of translational research that leads to meaningful innovation and the growth of impactful startups. He also called for greater support for DeepTech startups and suggested that India should shift from a service-based to a product-based industry model.

Additionally, he shared insights into key government initiatives designed to enhance research, innovation, and entrepreneurship across the country.

NITI Aayog said "The workshop featured several interactive discussions led by

eminent leaders in the field of innovation and technology. The session on "Bharat Innovates: Overview of the National Innovation Ecosystem" explored strategies for building an innovation-friendly India"

Sacha Wunsch-Vincent from the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) outlined India's innovation journey for the next 10 years.

He noted that India's intellectual property (IP) profile has improved in recent years, with an increase in patent filings. He also mentioned that the country will add more Science & Technology (S&T) clusters in the near future to boost innovation.

Additionally, the session "Vishwa Mein Ubharta Bharat: Strengthening India's Global Innovation Footprint" focused on India's growing presence in the global innovation landscape.

Zupee turns IPL 2025 sixes into winning moments

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Zupee, India's leading online skill-based gaming platform, is elevating the excitement of IPL 2025 with its 'Extra Winnings' campaign, featuring the 'Laga Chakka Toh Inaam Pakka' offer for sports fans across the country.

In both cricket and Ludo, a six is a game-changer--fueling excitement and triumph. Zupee Ludo is owning the 'Super 6' moment in IPL, making every six a rewarding opportunity on the Zupee Ludo app.

As an Associate Sponsor of IPL on Star Sports, this is Zupee's innovative approach to fan engagement, where media, creative strategy, and product innovation seamlessly integrate to create a truly immersive experience. During every live IPL match, each six hit on the cricket ground will trigger a virtual cricket ball on the Zupee app, allowing users to unlock exciting rewards, exclusive bonuses,



and special prizes in real time.

By owning the 'Super 6' moment in IPL, Zupee is strategically leveraging contextual messaging, real-time in-app rewards, and high-impact brand visibility to maximize engagement and recall.

To amplify the campaign's impact, Zupee has teamed up with cricketing legends Harbhajan Singh, K. Srikanth and renowned sports presenter Jatin Sapru to engage & entertain fans through a series of relatable and humorous ad films that celebrate the spirit of cricket.

The videos draw a clever parallel between the defining moments of cricket and the excitement of playing online ludo, cementing Zupee as the ultimate destination for fans who live and breathe the game. Whether a fan is celebrating a six, holding breath before a toss, or missing the action on a rainy day, they can keep the excitement alive by playing on Zupee.

Commenting on the campaign, a Zupee's spokesperson said, "We are thrilled to join IPL 2025, one of India's most celebrated sporting events.

Commenting on the campaign, a Zupee's spokesperson said, "We are thrilled to join IPL 2025, one of India's most celebrated sporting events.

Our Extra Winnings campaign enhances fan and player engagement by turning real game moments into exciting rewards. And with our Laga Chakka Toh Inaam Pakka offer during the Super 6 moments, we bring fans closer to the action, reinforcing our commitment to delivering immersive and rewarding experiences. This partnership reflects our vision of blending entertainment with innovation, ensuring every match is more than just a game--it's an opportunity to win, celebrate, and be part of something extraordinary."

POWER SHIFT IN WEST: HOW EU IS RISING
AMID US-EU RIVALRY AND GLOBAL TURMOIL

OPINION

DR. NISHAKANT OJHA



The geopolitical landscape of the West has been dramatically reshaped by the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. This article provides a comparative analysis of the United States (US) and European Union (EU) in their responses to the crisis, highlighting the EU's evolving strategy to enhance its strength and autonomy. With a focus on NATO's Article 5, economic resilience, defense initiatives, and practical case studies, this paper presents how the EU is repositioning itself as a formidable power capable of countering crises independently.

INTRODUCTION

The Russia-Ukraine war, which escalated in 2022, has tested the unity and strategic capabilities of both the US and the EU. While the US has traditionally played a leading role in global security, recent shifts in policy have caused European leaders to rethink their reliance on American military and intelligence support. Meanwhile, the EU has introduced new strategies aimed at strengthening its defense infrastructure, economic resilience, and political unity. This article critically evaluates these shifts, drawing on practical

examples of EU's strategic realignment.

US RESPONSE: STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

Historically, the US has acted as Europe's primary security guarantor, especially through its leadership in NATO. Under President Joe Biden, the US has provided substantial military and economic assistance to Ukraine, including weapons, intelligence, and economic sanctions against Russia. However, recent developments such as the suspension of intelligence-sharing with Ukraine have raised concerns among European allies about over-dependence on Washington for security.

With Donald Trump's latest decisions to reduce US commitments to NATO and scale down military aid to Ukraine, the European Union is now facing a critical test of its strategic autonomy.

The implications of these policy shifts include:

- 1. Reduced Military Support** – Trump's decision to scale back military aid to Ukraine places greater pressure on EU nations to compensate for the shortfall in arms and training support.
- 2. Uncertainty in NATO Commitments** – By challenging NATO's funding and questioning US engagement in European security, Trump's stance forces Europe to rethink its reliance on transatlantic security guarantees.
- 3. Economic Sanctions Reassessment** – If Trump relaxes sanctions on Russia or alters the US approach, the EU may need to adopt

independent financial strategies to sustain economic pressure on Moscow.

4. Diplomatic Repositioning – With potential US disengagement from European affairs, the EU must assume a more prominent role in mediating and influencing global geopolitical decisions.

Despite these challenges, Europe recognizes the need to fortify its own security and economic resilience, rather than relying solely on US interventions.

EU RESPONSE: STRENGTHENING AUTONOMY

In contrast to the US approach, the EU has taken significant steps to enhance its geopolitical strength and strategic independence. This includes economic diversification, bolstering its military-industrial complex, and reinforcing its commitment to collective defense under NATO's Article 5.

1. Article 5 and Collective Security

Article 5 of the NATO treaty, which states that an attack on one member is an attack on all, has been a cornerstone of transatlantic security. While the US has historically shouldered much of NATO's defense burden, Trump's skepticism toward the alliance has accelerated European efforts to assume greater responsibility:

- Increased Defense Budgets** – European nations, led by Germany and France, have significantly increased their military expenditures to fill gaps left by potential US withdrawals.
- Rapid Reaction Forces** – The EU has initiated new defense capabilities, including a 5,000-strong rapid reaction force, to bolster security in its eastern flank.
- Joint Military Exercises** – The EU and NATO members have

increased joint military drills to improve coordination and readiness against Russian aggression.

2. Rearm Europe Initiative

To address gaps in military capabilities, the EU launched the "ReArm Europe" initiative, a €800 billion defense investment plan aimed at:

- Strengthening Europe's weapons production capacity.
- Reducing reliance on US arms.
- Enhancing cyber defense and counter-intelligence operations.

3. Economic and Energy Resilience

Sanctions against Russia have had economic repercussions for Europe, particularly in energy dependency. However, the EU has pursued aggressive measures to counter these vulnerabilities:

- Diversification of Energy Supply** – The EU has significantly reduced its reliance on Russian gas, securing alternative sources from Norway, the US, and the Middle East.
- Investment in Renewables** – The European Green Deal has accelerated investments in solar, wind, and nuclear power to decrease dependency on fossil fuels.
- Strengthened Trade Partnerships** – The EU has enhanced trade agreements with African and Indo-Pacific nations to counterbalance economic risks.
- Strengthening Internal Political Cohesion** – While historically frag-

mented on defense policy, the EU has achieved unprecedented political unity in response to the Ukraine crisis:

- Continued Sanctions on Russia** – Despite economic difficulties, EU nations have maintained a strong sanctions regime.
- Increased Support for Ukraine's EU Membership** – Ukraine's fast-tracked EU accession process signals European commitment to counter Russian influence.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: US VS EU APPROACHES

The differences in how the US and the EU have responded to the crisis underscore fundamental shifts in global power dynamics.

While the US remains a dominant global power, Trump's policy shifts indicate a potential withdrawal from Europe-centric strategic commitments, compelling the EU to enhance its autonomy and geopolitical influence.

GEOPOLITICAL SHIFTS AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

The conflict in Ukraine has catalyzed major shifts in the geopolitical landscape of the West:

- NATO Expansion** – Sweden and Finland's NATO memberships have strengthened the alliance's northern flank, but Trump's stance raises doubts about long-term US involvement.
- US-Europe Relations** – With growing uncertainty in US foreign

policy, the EU's push for strategic autonomy is expected to reshape future alliances.

- Russia's Positioning** – If the US scales back its opposition to Russia, Europe may face heightened security threats, requiring a faster and more coordinated defense response.

The EU's ability to maintain unity and develop independent security mechanisms will be crucial in determining its future geopolitical influence.

The comparative study of the US and EU responses to the Russia-Ukraine crisis highlights an evolving shift in global power structures. With Trump's latest decisions challenging NATO, reducing aid to Ukraine, and questioning America's engagement in European security, the EU must accelerate its push for self-reliance. Through investments in defense, energy resilience, and economic realignment, the EU is demonstrating its ability to handle crises independently. The success of these efforts will shape the future of European security and its role in global affairs.

Bottomline the EU's commitment to Article 5 and its proactive initiatives reflect a new era of European strength. As the US recalibrates its global commitments, Europe is poised to not only withstand current challenges but also redefine its position as a major geopolitical force.

Dr. Nishakant Ojha – Internationally Acclaimed Expert on Foreign Affairs & National Security

Aspect	US Approach (Under Trump)	EU Approach
Defense & NATO	Scaling back NATO commitments; reducing aid to Ukraine	Increased defense budgets, developing European military capabilities
Economic Measures	Potential relaxation of sanctions on Russia	Sanctions + economic restructuring to reduce energy dependence
Energy Strategy	Return to fossil fuel reliance; reduced focus on climate policies	Focus on renewables and diversified energy imports
Political Positioning	Less engagement in European security affairs	Strengthening internal cohesion and EU-led diplomacy

Politics of monkeys

S. K. SAIDAPUR



Hanuman langurs (*Presbytis entellus*) considered sacred are found throughout India. They generally live in groups with a complex social organization having dominance hierarchies. They are both polygynous and polyandrous. A group may consist of one male, several females and their offspring or all male groups. Multiple-male groups consist of many males and females of different ages. Single males,

driven out of the group wander alone.

Hanuman langurs are known for flaunting infanticide phenomenon that was discovered in Dharwad, Jodhpur and Abu some fifty years ago. Briefly, in mixed compositions the dominant male monopolizes all females. Subordinate males can mate with females stealthily when dominant male is not in the vicinity. Dominance of larger male is maintained due to his aggressive powers which enables him mating success, and siring as many offspring as possible. In a way langurs live in a harem.

A subordinate male member of langur troop is incapable of taking head-on the resident dominant male and defeat him. Consequently, the subordinate males face a setback in ac-

complishing mating success and siring offspring. As a result, they hatch a plot to jointly fight the dominant male and drive him away. Then, the subordinate males (who are of comparable strength) fight among themselves; the winner becomes new resident commander and takes over the troop (harem).

Hanuman langurs (different species) are famous for practicing infanticide mostly in one-male and several female groups soon after replacement of the resident male by a new Master. From evolutionary biology perspective, it is believed that males compete for mating success with females to leave behind their own progeny and pass on their genes to next generation. It is an effort to enhance one's own *fitness*, a phenomenon that is common in animal kingdom. Infanticide is also seen in human society for reasons of poverty, raising step children, tribal practices etc.

A dominant male langur from the same or another group after taking over the troop and gaining full con-

trol over it kills all suckling infants sired by the evicted or other male(s). The lactating primates are not receptive to mating. However, the females come to heat and become receptive to mating following ab lactation (weaning). Ostensibly, committing infanticide by dominant male is to hasten lactating females to become sexually receptive and produce new offspring to pass on his genes to next generation. Thus, female langurs of a troop are like the members of harem under the dominant resident male. Replacement of dominant resident male appears to take place usually around two years.

What has the infanticide behaviour got to do with politics? Are monkeys politicians? Honestly, I do not know. I only found some resemblance between how subordinate male langurs plan to take over the troop and how the small regional political parties having to sit in opposition hatch their plans to contain or overpower ruling party in power enjoying sound majority. However, the parties in opposition are

helpless individually in overpowering the party in power much like the subordinate male member of langur troop. The members elected as independents do not belong to any party do not hold any rigid ideology are like female members of the langur troop. They usually align with the ruling party to derive benefits in any manner possible.

The opposition parties which espouse the regional compulsions that differ from one State to the other. Individually, small regional parties can take on frontally with the ruling dispensation. Therefore, various political outfits with differing ideology come together, form alliances with a common goal of weakening or intimidating the duly elected leader of the largest ruling party as the Chief Minister or Prime Minister. This is to manoeuvre passing resolutions or bills to their advantage. The situation of opposition parties is thus analogous to that of the subordinate males of langur troops. They can tackle the situation only by joining hands with each

other. However, they go beyond the langur strategy. For instance, when the alliance group fails to articulate effectively using sound arguments it resorts to creating a ruckus, sloganeering and making noise. It is said, when firmness is enough, rashness is unnecessary. When legislators/parliamentarians fail to win arguments through debate, or when various tactics fail, walking out in protest seems to become the last resort.

People play politics but Hanuman langurs may not. However, the strategy adopted by the subordinate male langurs to jointly fight the opponent is laudable. They then fight among equals to gain control of the troop. If the various political parties try to do the same (form alliance first and then fight among themselves) what is wrong? Langurs have not patented the strategy. Besides, they are our own distant cousins and, most revered species! Clearly, politicians are well within their rights in following the ancestral alleyway of langurs! (saidapur@gmail.com)

PERSPECTIVE
IN WEST ASIA

HAMAS WANTS
CONTROL, NOT READY
FOR PEACE

The ceasefire declared by Israel in Gaza has ended, with Tel Aviv resuming military operations, first in the form of airstrikes and then by expanding ground operations. Israel Defense Forces have retaken control of parts of the Netzarim corridor between north and south Gaza, and has advanced into areas in south Gaza, while Hamas has restarted firing rockets at Tel Aviv. Israel has been able to eliminate a senior Hamas official, Ismail Barhoum. According to Israeli Defence Minister, Israel Katz, Barhoum was Hamas' new prime minister, "who replaced Issam Da'alis, the previous prime minister who was eliminated a few days ago." With Barhoum's death, Hamas has lost 11 of the 20 members of its political bureau. These developments have to be seen in the context of the Hamas not being ready to release the 59 hostages it still has in its custody. In the first phase of the ceasefire, Hamas released 33 hostages, while Israel released nearly 2,000 prisoners, many of whom Hamas terrorists. Out of these 33, eight were returned dead, while Hamas put up a macabre show, treating the hostages in an uncivilized manner, even as cheering civilians raised anti-Israel and anti-Jewish slogans. Hamas has been seeking the complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza as well as the control of the Philadelphia corridor between Gaza and Egypt, something, if done, would have again allowed the free flow of arms and ammunition to the Hamas. But the ceasefire agreement never entered the second stage as the Hamas never released the remaining hostages, many of whom are Israeli soldiers and reservists which the terrorist group captured on October 7 2023. Hamas wants a better deal for them, including the release of hard-core terrorists who would pose a major security threat to Israel. Hamas also wanted a complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, which actually was scheduled to take place in the second phase. But the second phase never commenced as the ceasefire fell through, as did hopes of the reconstruction of Gaza, both of which were supposed to be a part of the third phase of the ceasefire. The peace talks in Doha also failed and the war restarted.

In the interim period, there was no let-up in the lone wolf terror attacks or attempted attacks, targeting civilians. Israel also had enough intelligence inputs to believe that the Hamas was using the ceasefire to regroup and re-energise itself. That Israel was suspecting another October 7 like attack on Israeli civilians settled along the Gaza border became evident when it asked civilians in the area to exercise caution.

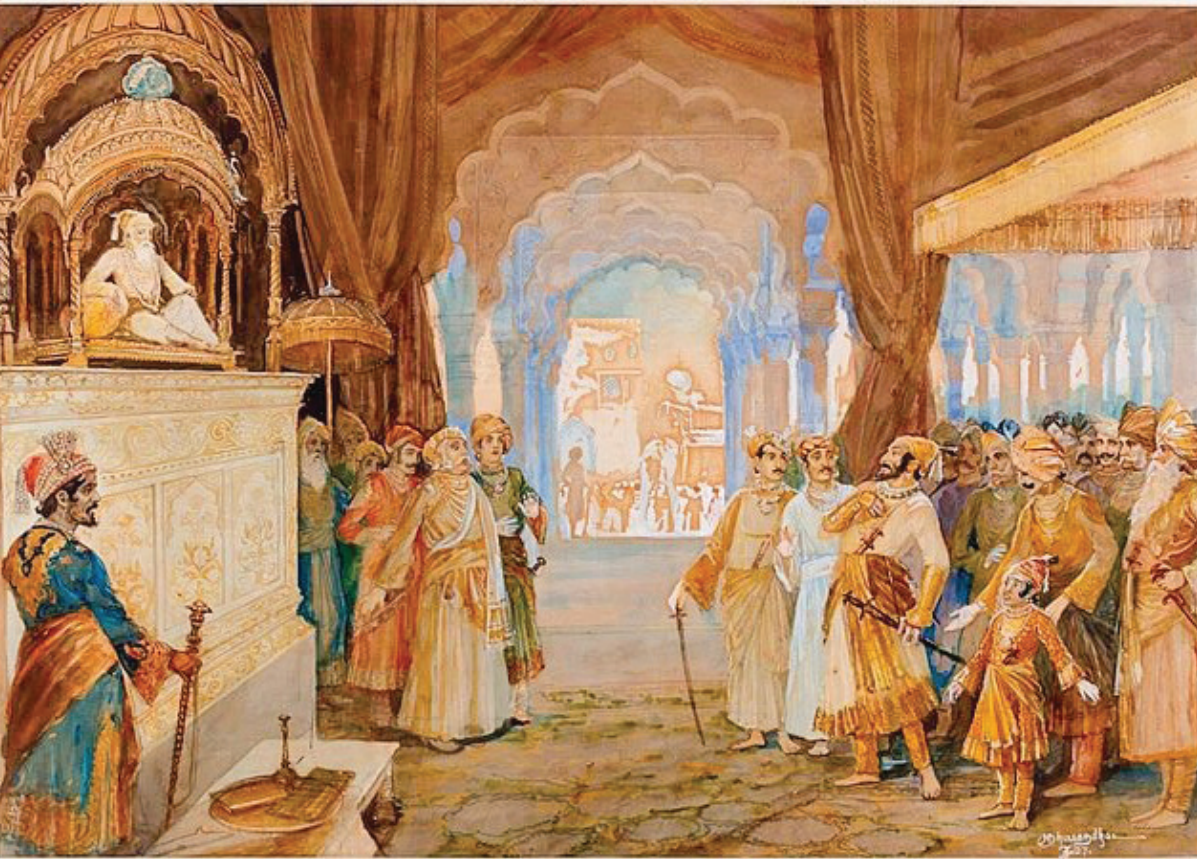
One of the reasons that the region is getting sucked into a prolonged war is because of Hamas' unwillingness to let go of its control on Gaza. To a large extent, October 7, 2023 was the means directed towards this end, where Hamas wanted a complete hold on the Palestinian mind and eventual control over West Bank, elbowing out the Palestinian Authority. In fact, they succeeded in convincing the Palestinians that October 7 was a great victory against the Israeli state and a step towards erasing Israel from the face of the earth and establishing an independent Palestinian state—the reason why Hamas is wildly popular among the Palestinians in both Gaza and West Bank. It is a classic case of brainwashing and radicalization at a mass level. That this has happened in Gaza became evident on October 7 2023, when along with the Hamas terrorists, a large section of the civilian population of Gaza either participated in the blood-curdling terrorist attacks, or cheered the Hamas actions, or both. The problem is, the Gazans are seemingly oblivious of the reality that they have lost their homes, their families and friends because of Hamas, which, by normalizing the worst kind of barbarity, has brought the war upon them. It is also because of this that the proposed two-state solution to solve the Palestinian problem will never work. Hamas has had complete control over Gaza since 2026—almost 20 years, during which aid worth billions of dollars have flown into this strip of land. Gaza under Hamas had complete autonomy. Hamas could have changed the face of Gaza with that kind of money in these two decades, but instead built tunnels and rockets and churned out terrorists by luring them with the vain promise of destroying Israel. Of course a part of that money turned the Hamas leadership into billionaires as well.

And now US President Donald Trump wants to push through his plan to send the Palestinians to countries ready to accept them—their number is not that large, only 2.1 million, or 21 lakh—and develop Gaza as prime real estate. However outlandish this may seem, but it may actually be a better solution than the much touted two-state solution. For unless there is a change in the mindset, an independent Palestine cannot co-exist with Israel.

JOYEETA BASU

MUGHALS: HEROES, VILLAINS, OR JUST RULERS OF THEIR TIME?

Were the Mughals India's greatest builders or its most brutal invaders? Akbar's policy of religious tolerance built a united empire—but Aurangzeb's hardline approach shattered it. Even today, India's political landscape echoes the choices of these mighty emperors. As the sun rises over the Taj Mahal, we ask: Did the Mughals shape India, or scar it forever?



Shivaji Maharaj in the court of Aurangzeb, by Dhurandhar. Date: 1 January 1927. Source: Wikipedia

The characterization of the Mughal Empire and its rulers as either heroes or villains is a subject of extensive debate, influenced by diverse historical interpretations, cultural narratives, and national perspectives. While the British colonial narrative established Akbar as a liberal ruler and Aurangzeb as a religious bigot, modern scholarship challenges these binary classifications and argues for a more complex understanding of their policies and motivations.

The Legacy of Akbar and Aurangzeb: Shaped by Colonial and Nationalist Narratives

The Mughal Empire, which ruled large parts of the Indian subcontinent from 1526 to 1857, remains central to the political and cultural identity of both India and Pakistan. Among the six major Mughal emperors, Akbar and Aurangzeb stand out not only for their long reigns but also for the contrasting ways they have been remembered.

Colonial historians framed Akbar as a secular, enlightened ruler who promoted religious tolerance through his policy of Sulh-i-Kul (universal peace). His abolition of the jizya tax on non-Muslims in 1564 and his inclusion of Rajput chiefs in the Mughal nobility were presented as evidence of his progressive and inclu-



Akbar the Great (1542-1605). Wikipedia

sive governance. However, these interpretations often ignore the strategic and political motivations behind these decisions. According to recent research, Akbar's engagement with Rajputs was not purely driven by a vision of religious harmony—it was a calculated move to secure political stability and limit the influence of the Central Asian nobility, who posed a threat to his rule.

Aurangzeb, on the other hand, has been largely portrayed as a tyrannical figure

driven by religious zealotry. His imposition of the jizya tax, destruction of some Hindu temples, and ban on music are often highlighted as evidence of his intolerance. However, recent scholarship challenges this simplistic portrayal. For instance, despite his orthodox Islamic policies, Aurangzeb employed more Hindus in his administration than any previous Mughal ruler and granted land to Hindu temples. His decision to restrict public religious festi-

vals, including both Hindu and Islamic celebrations, stemmed more from concerns about maintaining public order than from religious bigotry.

The postcolonial framing of these rulers reflects the political and cultural needs of the modern nation-states that emerged from British India. In India, Akbar is often celebrated as the ideal monarch who upheld religious pluralism, while Aurangzeb is demonized as a destroyer of the syncretic



Aurangzeb, Credit Line: Edwin Binney 3rd Collection
Accession Number: 1990 from The San Diego Museum of Art.
Creation Date: ca. 1650. Wikipedia



Police security at Aurangzeb's tomb. Amid calls for the removal of Aurangzeb's tomb at Khultabad in Maharashtra's Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar district, the administration has declared the grave of the Mughal ruler a "no drone" zone, an official said on March 19. PTI

Mughal legacy. In Pakistan, this narrative is reversed: Akbar is seen as a threat to Islamic orthodoxy for introducing Din-i-Ilahi, while Aurangzeb is celebrated as a defender of Islamic principles.

POLITICAL STRATEGY OVER RELIGIOUS ZEALOTRY

The reality of Mughal rule was defined more by political pragmatism than religious ideology. Akbar's alliances with Rajput chiefs were motivated by political necessity rather than a commitment to religious pluralism. His marriage to Rajput princesses and his recruit-

ment of Rajput nobles into the Mughal administration helped to secure the loyalty of the powerful Rajput kingdoms and stabilize his empire.

Similarly, Aurangzeb's decision to reimpose the jizya was not entirely driven by religious orthodoxy. The Mughal treasury was strained due to prolonged military campaigns in the Deccan, and the jizya was a means of increasing state revenue. His campaigns in the Deccan were not holy wars but efforts to expand and consolidate Mughal control over strategically important territories. Even his decision to ban music at the Mughal court reflected his personal asceticism rather than an attempt to impose Islamic orthodoxy on his subjects.

Moreover, Aurangzeb's attitude toward temples was not uniformly hostile. While he ordered the destruction of some temples tied to political rebellion, he also protected many others and issued farmans (royal orders) granting land and resources to Hindu religious institutions. This reflects the political rather than religious motivation behind his temple policies.

THE MISCONCEPTION OF A HINDU-MUSLIM CONFLICT

Modern political narratives often frame Mughal history as a religious conflict between Hindus and Muslims. However, Mughal politics was primarily shaped

by competition among rival dynasties, regional powers, and court factions. Aurangzeb fought not only Hindu rulers like Shivaji and the Rajputs but also Muslim leaders in the Deccan and Central Asia. Similarly, Akbar's wars were not defined by religious identity but by political rivalry. The conflict between Shivaji and Aurangzeb, for example, was not a religious war but a battle for territorial dominance. Shivaji himself employed Muslim commanders and maintained diplomatic ties with Muslim sultanates.

This complexity is often erased in modern nationalist narratives. Hindu nationalist groups in India have appropriated Shivaji as a symbol of Hindu resistance against Muslim tyranny, while Islamic fundamentalists in Pakistan celebrate Aurangzeb as a defender of Islam. Both interpretations reduce the historical figures to caricatures, ignoring the political realities of their time.

MORAL COMPLEXITY IN HISTORY

The tendency to frame historical figures as heroes or villains overlooks the inherent complexity of their actions and motivations. Akbar and Aurangzeb were products of their time, navigating the brutal political realities of a pre-modern empire. Both employed violence, strategic marriages, and administrative reforms to consolidate their power. Akbar's inclusivity was as much a political strategy as it was a reflection of his

personal beliefs. Aurangzeb's harshness reflected the challenges of holding together an increasingly fragmented empire.

In reality, no ruler is entirely good or bad. Akbar presided over massacres of Rajput defenders at Chittorgarh, and Aurangzeb protected certain Hindu temples even as he destroyed others. Ashoka, often celebrated for his embrace of Buddhism, is rarely criticized for the mass slaughter at Kalinga that preceded his conversion. Monarchy thrives on conflict and power struggles; moral judgment is misplaced when applied to the political calculations of pre-modern rulers.

HISTORY AS A REFLECTION, NOT A MORAL JUDGMENT

Understanding Mughal history requires moving beyond nationalist and colonial frameworks. Aurangzeb was not a religious fanatic; Akbar was not a champion of modern secularism. Both were ambitious monarchs who used religion, diplomacy, and warfare to consolidate and expand their empires. Their policies reflect political realities rather than ideological commitments.

Modern political discourse often instrumentalizes history to justify current ideological positions. Hindu nationalism in India invokes Aurangzeb's legacy to stoke anti-Muslim sentiment, while Islamic fundamentalism in Pakistan appropriates his image to rally support for religious orthodoxy. Such distortions prevent a genuine understanding of history and perpetuate cycles of communal conflict.

True historical maturity lies in acknowledging the moral complexity of the past without using it to justify present-day divisions. The Mughals, like all rulers, were driven by power, survival, and strategy. Their actions had consequences, both positive and negative. To understand history is not to praise or condemn but to comprehend and learn from it.



Agitators burn an effigy of Aurangzeb in Nagpur on March 18. PTI



Sambhaji Maharaj captured by Mughals at Sangameswar. Created: 27 December 2022. Wikipedia

SUPREME COURT GRANTS INTERIM PROTECTION TO MEDIA OUTLET MED, ASKS HIM TO COOPERATE WITH INVESTIGATION: TELANGANA PHONE TAPPING CASE

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Aruvela Shravan Kumar Rao Versus The State Of Telangana observed and has granted interim protection against arrest to Aruvela Shravan Kumar, the Managing Director of a Telugu media outlet in order to allow him to travel from the United States to India for the purpose of investigation.

In the present matter, Aruvela Shravan Kumar, is one of the accused in the illegal phone-tapping operation which is being conducted during the reign of the BRS Government, allegedly against bureaucrats and High Court judges.

The Telangana High Court initiated suo moto proceedings into the illegal phone-tapping operation.

The Telangana High Court considered the present matter, wherein it is stated that the issue involved 'national security' and not just infringement of right to privacy.

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



The bench in the case was hearing a Special Leave Petition against the order of Telangana High Court, wherein the court denied the anticipatory bail to Kumar through an order passed in March.

The counsel, Senior Advocate Dama Seshadri Naidu appearing for Kumar requested the court that a notice be issued in the SLP and meanwhile, some interim protection may be given to him.

On the other hand, the counsel appearing on behalf of the State of Telangana, opposed any interim protection.

Addin to it, she stated that a red-corner notice has been issued against Kumar.

In response to this, Naidu stated: 'My lords, I have written to them. I am always available. They have not sent even one notice to me under Section 41A of Code of Criminal Procedure, CrPC.'

The counsel appearing for the State remarked that Kumar has been absconding for a year now.

The bench of Justice Nagarathna orally asked if the State would arrest him today.

The responded that the State is unable to arrest him because he is currently in the US.

Justice Nagarathna suggested that the extradition process should be initiated.

Adding to it, she stated that an interim protection would actually benefit the State as

The counsel, Senior Advocate Dama Seshadri Naidu appearing for Kumar requested the court that a notice be issued in the SLP and meanwhile, some interim protection may be given to him.

he will have to respond to the Court's order and come back to India.

The bench of Justice Nagarathna stated that, 'We tell you one thing, if we don't give him protection now he will never come to India. Let him come... Suppose he receives a notice that he has to come for investigation, he must land in India.'

The court in its order stated that, 'In such kind of facts and circumstances, this court find just and proper to grant interim protection to the petitioner here in till the next date of hearing provided that the petitioner cooperates with the investigation. It is needless

to state and observe that in the event the time and date is fixed for the petitioner to appear before the concerning investigating officer, he shall do so and comply with the said order subject to the time being granted to come to India.'

Naidu submitted, 'Within 48 hours we undertake he will be here.'

In January, the same bench also granted bail to Mekala Thirupathanna, a suspended police officer, who is also an accused in this case.

The Special bench comprising of Chief Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice Vinod Kumar took up the present matter following a new article published in the Deccan Chronicle which claimed that apart from rival politicians, High Court judges had become the target of the phone-tapping scam. In December 2023, the present issue came into light, after Congress won the elections and came to power within the State of Telangana.

Accordingly, the court listed the matter for further consideration on April 28, 2025.

The counsel, Senior Advocate Dama Seshadri Naidu appeared for Kumar

Supreme Court: Liberal Approach Can Be Adopted In Condoning Delay When Case's Merist Needs Examination

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Inder Singh Versus The State Of Madhya Pradesh observed that although a delay cannot be condoned without sufficient cause, the case's merit cannot be discarded which being solely on the technical grounds of limitation.

The court stated that a liberal approach should be taken in condoning delays when the limitation ground undermines the merits of the case and obstructs substantial justice.

The court in the case observed that, 'There can be no quarrel which being on the settled principle of law that delay cannot be condoned without sufficient cause, but a major aspect which has to be kept in mind is that, if in a particular case, the merits have to be examined, it should not be scuttled merely on the basis of limitation.'

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

The bench in the case was hearing the matter wherein the Appellant claimed ownership rights over the suit property or land, which was classified as grazing land under the ownership of the MP Government and was allocated for the public

purpose.

In the present matter, the Respondent-State government filed a belated second appeal along with a delay condonation application praying to condone a delay of 1537 days against the dismissal of the review petition by the trial court declaring the appellant as the rightful owner of the land.

The High Court in the case observed and has allowed the second appeal despite being filed belatedly noting that the suit property was a government property being allocated for the public purpose.

The High Court reasoned that the second appeal could not be dismissed just because it was filed belatedly when its merits needed to be examined.

The Appellant appealed to the Supreme Court, challenging the ruling of High Court.

The judgement authored by Justice Amanullah stated that while delays should ideally not be excused without sufficient reason, the technical ground of limitation should not be used to undermine the merits of a case. When the merits require examination, substantial justice should not be compromised solely due to delay caused in preferring an appeal or filing a case.

The court referred to the case of Ramchandra Shankar Deodhar v. State of Maharashtra,

wherein the court stated that substantial justice is of paramount consideration and the said case cannot be dismissed which being solely on limitation grounds when the merits of the case require consideration.

The Court also referred to the recent case of Sheo Raj Singh v. Union of India, wherein the Court advocated for taking a liberal approach regarding delays in appeals filed by the State.

The court also that the dispute involves government land, which is in the possession of State and has been allocated for public purposes. The said factor weighed in favor of allowing the Second Appeal to be heard on merits.

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case stated that it being necessary to indicate that in the present case, the dispute over title of a land is not between private parties, but rather between the private party and the State.

Moreover, when the land in question was taken possession of by the State and allotted for public purpose to the Youth Welfare Department and the Collectorate and has continued in the possession of the State, the claim of the State that it is government land cannot be summarily discarded.

Supreme Court: Plea Move Seeking FIR Against Justice Yashwant Varma Challenging In-House Probe By Committee Constituted By CJI

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Shri Mathews J. Nedumpara And Ors. Versus The Hon'ble Supreme Court Of India And Ors. wherein the Public Interest Litigation, PIL is filed seeking to register an FIR against Justice Varma and challenging the three-member committee constituted by the Chief Justice of India to investigate the matter.

In the present matter, the petition is filed by Supreme Court Advocate Mathews Nedumpara challenging the direction of Supreme Court in the case K. Veeraswami v. Union of India, wherein the court held that a criminal case under section 54 of Code of Criminal Procedure, CrPC against a sitting High Court or Supreme Court judge can only be filed after consulting the Chief Justice of India, CJI.

The petitioner in the plea stated that while a majority of the judges act with integrity, instances like the pres-

ent one cannot be skipped from the prescribed criminal procedure.

The petition states that, 'The petitioners, in all humility, believe that the consequence of the aforesaid direction, that no First Information Report, FIR shall be filed, was certainly not present in the minds of the Hon'ble judges. The said direction creates a special class of privileged men or women, immune from the penal laws of the land. Our judges, except for a minority, are men and women of the greatest of erudition, integrity, learning and independence. Judges do not commit crimes. However, but the incidents where judges are caught red handed accepting money as in the case of Justice Nirmal Yadav or in the recent case of Justice Yashwant Varma, so too, being involved POCSO and other cases, cannot be denied. The judgement in K. Veeraswami's case, to the knowledge of the Petitioners has stood in the way of an FIR being registered

even in an offence involving POCSO.'

The petition filed stated that the dwindling trust of the public was restored when the Supreme Court made the fire-dousing video and Delhi High Court's Chief Justice Report available for public access on its website.

The plea states that:

'In Justice Yashwant Varma's case no FIR has been filed to the knowledge of the Petitioners. The public perception is that very effort will be made to cover up the issue, to the extent even the initial statements regarding recovery of money is now being refuted. However, the Supreme Court uploading on its website the report of the Hon'ble Chief Justice of the High Court of Delhi along with the explanation from Justice Varma and the video of the fire force dousing huge volumes of currency notes, has to some extent helped public trust to be restored.'

It has also been stated that, 'Therefore, the common man and media chan-

nels, not lawyers and judges who comment on public platforms, keep asking the same question, why no FIR was registered on March 14, which being on the day of the occurrence. Why no arrests were made, why the money was not seized, why no mahazar prepared, why the criminal law was not put into motion. Why it took over almost a week for the public to know about the scandal.'

Further, the petition filed states that directing a three member committee to conduct in-house inquiry instead of following the criminal procedure by way of FIR was a 'great disservice to the public interest'.

It stated that, 'The collegium in appointing a committee of judges to conduct an in-house inquiry, instead of directing that an FIR shall be lodged, has done a great disservice to public interest, the fair name and the reputation of the Supreme Court and the institution of judiciary and even Justice Varma if one were to believe

his version, which is ex facie absurd.'

The petitioner in the plea contended before the court that such kind of reasoning in K Veeraswami Case is opposed to the statutory duty of the police as laid down under the criminal legislation to lodge an FIR in the event of any information of an alleged cognizable offence.

The case stated that, 'The 5-judge constitution bench of this Court in the case K. Veeraswami v. Union of India was pleased to direct that no criminal case shall be registered under Section 154 of the CrPC against a judge of the High Court, Chief Justice of a High Court or judge of the Supreme Court unless the Chief Justice of India is consulted in the matter.'

The petitioner in plea seek the following prayers:

1. Declare that the incident of recovery of huge sums of unaccounted money from the official residence of Justice Yashwant Varma, by the fire force or police when their services for sought to

douse fire, constitute a cognisable offence punishable under various provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, BNS and that the police is duty bound to register an FIR;

2. To declare that the observations in paragraph 60 of the judgment of the Supreme Court in the case of K. Veeraswami v. UOI wherein it prohibited that no criminal case shall be registered against a judge of a High court or Supreme Court without the prior permission of the Chief Justice of India is one rendered per incuriam and sub silentio;

3. To declare that the 3-member Committee constituted by the collegium has no jurisdiction to investigate the incident and that the resolution of the collegium investing the Committee the power to conduct such an investigation is one rendered void ab initio inasmuch as the collegium cannot confer jurisdiction upon itself to order so where the Parliament or the Constitution has conferred none;

4. To direct Delhi Police for registering an FIR and cause an effective and meaningful investigation;

5. To restrain any person or authority, even authorities as contemplated in K. Veeraswami's case, from interfering with the sovereign policing function of the state, nay, in registering an FIR and investigating the crime;

6. To direct the Government to take effective and meaningful action for curbing corruption across all levels of judiciary, including the enactment of the Judicial Standards and Accountability Bill, 2010, which had lapsed;

Background of the Case:

On March 14, the fire incident occurred at the residential office of Justice Varma when he was out of town.

On March 15, the Delhi High Chief Justice Upadhyay was informed by the Commissioner of Police Delhi in the evening around 4:50 pm about the fire which happened at Justice Varma's bungalow on March 14 at 11:30 PM. Thereafter, the

Chief Justice instructed the Registrar-cum-Secretary to visit the spot of the incident in person and prepare a report. The Registrar visited the spot, after informing the PS to Justice Varma. Justice Varma was also there.

On March 22, the CJI, Justice Sabjiv Khanna constituted a 3-member committee to conduct an inquiry into the allegations against Justice Varma, as part of the in-house procedure. This was after Delhi HC CJ reported to the CJI that the matter required a "deeper probe."

The Supreme Court making the video of fire dousing and the Delhi High Court Report and Justice Varma's response public on its official website on March 23.

Justice Varma has denied of such possession of cash and claimed it to be a conspiracy against him.

On March 24, the Delhi High Court withdrew judicial work from Justice Varma in pursuance of directions from the Apex Court.

DELHI HIGH COURT SEEKING CENTRE'S RESPONSE ON REGULATORY MECHANISM TO ENSURE TAXI APPS ARE DISABLED FRIENDLY PRIOR TO THER LAUNCH

The Delhi High Court in the case observed and has directed the Union Government for filing a response on the regulatory mechanism in place to ensure that taxi applications are disabled friendly prior to their launch.

JAMMU AND KASHMIR HIGH COURT: EMPLOYER SETTING CUT-OFF DATES FOR PENSION SCHEMES NOT VIOLATIVE OF ARTICLE 14 OF CONSTITUTION

The Jammu And Kashmir And Ladakh High Court in the case has ruled that employers are well within their rights to fix a cut-off date for introducing new pension or retirement schemes, and such decisions do not violate the equality clause under Article 14 of the Constitution of India.

RAJASTHAN HIGH COURT ISSUED GUIDELINES ON SUSPENSION OF GOVT EMPLOYEES WHERE DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS ARE CONTEMPLATED, PENDING

The Rajasthan High Court in the case observed and has issued guidelines to be followed by competent authorities or State's head of departments in cases where delinquent employees were suspended either in contemplation of or pending departmental proceedings initiated under Rule 13 of the Rajasthan Civil Services (Classification, Control, and Appeal) Rules.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case M/S Citicorp Finance (India) Limited Versus Snehasis Nanda observed and has reiterated that the arbitration clauses in an agreement would not override the choice of consumer for approaching the consumer forum for adjudication of the dispute.

The court in the case stated that a consumer cannot be forced to get the dispute adjudicated through Arbitration just because an arbitration clause is being mentioned in an agreement.

Adding to it, the court also stated that the consumer has the exclusive right to decide whether to pursue arbitration or approach the Consumer Forum.

The bench comprising of Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia and

Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah was hearing the present matter.

In the present matter, the dispute arose in relation to tripartite agreement contained an arbitration clause.

Facts of the Case:

The respondent i.e., the complainant before the NCDRC had purchased a flat with a housing loan of Rs.17,64,644/- from the ICICI Bank. However, one Mubarak Vahid Patel i.e., the borrower expressed interest in buying the said flat for an amount of Rs.32,00,000/-.

The borrower and the appellant i.e., Citicorp Finance entered into a loan agreement for an amount of Rs.23,40,000/- As the flat was already being mortgaged with ICICI Bank, the borrower requested the appellant to disburse an amount of Rs.17,80,000/-

(Rupees Seventeen Lakhs Eighty Thousand) directly to the respondent's ICICI Bank account, in order to secure the release of the flat.

The respondent filed a consumer complaint in the NC-DRC, wherein seeking to direct the appellant to pay him the balance sale consideration of Rs.13,20,000/-.

The respondent claimed that there was a tripartite agreement between him, the appellant and the borrower, whereby the appellant was required to deposit the entire sale consideration.

The NCDRC allowed the complaint, wherein it directed the appellant-Citicorp Finance to refund an amount of Rs. 13,20,000 with interest and pay Rs. 1,00,000 as litigation costs.

Aggrieved with the ruling of NCDRC's, the Appellant appealed to the Supreme Court.

The court in the case stated that so-called tripartite agreement mentioned about the arbitration clause stating that the disputes be adjudicated through an arbitration.

The court referred to the case of M. Hemalatha Devi v. B. Udayasri, wherein the court observed that the consumer disputes are non-arbitrable unless the consumer voluntarily opts for arbitration.

The present dispute is in relation to Tripartite Agreement contained an arbitration clause.

The court noted that the existence of the agreement itself was disputed, and the consumer i.e., respondent had chosen to approach the Consumer Forum.

The court also noted that the arbitration clause could not be enforced against the consumer, as the choice of forum lies exclusively with the consumer.

The court referred to the case of Emaar MGF Land Ltd. v Aftab Singh, and M Hemalatha Devi (supra), wherein it is stated that even in a consumer dispute under the Act, or for that matter, the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, arbitration, if provided for under the relevant agreement or document, can be opted for or resorted to, however, at the exclusive choice of the 'consumer' alone. As the appellant is not a 'consumer' in terms of the Act and the existence of the Tripartite Agreement is doubtful, we need not dwell further hereon.

The court also referred to the case M. Hemalatha Devi v. B. Udayasri, wherein the court stated that, 'The exclusion of a dispute from arbitration may be express or implied, depending again upon the nature of the dispute, and a party to a dispute cannot be compelled

to resort to arbitration merely for the reason that it has been provided in the contract, to which it is a signatory. The arbitrability of a dispute has to be examined when one of the parties seeks redressal under a welfare legislation, in spite of being a signatory to an arbitration agreement. "The Consumer Protection Act" is definitely a piece of welfare legislation with the primary purpose of protecting the interest of a consumer. Consumer disputes are assigned by the legislature to public fora, as a measure of public policy. Therefore, by necessary implication of such kind of disputes will fall in the category of non-arbitrable disputes, and these disputes should be kept away from a private fora such as "arbitration", unless both the parties willingly opt for arbitration over the remedy before public fora.'

F-47 VS J-36: THE BATTLE FOR AIR SUPREMACY

As the F-47 and J-36 move closer to completion, the future of air combat seems poised for a revolution. Both jets offer groundbreaking features that could redefine how wars are fought in the air, and the battle for air supremacy is far from over.

The United States has officially unveiled its highly anticipated sixth-generation fighter jet, the F-47, a marvel of modern technology that is set to change the landscape of air combat. Developed under the U.S. Air Force's Next Generation Air Dominance (NGAD) program, the F-47 promises unprecedented capabilities to maintain and assert American superiority in the skies. As tensions with global adversaries such as China and Russia intensify, the F-47 is positioned as a game-changer, not only to bolster U.S. airpower but also to reshape the future of aerial warfare.

With the introduction of this revolutionary aircraft, the U.S. aims to replace the aging F-22 Raptor, its top fighter jet in service. However, the F-47 is not the only cutting-edge fighter in

development. China is also working on its own sixth-generation fighter, the J-36, manufactured by Chengdu Aircraft Corporation. As the world watches, the battle for dominance in the air heats up between these two advanced jets, each offering a unique set of capabilities. This article will break down the F-47's features, compare it to China's J-36, and analyze the future of aerial combat.

The F-47: America's Sixth-Generation Fighter

The F-47, touted as one of the most advanced fighter jets ever built, is the result of years of secretive development by Boeing under the NGAD program. While most of its specifics remain classified, key details about its capabilities have been revealed, hinting at an aircraft that far surpasses the performance of its predecessors, including the F-22 Raptor and F-35 Lightning II.

KEY FEATURES AND CAPABILITIES

Stealth Technology: One of the standout features of the F-47 is its enhanced stealth capabilities, which allow it to operate undetected by enemy radar. This will be critical in evading detection and striking at high-speed targets with little to no warning.

Advanced Sensors: The aircraft will be equipped with state-of-the-art sensors that provide unparalleled situational awareness. These sensors will give pilots a 360-degree view of their environment, enabling them to detect potential threats far before they become visible.

Speed and Maneuverabil-



F-47-fighter-jet.

ity: Powered by next-generation engines, the F-47 is expected to have unmatched speed and maneuverability, pushing the limits of what is possible in air combat today. This will give the jet the ability to outmaneuver enemy aircraft and avoid enemy fire with precision.

Autonomous Integration: One of the most remarkable aspects of the F-47 is its integration with autonomous drones. These drones will work in tandem with the manned jet, providing increased capabilities for surveillance, targeting, and combat. The combination of a human pilot with the precision and versatility of drones could change the dynamics of aerial combat.

Design and Aerodynamics: Visually, the F-47 shows a radical departure from previous stealth designs. The aircraft features a sleek fuselage, canards (small wings

near the front), and swept-back wings to improve maneuverability. A bubble canopy offers the pilot enhanced visibility, while the overall shape is optimized for stealth, enabling the jet to reduce its radar signature.

Development and Testing: The development of the F-47 has been cloaked in secrecy, with reports suggesting that it has undergone extensive covert testing over the past several years. The aircraft's development cost is projected to exceed \$20 billion, with an overall lifetime cost running into hundreds of billions of dollars. Test flights have reportedly been conducted using classified "X-planes" over the past five years, flying hundreds of hours to ensure the technology works as intended.

THE J-36: CHINA'S SIXTH-GENERATION RIVAL

On the other side of the globe, China is also pushing the envelope with its sixth-generation fighter, the J-36. Manufactured by the Chengdu Aircraft Corporation, this aircraft represents China's ambition to rival Western air superiority and secure its own dominance in the skies. Much like the F-47, details about the J-36 are scarce, but experts believe it will feature several groundbreaking technologies.

KEY FEATURES AND CAPABILITIES:

Stealth Design: The J-36 is designed with a triangular, tailless shape to minimize its radar signature. This radical design, while promising excellent stealth capabilities, has raised concerns about its maneuverability. Without a tail, which is typically used to stabilize aircraft, the J-36 may face challenges in agile flight unless equipped with



US President Donald Trump (Left) and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping.

advanced thrust-vectoring engines.

Engines and Speed: The J-36 is expected to be powered by three WS-10C turbofan engines, allowing it to operate at high altitudes and reach impressive speeds. However, some analysts argue that the non-standard three-engine configuration could pose operational challenges, especially in combat situations.

Next-Generation Weapons: The J-36 will likely feature internal weapons bays designed to carry advanced air-to-air missiles. This would provide the aircraft with significant firepower while maintaining its stealthy profile. Additionally, electro-optical sensors and radar will allow the J-36 to detect and track targets at greater distances than current systems allow.

Advanced Systems: Similar to the F-47, the J-36 will incorporate cutting-edge sensor technology for enhanced detection and targeting. However, China's J-36 may place more emphasis on internal systems, reducing its reliance on external sensors to maintain its stealth.

HOW THE F-47 AND J-36 COMPARE

Both the F-47 and J-36 represent the future of air combat, and while they share some similarities, they are also marked by distinct differences in design philosophy and technological approach.

Stealth and Radar Signature: Both aircraft emphasize stealth, but the design philosophy diverges. The F-47 focuses on a more conventional stealth design with advanced radar-absorbing materials and aerodynamic features, while the J-36 adopts a more radical, tail-

J-36's three-engine setup. While the J-36 may benefit from the extra thrust, the F-47's superior engines could offer better speed, fuel efficiency, and maneuverability in the long run.

Autonomy and Drones: The integration of autonomous drones in the F-47 gives it a significant edge in terms of versatility. These drones can perform a variety of tasks, from reconnaissance to combat, allowing the F-47 to execute a wider range of operations than the J-36, which may still be reliant on traditional piloting.

THE FUTURE OF AIR COMBAT: DRONES VS. MANNED AIRCRAFT

As the F-47 and J-36 take center stage in the next generation of fighter jets, an ongoing debate lingers over the role of manned aircraft in modern warfare. Elon Musk, a vocal critic of tradi-



less approach to minimize its radar signature.

Maneuverability: The F-47 is expected to have superior maneuverability thanks to its advanced wing design and canards, allowing it to execute tight turns and rapid evasive maneuvers. The J-36's tailless design may limit its agility unless its thrust-vectoring engines deliver the necessary control.

Engines: The F-47's engine technology is likely to be more advanced than the

tional military aviation, has argued that manned fighter jets are becoming obsolete, suggesting that drones are the future of combat.

According to Musk, drones are cheaper, more efficient, and safer than manned planes, and the U.S. should focus on unmanned aircraft like the MQ-9 Reaper instead of investing in traditional fighters like the F-35.

● TDG NETWORK

US seeking Black Sea ceasefire in talks with Russia in Saudi Arabia

The ongoing war in Ukraine, which has been marked by intense military clashes and geopolitical maneuvering, continues to dominate global headlines. In a significant diplomatic effort, the United States is taking steps to de-escalate the conflict and initiate discussions aimed at securing a ceasefire, with a specific focus on the Black Sea region. A U.S. delegation is set to meet Russian officials in Saudi Arabia on Monday to discuss the possibility of a maritime ceasefire, which would allow the free flow of shipping through the Black Sea. This meeting comes on the heels of separate talks with Ukrainian diplomats, further signaling the U.S.'s commitment to resolving the crisis.

THE DIPLOMATIC PUSH FOR A BLACK SEA CEASEFIRE

The primary goal of these talks is to address the conflict in the Black Sea, a critical strategic region for both Russia and Ukraine. The U.S. hopes that by securing a ceasefire in this area, it can provide a means for shipping to resume without the threat of attack, easing one of the most significant points of contention in the ongoing



The aftermath of a Russian drone strike on a residential high-rise building in Kyiv on 23 March. Agency

koff has expressed optimism about making "real progress," particularly with regard to the Black Sea ceasefire. He suggested that the negotiations could be a step toward a broader ceasefire in the war itself, which would ultimately help pave the way for a reduction in violence. Witkoff remains hopeful that significant progress could be made during the talks scheduled in Saudi Arabia, especially in terms of reaching an agreement that would allow the resumption of maritime ship-

pers of hope that the talks could mark the beginning of a longer path toward de-escalation, particularly in the Black Sea region. However, the situation remains fluid, with both sides expressing differing levels of optimism about what can be achieved through dialogue.

Tensions Over Peacekeeping Efforts and Ukraine's Energy Sector

During the run-up to these talks, U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff took aim at British Prime Minister Keir Starmer's attempts to rally peacekeepers to Ukraine, dismissing them as "a posture and a pose." Witkoff criticized the idea, suggesting that Starmer and other European leaders were overly simplistic in their approach. The U.S. envoy argued that such initiatives were rooted in an outdated mindset, with leaders hoping to emulate figures like Winston Churchill, who became famous for his leadership during World War II. Witkoff's comments highlight the differences in approach between the U.S. and its Eu-



Representative Image

ropean allies in terms of how to resolve the war in Ukraine. Furthermore, Witkoff made headlines by offering unusually positive remarks about Russian President Vladimir Putin. He stated that he "liked" Putin and did not view him as a "bad guy." Witkoff acknowledged that the war in Ukraine was a complicated situation with many underlying factors, but he expressed belief that Putin



US and Russian officials meet for talks mediated by Saudi Arabia in Riyadh on Tuesday, February 18, 2025. File Photo

wanted peace. This statement stands in stark contrast to the broader Western view of Putin as the chief architect of the conflict, leading some critics to question the diplomatic strategy behind these comments.

The U.S. is also closely involved in discussions surrounding Ukraine's energy sector. Ukraine's Defense Minister, Rustem Umerov, spoke on social media about

the "constructive and meaningful" nature of talks with the U.S. delegation, which have focused on critical issues like the energy sector. Speculation has surfaced about the potential for the U.S. to play a more direct role in overseeing Ukraine's nuclear power facilities, though it remains unclear whether this idea will gain traction in the coming weeks.

THE CALL FOR A BROADER TRUCE

According to Bloomberg, the Trump administration is pushing for a broader truce agreement between Russia and Ukraine, with the aim of securing a deal by Easter Sunday, which falls on April 20 this year. The ambitious target date for a ceasefire, if achieved, would represent a significant diplomatic breakthrough. However, sources have cautioned that the timeline is likely to slip, as both sides remain entrenched in their positions and the path to peace remains uncertain.

A truce agreement would require substantial concessions from both sides, particularly from Russia, which has made significant territorial gains in Ukraine since the war's outset. On the other hand, Ukraine is unlikely to accept anything short of significant security guarantees and the restoration of its territorial integrity. The involvement of the U.S. in the process underscores the importance of diplomatic engagement at the highest level, with Wash-

ington pushing for an end to hostilities in the near future.

HUMAN COST OF THE CONFLICT: CIVILIAN CASUALTIES AND MILITARY ENGAGEMENT

As diplomatic efforts continue, the human toll of the conflict in Ukraine remains devastating. On Sunday, Ukrainian officials reported that at least seven people were killed in a massive drone attack, with more than 140 drones striking cities across Ukraine. The barrage of strikes targeted multiple locations, including the capital, Kyiv. The sound of explosions reverberated throughout the night, with the attacks lasting for more than five hours.

Ukrainian emergency services responded to the crisis as debris from shot-down drones and Russian drones themselves fell on residential buildings in Kyiv, adding to the destruction. Tragically, at least one child was among those killed in the attack, underscoring the heavy civilian toll this war continues to exact.

● TDG NETWORK



war. The U.S. administration views the free flow of goods through the Black Sea as vital not only for regional stability but also for global trade.

Despite this ambition, there remains a wide gulf between the expectations of the U.S. and Russia regarding the potential outcomes of these talks. U.S. envoy Steve Wit-

ping in the region.

On the Russian side, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov has indicated that the negotiations will be challenging. He emphasized that Russia is still in the early stages of the diplomatic process, warning that the road ahead would be long and difficult. Despite this, there are glim-

RUSSIA AND US EXPLORE BLACK SEA TRUCE, EUROPE REMAINS SKEPTICAL

United States of America and Russia had a dialogue to introduce truce amid ongoing Ukraine conflict in the Black Sea region.

AGENCIES
RIYADH

U.S. and Russian officials convened in Saudi Arabia on Monday to negotiate a maritime ceasefire in the Black Sea, aiming to establish a controlled truce before addressing broader peace agreements in Ukraine. This follows ongoing drone strikes between Moscow and Kyiv, escalating tensions on both sides.

The discussions, which succeeded U.S.-Ukraine talks in Saudi Arabia the previous day, were prompted by Russia's continued air assaults on Kyiv, injuring civilians and damaging infrastructure. Meanwhile, Russia claims to have intercepted 227 Ukrainian drones in the past 24 hours, with its southern Krasnodar region battling oil depot fires caused by Ukrainian attacks.

U.S. President Donald Trump has intensified diplomatic efforts to end the

THE MEETING

- US and Russia discuss Black Sea maritime ceasefire
- Scepticism in Europe over Putin's desire to compromise
- Russian negotiator tells Interfax talks progressing 'creatively'
- Trump has expressed broad satisfaction over the talks



Patrol boats of Ukraine's coast guard sail in the Black Sea, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, February 7, 2024. File Photo

three-year war, holding direct conversations with both Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy and Russian President Vladimir Putin. The White House emphasizes that the primary goal of the Saudi talks is ensuring safe navigation in the Black Sea, despite the region not being the current focal point of intense military operations.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov highlighted that the discussions center

around maritime security, citing Moscow's dissatisfaction with the unfulfilled promises of a 2022 Black Sea shipping agreement. This narrower focus suggests that Russia remains hesitant to commit to a broader ceasefire.

Ukraine's Black Sea operations have significantly weakened Russia's naval fleet, forcing Moscow to relocate ships from Crimea. Despite ongoing Russian attacks on Ukrainian ports,

Kyiv continues to export commodities like grain and iron ore at near pre-war levels, although it has yet to regain use of the port of Mykolaiv. Zelenskiy has urged European leaders to support a truce at sea and in the air.

Leading the U.S. delegation at the Saudi talks were Andrew Peek from the White House National Security Council and senior State Department official Michael Anton. Russia's

representatives included Grigory Karasin, head of the Russian Senate's Foreign Affairs Committee, and Sergei Beseda, an adviser to the Federal Security Service (FSB).

Karasin told Interfax news agency that the negotiations were progressing "creatively," with both sides addressing longstanding diplomatic tensions. Trump, who has consistently advocated for ending the Ukraine conflict, expressed general satisfaction with the talks and praised Putin's engagement in the process.

However, major European powers remain skeptical about Putin's willingness to make meaningful concessions, suspecting that he will maintain his firm stance. Putin insists that Ukraine must abandon its NATO aspirations and withdraw from four occupied regions claimed by Russia before any peace deal can be finalized.

Germany: Merz's fiscal shift faces domestic backlash

AGENCIES
BERLIN

A bold move by Germany's prime minister-in-waiting Friedrich Merz to ease longstanding caps on government spending has won praise internationally but signs are emerging of a domestic political blowback.

Merz's Fiscal Shift Faces Domestic Backlash Amid Political TensionAn INSA poll published on Sunday showed 73% of all voters and 44% of CDU/CSU supporters felt deceived. Support for the group fell one point to 27% while the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) gained one to 23%.

That left the margin between the two parties at just four points, half the gap one month ago when the election took place.

"The CDU/CSU has failed to deliver on its pre-election promises with the debt package," INSA head Hermann Binkert told Bild. "Some disappointed voters are turning to the AfD."

Merz announced his dramatic shift on spending - agreed with likely future coalition partners the Social Democrats - only nine days after winning the Febru-



German Chancellor-in-waiting Friedrich Merz speaks to the media after he reached an agreement with the Greens on a massive increase in state borrowing just days ahead of a parliamentary vote next week, in Berlin, Germany, March 14, 2025. File Photo

ary 23 election, following a campaign in which he had promised not to open the spending tap.

Parliament approved the plans last week, jettisoning decades of fiscal conservatism in hopes of reviving economic growth and scaling up military spending for a new era of European collective defence as the U.S. pulls back from Europe.

Yet, CDU voters are deeply torn over the move and its justification.

"If America no longer helps us, we have to defend

ourselves," Juergen Feddersen, born in 1944 towards the end of World War Two, told Reuters.

"We have to because Russia will not calm down. I don't trust (Russian President Vladimir) Putin," said Feddersen, a CDU voter for 50 years and previously a staunch supporter of the debt brake, instituted by former CDU chancellor Angela Merkel to formally restrain government borrowing.

There is broad public approval of higher spending on the armed forces and defence, arising from the changed threat situation for Germany and Europe, Andrea Wolf of pollster Forschungsgruppe Wahlen told Reuters. But voter reaction to Merz's decision will surface in the polls in the coming weeks, Wolf said. "It is quite likely that this will cost the (CDU/CSU) and Friedrich Merz support."

Already, younger CDU supporters fear the onus for funding the new spending spike will land on them, already a generation struggling to get on the housing ladder and fearing future pension and welfare entitlements could be at risk.

Pope Francis returns to Vatican, but remains out of public view

AGENCIES
VATICAN CITY

After 38 days in hospital battling double pneumonia almost entirely out of sight, Pope Francis made his first public appearance on Sunday since February 14 and returned to the Vatican.

But with his doctors prescribing the 88-year-old pontiff another two months of rest to allow his ageing body to fully heal, it is unclear how often people will get to see the leader of the world's 1.4 billion Catholics in the coming weeks.

The pope left Rome's Gemelli hospital on Sunday and returned to the Casa Santa Marta (St. Martha's House), a small building at the Vati-



People watch Pope Francis during his first public appearance in five weeks, on the day of his discharge from Gemelli Hospital, on a big screen in St. Peter's Square, at the Vatican, March 23, 2025. Agency

can which has been his home since his election as pontiff in 2013.

Constructed in 1996 as a place for cardinals to stay during a papal conclave to elect a new pope, Santa Marta is structured like a hotel,

with guest rooms across five floors, a small cafeteria and a chapel.

But the facility is not generally open to the public. In the years between conclaves, it is primarily a home for many of the priests who work at

the Vatican, who have special passes allowing them entry.

The pope and his closest aides occupy a series of rooms on the building's second floor. In his private quarters, Francis has lived relatively unassisted up to now, taking care of many of his own needs, and is largely out of public view.

The Vatican has indicated that no new special arrangements have been made to the facility to care for Francis as he recovers from pneumonia.

The only change was to install a new adjustable bed, with electronic controls to make it more accessible for the pope, who has used a wheelchair in recent years, Italy's Corriere della Sera reported on Sunday.

China denies Philippines ex-president Duterte sought asylum

AGENCIES
BEIJING

China on Monday said it had not received any application for asylum from Philippines' former president Rodrigo Duterte, regarded as a close ally of Beijing, who was arrested after his visit to Hong Kong.

Duterte was arrested on March 11 at Manila's main airport and deported to The Hague for trial by the International Criminal Court (ICC) over the allegations of serious human rights violations, including sanctioning the killings of drug dealers as part of his war against drugs.

Asked about reports from the Philippines that Duterte sought asylum in China before his arrest, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun



Former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte

told a media briefing here that the Chinese government had never received any so-called asylum application from Duterte or his family.

"Let me point out in particular that Duterte's visit to Hong Kong was a private vacation trip. We have never received the so-called application for asylum to the Chinese gov-

ernment from former president Rodrigo Duterte or his family," Guo said.

"We hope people from the media can be careful about the so-called 'information from sources,' either unfounded or ill-motivated, and do not easily believe what they hear," he said.

The media outlets in the Philippines last week reported that Duterte's asylum application was rejected by China before he was arrested in Manila. Before his arrest, Duterte travelled to Hong Kong on March 7 to attend an event of overseas Filipino workers along with his daughter, Vice-President Sara Duterte. The UN and the Roman Catholic church, the dominant religion in the Philippines.

IDF strikes key Hamas commanders as Gaza crisis deepens

AGENCIES
TEL AVIV

The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) announced a targeted strike on a Hamas operative inside Gaza's Nasser Hospital compound.

In a post on X, the IDF stated, "A key Hamas terrorist who was operating from within the Nasser Hospital compound in Gaza was precisely struck. The strike was conducted following an extensive intelligence-gathering process and with precise munitions in order to mitigate harm to the surrounding environment as much as possible."

The military accused Hamas of using civilian sites as cover, stating, "Hamas exploits civilian infrastructure while brutally endangering



Representative Image

the Gazan population--cynically using an active hospital as a shelter for planning and executing murderous terrorist attacks in a direct violation of international law."

Separately, the IDF confirmed the killing of two key Hamas commanders, writing, "ELIMINATED: Deputy commander of

Hamas' Gaza Brigade and the commander of Hamas' Shejaiya Battalion."

The IDF identified them as Ahmad Salman 'Awj Shimali, "responsible for operations, planning Hamas' offensive strategy, and building the brigade's force in preparation for the brutal massacre on Oct 7," and Jamil Omar Jamil Wadiya, "responsible for deploying the battalion's forces against IDF troops and operated to restore and reorganise the battalion. He was involved in an attack in which Daniel Viflic, 16, was murdered."

Earlier today, US Special Envoy Steve Witkoff blamed Hamas for the renewed fighting, rejecting claims that Israel derailed ceasefire efforts.

Korea battles multiple wildfires in southeastern region

AGENCIES
SEOUL

The Republic of Korea is battling to contain multiple wildfires raging across the southeastern region Sunday, with strong and dry winds hindering efforts to bring the blaze under control, authorities said.

According to Yonhap News Agency, the fire began Friday in Sancheong County, 250 kilometres southeast of Seoul, spreading to other areas.

Wildfires also broke out in Eui-seong, North Gyeong-sang Province, about 180 km southeast of the capital; and Ulju County in Ulsan, some 300 km away.

Four people have been killed in the Sancheong fire so far, with six others injured. More than 1,500 people have been evacuated to temporary shelters, according to the Central Disaster and Safety Countermeasures Headquarters.

A total of 4,650 hectares of land -- equivalent to approximately 6,512 football fields -- has been burned so far in Eui-seong, leaving more than 390 people displaced. On Sunday, acting President Choi Sang-mok instructed officials to review additional designations of Eui-seong and Ulju as special disaster zones, following the designation of Sancheong.

Istanbul Mayor's arrest sparks unrest across Turkiye

AGENCIES
ISTANBUL

Istanbul's Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu, a key opposition figure, has been jailed on corruption charges, triggering massive street protests across Turkey, Al Jazeera reported.

The court's decision to strip him of his mayoral title and transfer him to Silivri Prison has sparked nationwide outrage.

Imamoglu's arrest occurred just four days after a predawn raid involving hundreds of police officers. While the court has opted not to pursue a separate "terrorism" investigation, the Ministry of Interior has suspended him from office as mayor of Turkey's largest city, as per Al Jazeera.



Istanbul's Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu

Government officials have denied allegations that the legal action against the opposition figure is politically motivated, insisting that Turkey's courts operate independently.

However, the timing of the arrest and the subsequent protests have raised concerns about the fairness

The court's decision to strip him of his mayoral title and transfer him to Silivri Prison has sparked nationwide

outrage.

and integrity of the upcoming elections.

More than 700 accounts on X, including those belonging to "news organisations, journalists, political figures, students, and others within Turkiye", were targeted, the X company said.

Describing the government's move as "unlawful", X affirmed its commitment to defending free speech through legal channels.

Baloch leaders' detention: Section 144 imposed in Karachi

AGENCIES
KARACHI

The Karachi commissioner imposed Section 144 across the city on Monday, following concerns over the "law and order situation," as reported by Dawn.

This came after a recommendation from Karachi South Zone DIG Syed Asad

Raza ahead of a planned protest by the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) at the Karachi Press Club against the "illegal detention" of leaders Mahrang Baloch and Bebag Baloch.

Dawn reported that the Section 144 order, effective immediately for March 24, banned protests.

US Defence Secy embarks on first Indo-Pacific tour

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

US Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth departed on Sunday (local time) for his first Indo-Pacific in his current role, with stops in Hawaii, Guam, Philippines, and Japan.

Hegseth said that the Indo-Pacific is a priority theatre for the US.

In a post on X, he said, "Wheels up from Washington DC--out to the US Indo-Pacific Command AO for the first time as Secretary of Defence. The Indo-Pacific is our priority theater, and we're strengthening our deterrence, readiness, and alliances. We will lead with strength, resolve, and pur-

pose."

As per a statement by the US Department of Defence, Hegseth during his visit will meet senior US military and civilian leadership and participate in a series of bilateral meetings. These engagements will drive ongoing efforts to strengthen our alliances and partnerships toward

our shared vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific.

As part of his first official visit to the region, Hegseth will first travel to Hawaii to meet with civilian and military leaders from the US Indo-Pacific Command. From there, Hegseth will travel to Guam, where he is expected to tour the military facilities and re-

ceive capabilities briefs. Next, he will travel to the Philippines, where he will advance security objectives with Philippine leaders and meet with US and Philippine forces. In Japan, Hegseth will participate in a ceremony commemorating the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima and will later meet with

Japanese leaders and U.S. military forces. And as always, the Secretary looks forward to some great PT (physical training) with the troops!

Hegseth's trip comes as the United States builds on unprecedented cooperation with like-minded countries to strengthen regional security.

PICTURE PERFECT



Janhvi Kapoor poses for her social media. (INSTAGRAM)

Akshay’s ‘Kesari Chapter 2’ teaser out

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The teaser for Kesari Chapter 2, starring Akshay Kumar, was released on Monday. Dharma Productions shared the 90-second clip on YouTube, instantly grabbing attention.

The teaser begins with disturbing screams of men and women fleeing in terror during the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. Moments later, the Golden Temple in 1919 appears, setting a historical backdrop. A voiceover then describes how British soldiers ruthlessly killed unarmed civilians at Jallianwala Bagh. Soon after, Akshay Kumar enters the scene as a determined lawyer in a British courtroom. A British judge sneers, saying, "Don't forget you're still a slave of the British Empire." Without hesitation, Akshay's character fires back, "F* you."*** This moment sets the tone for a bold and rebellious narrative.

Fans React with Excitement
After the teaser dropped, fans flooded social media with reactions. Many praised Akshay's powerful



dialogue delivery, while others predicted a box-office blockbuster. Here are some reactions:
"He's not acting; he's living the role!"
"This will be even more intense than Kesari Chapter 1!"
"Pure goosebumps! Blockbuster on the way!"
"Akshay Kumar is back with another masterpiece. 300 or loading!"
"History comes alive again with Akshay Kumar!"
Release Date and Star Cast
The film is set to release on April 18. Besides Akshay, Ananya Panday and R. Madhavan play crucial roles. Akshay also promoted the teaser on Instagram, captioning it:
"He held his head high. He beat them at their game. He told them where to go. A genocide India must know

about. A revolution painted in courage."
Kesari (2019) Recap
The first film, Kesari, hit theaters in 2019. It told the story of the Battle of Saragarhi (1897), where 21 Sikh soldiers from the 36th Sikh Regiment heroically fought 10,000 Pashtun tribesmen. The film also starred Parineeti Chopra, adding emotional depth. Jallianwala Bagh Massacre: A Dark Chapter in History
The Jallianwala Bagh massacre happened on April 13, 1919. Thousands of people had gathered in Amritsar to protest the Rowlatt Act and the arrest of pro-Indian leaders Saifuddin Kitchlew and Satyapal. Without warning, General R.E.H. Dyer surrounded the crowd with British troops and ordered them to fire.

Emraan Hashmi announces 'Awarapan 2' as birthday surprise for fans

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Bollywood fans can brace themselves for a blast from the past as Emraan Hashmi and filmmaker Vishesh Bhatt have officially announced 'Awarapan 2' as the ultimate birthday surprise for the actor's dedicated fanbase.
In a thrilling social media announcement, Emraan Hashmi and Vishesh Bhatt revealed that a sequel to the cult classic Awarapan is in the works.



BRAIN PICKING



As a kid, I wanted to do so many different things; I saw my aunt as an air hostess, and then I wanted to be an air hostess.
— SUSHMITA SEN
(Indian Actress)

Alan Cumming to host BAFTA TV Awards

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

The British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) has announced that Emmy-winning actor Alan Cumming will host this year's BAFTA TV Awards.
According to Deadline, the ceremony, which celebrates the best in British



television, will take place on Sunday, May 11.
Cumming, the performer known for his roles in 'The Good Wife', 'Golden Eye', and 'Spy Kids', is set to bring his unique brand of humor and charm to the event.
Emma Baehr, Executive Director of Awards & Content at BAFTA, expressed her excitement

Harrdy Sandhu drops his romantic single 'Baby'

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Punjabi singer Harrdy Sandhu has released a new single, 'Baby.'
The song's video was shot in London, elevating the track's emotional depth as it presents a cinematic love story against the city's picturesque scenery.
Speaking about the inspiration behind the track, Harrdy, in a press note, said, "'Baby' is more than just a song - it's a celebration of love in its purest form. We've created something that pushes the boundaries of what Punjabi pop can be while staying true to its roots. The production

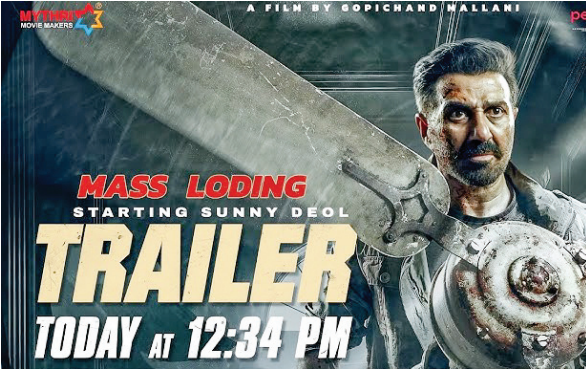


process was incredibly detailed, with months spent perfecting every element, from the traditional percussion arrangements to the modern synthesizer layers. Each sound has been carefully chosen to create an emotional connection with listeners, regardless of their cultural background."
Harrdy Sandhu is best known for his hit tracks such as 'Joker'.

Sunny vs Randeep in action-loaded film

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

After 'Gadar 2', Sunny Deol is all set to showcase his action avatar once again with his new film 'Jaat', which also stars Randeep Hooda, Vineet Kumar Singh, Saiyami Kher, Jagapathi Babu and Ramya Krishna.
On Monday, the film's trailer was unveiled. It's loaded with action-packed sequences and some whistle-worthy dialogues.
The trailer shows Sunny Deol 'JAAT' locking horns with antagonist Randeep



Hooda (Ranatunga). With the film, Sunny promises to bring the magic of his 'dhaai kilo ka haath' to impress the South audience after impressing the North.

"Ye dhai kilo ke haath ki takat pura north dekh chuka hain. Ab south dekhega. (The north has already seen the power of this two-and-half-kilo arm.

‘RAID 2’ FIRST LOOK, FILM TO RELEASE ON MAY 1

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Bollywood star Ajay Devgn's next film is 'Raid 2'.
Captivating the audience's attention, Ajay on Monday afternoon unveiled the first-look poster of his character IRS Amap Patnaik.
Ajay posed amid hordes of files in the backdrop, giving intense expressions.
"Naya Shehar. Nayi File. Aur Amap Patnaik Ki Ek Nayi Raid. #Raid2 knocking at your doors in cinemas near you on 1st May, 2025," he captioned the post.
Raid 2 is produced by Bhushan Kumar, Kumar Mangat Pathak, Abhishek Pathak and Krishan Kumar. The film, which will be released on May 1, is presented by Gulshan Kumar and T-Series and is a Panorama Studios production.
Raj Kumar Gupta has helmed the film, which is



the sequel to the 2018 crime thriller that captivated audiences with its gripping story of tax raids and corruption. In the movie, Ajay will share screen space with Riteish Deshmukh, Vaani Kapoor and Rajat Kapoor.
'Raid' was released in 2018 and also starred Sau-

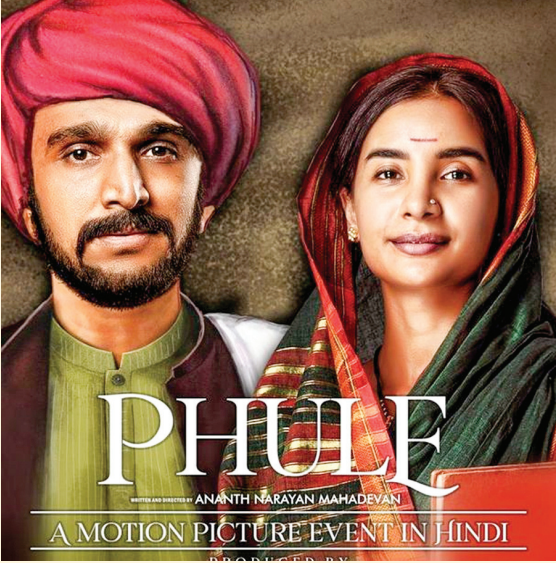
rabh Shukla and Ileana D'Cruz. It was inspired by a real-life raid conducted by the officers of the Income Tax Department in the 1980s. Ileana played Ajay's wife in the movie.
Meanwhile, Ajay Devgn is currently basking in the success of 'Singham Again',

which is directed by Rohit Shetty.
In the film, he reprised the role of police officer Bajirao Singham whom he first essayed in the first part, which was released in 2011 and then again in 2014 in the second instalment of the 'Singham' franchise.

Trailer of Pratik Gandhi-starrer 'Phule' unveiled

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

The trailer of 'Phule', a biographical drama based on the life of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule and Savitribai Phule, has been unveiled.
Directed by Ananth Mahadevan, the film stars Pratik Gandhi as Jyotirao Phule and Patralekhaa as his wife, Dnyanajyoti Savitribai Phule.
Have a look at the trailer
The film offers a glimpse into the relentless struggle of the legendary reformers while they at-



tempted to "change the status quo of women, particularly widows and Dalits."
Set to release on April 11, 2025, coinciding with Phule's birth anniversary, the film brings to life a story of social justice, women's emancipation, and the fight against caste oppression.
Reflecting on his role, Pratik Gandhi in a press note shared, "I am fortunate that I got to live the life of the legendary Mahatma, on screen.

WHY ARE ORAL CHECK-UPS IMPORTANT LIKE HEALTH CHECK-UPS



DR. DARSHINI SHAH

With almost half of adults in India suffering from periodontal disease and kids fighting cavities, oral health problems like tooth decay, gum disease, and oral cancer are shockingly widespread in India. Usually brought on by behaviors like chewing tobacco or betel nuts, these issues are mostly avoidable with basic dental visits.

Still, many people undervalue oral health as they are unaware of its impact on overall well-being. Oral check-ups are as important as regular health tests in avoiding major medical problems and guaranteeing a better, happier life.

IMPORTANCE OF REGULAR DENTAL

CHECK-UP IMPROVE OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE

Maintaining excellent dental health promises pain-free eating, clear pronunciation, and a confident grin, thereby minimising discomfort and social anxiety and so encouraging improved nutrition and self-esteem.

EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF ORAL CONDITIONS

Early identification of oral health problems depends much on routine dental visits. Dentists carefully examine the mouth to look for the patterns of cavities, gum disease, and other, perhaps undetectable dental conditions. Early identification of the same enables quick diagnosis, therefore preventing small problems from developing into more serious diseases.

STOPPING GUM DISEASE AND TOOTH DECAY

If not quickly handled, plaque and tartar accumulation can cause periodontal (gum) disease and tooth decay. Professional dental cleanings eliminate these accumulations,

therefore preserving the health of teeth and gums. Ignoring such preventative actions could lead to tooth loss and other problems compromising everyday living.

DETECT ANY UNDERLYING ISSUES

Usually each year, dentists advise new dental X-rays. Apart from the oral assessment, this enables them to identify any underlying issues such as bone loss in the jaw, impacted teeth, etc., that could otherwise go unnoticed. During a dental check-up, a dentist also examines for numerous problems the patient cannot find on their own at home. For instance, although they are a major indicator of periodontal disease, deep gum pockets are difficult to find with an at-home oral exam.

ORAL CANCER SCREENING

One of the most critical components of a dental check-up is screening for oral cancer. Dentists are trained to detect early signs of this potentially life-threatening disease, such as unusual sores or discolorations in



the mouth. Early diagnosis significantly improves treatment outcomes, underscoring the importance of regular dental visits.

CUSTOMIZED ORAL HEALTH EDUCATION

Regular dental visits give patients great chances to get individualized oral health instruction from their

During a dental check-up, a dentist also examines for numerous problems the patient cannot find on their own at home. For instance, although they are a major indicator of periodontal disease, deep gum pockets are difficult to find with an at-home oral exam.

dentist or dental hygienist. Patients can learn how to

keep appropriate brushing and flossing habits as well

as get advice on oral hygiene products catered to their

particular requirement during these visits. Dentists can also provide guidance on lifestyle choices and dietary elements that could affect dental conditions.

BOTTOM LINE

We should get our dental check-up done just like health check-ups. After a certain age, people are accustomed to getting a full health check-up every year or every couple of years. In the same way, it is essential to get your dental health checked every six months because your smile is the first thing that people notice. Routine check-ups maintain oral hygiene, prevent gum disease, and even screen for conditions like oral cancer. Prioritizing oral health not only protects your smile but also contributes to overall well-being. So, the next time you schedule a health check-up, make sure to book a dental appointment, too—it's a small step that can make a big difference.

Dr. Darshini Shah, Director, Shalby Hospitals & Consultant Dentist and Oral Implantologist (B.D.S., F.I.C.O.I., Diplomate-ICOI (USA), Shalby Dental Cosmetics & Implantology Centres.

The pain behind the glamour: Women know how high heels can harm your knees and bones



DR. ABHISHEK VAISH

Wearing high heels has long been a fashion statement for women, often associated with elegance and confidence. However, the consistent use of high heels can have significant consequences for musculoskeletal health, particularly for the knees, ankles, and spine. Dr. Abhishek Vaish, an esteemed orthopedic surgeon and Sports Injury Specialist from Indraprastha Apollo Hospital and Healing Touch Clinic, New Delhi sheds light on how habitual high heel use can contribute to joint and bone issues. “Beyond temporary discomfort, prolonged use can lead to long-term joint damage and chronic pain. Understanding these risks is crucial for women who rely on heels for daily wear or professional attire”.

HOW HIGH HEELS AFFECT THE BODY?

Wearing high heels alters the body's natural alignment. The elevated heel forces the wearer to adjust her posture to maintain balance, shifting body weight forward. This unnatural stance places added stress on various parts of the body, particularly the knees, lower back, and feet.

“When you wear high heels regularly, the body's center of gravity shifts forward,” explains Dr. Abhishek Vaish. “This places excessive pressure on the knee joints, especially the patellofemoral joint, which can lead to pain and discomfort over time.”

IMPACT ON KNEES

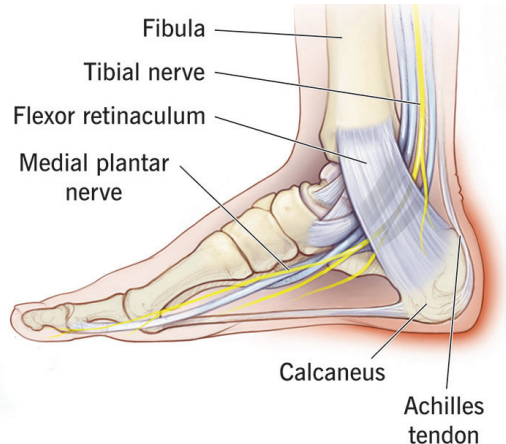
The knees are crucial

weight-bearing joints, and any misalignment significantly increases their strain. High heels cause the quadriceps muscles to work harder, putting excessive pressure on the knee cap (patella) and increasing the risk of developing conditions like osteoarthritis.

Frequent heel wearers often complain of knee pain, stiffness, and even swelling. Over time, this additional stress can accelerate cartilage wear and tear, potentially leading to chronic knee issues.

IMPACT ON BONES AND JOINTS

Beyond the knees, high heels can also affect bone structure and joint stability. The unnatural foot position forces the ankle into a downward angle, reducing stability and increasing the likelihood of ankle sprains and fractures. Additionally, the altered posture can strain the lower back, leading to conditions like lumbar lordosis.



“Wearing heels consistently can shorten the Achilles tendon and calf muscles,” warns Dr. Vaish. “This not only limits ankle flexibility but may also result in long-term pain and reduced mobility.”

LONG-TERM RISKS

Women who frequently wear high heels may develop musculoskeletal imbalances. Conditions such as bunions, hammertoes, and plantar fasciitis are common among habitual heel wearers.

High heels don't just affect the feet; they disrupt the body's natural alignment, increasing the risk of hip and spine issues as well.

Tips for Reducing the Risk

While giving up high heels altogether may not be practical for everyone, Dr. Vaish suggests adopting the following practices to minimize potential harm:

1. Limit Heel Height: Opt for heels that are no higher than 1-2 inches to reduce pressure on the knees and

spine.

2. Alternate Footwear: Rotate between flats, supportive sneakers, and heels to prevent overburdening the joints.

3. Strengthening Exercises: Strengthening the calf muscles, quadriceps, and core can improve joint stability and reduce strain.

4. Stretching Routine: Regular stretching of the Achilles tendon and calf muscles can counteract the shortening effects of high heels.

5. Use Orthopedic Inserts: Specially designed insoles can improve comfort and provide better arch support. Fashion and comfort can go hand in hand if one takes preventive measures. High heels may elevate your style, but frequent use can have serious consequences for your musculoskeletal health. Know the importance of moderation and proper footwear choices to safeguard knee and bone health. “By adopting preventive measures and staying mindful of your body's alignment, you can enjoy fashion without compromising your well-being. Women should prioritize their long-term well-being by balancing their footwear choices with proper care routines to ensure they stay stylish without compromising their physical health” concluded Dr. Vaish.

Dr. Abhishek Vaish, Sr. Orthopedic Surgeon and Sports Injury Specialist from Indraprastha Apollo Hospital and Healing Touch Clinic, New Delhi



How to preserve Mithai for the best taste and freshness



RIDDHI BHAGAT

Mithai, the delightful assortment of traditional sweets from India, is an essential part of celebrations and everyday indulgences. Whether it's the rich laddoos, delicate barfis, or the irresistible jalebis, these sweet treats are beloved by many. However, one common challenge when it comes to mithai is preserving them for the best taste and freshness, especially since they can easily lose their flavor and texture if not stored properly. Here, we will explore the best methods to preserve mithai so that every bite retains its freshness and mouthwatering taste.

1- STORE MITHAI IN AN AIRTIGHT CONTAINER

One of the easiest and most effective ways to preserve mithai is by storing it in an airtight container. Exposure to air can cause the sweets to dry out, lose moisture, and lose their soft, melt-in-the-mouth texture. Airtight containers prevent this by keeping the humidity and air at bay. This is particularly useful for sweets like barfis, pedas, and laddoos, which are often made with milk and ghee.

2. REFRIGERATE MITHAI WHEN NECESSARY

Many mithais, particularly those made with dairy products (like khoya, condensed milk, or paneer), tend to spoil quickly in the heat. If you're storing mithai for more than a day or two, refrigeration is a good option. Sweets like rasgulla, gulab jamun, and milk cake should be kept in the fridge to prevent them from

fermenting or going bad. Make sure to wrap mithai in plastic wrap or place it in a container to avoid it absorbing strong odors from the fridge. You can also place a piece of wax paper between layers of mithai to prevent sticking.

3. AVOID FREEZING MITHAI UNLESS NECESSARY

While it's tempting to freeze mithai to extend its shelf life, freezing is generally not recommended for most traditional Indian sweets. Freezing can alter the texture and taste of mithai, especially for delicate ones like jalebis or gulab jamun, which can lose their crispness and become soggy upon thawing. However, if you have excess sweets that you want to store for a long period, freezing can be an option, but ensure that you wrap them tightly in plastic and place them in a ziplock bag to minimize freezer burn. To prevent mithai from absorbing moisture or becoming too hard in the freezer, it's best to consume frozen sweets within a month.

4. STORE MITHAI AT ROOM TEMPERATURE FOR SHORT-TERM PRESERVATION

For short-term storage, many mithais can be kept at room temperature. This works particularly well for sweets that don't contain perishable ingredients, like besan laddoos, coconut barfi, and soan papdi. These types of sweets have a longer shelf life and can remain fresh for several days if stored in a cool, dry place

Preserving mithai to maintain its freshness and taste is an art in itself. By following the right storage techniques, such as using airtight containers, refrigerating when necessary, and avoiding freezing unless absolutely required, you can enjoy these delectable sweets for a longer period.

away from direct sunlight. Keep the sweets away from high humidity, as this can cause them to lose their texture or spoil faster. A cool, dry corner of the kitchen or pantry is ideal.

5. CHECK FOR FRESHNESS REGULARLY

If you are storing mithai for more than a few days, it's essential to check on them regularly. Sweets that have been stored for longer periods can start to lose their flavor or get too hard. Some types of mithai, like rasgulla and gulab jamun, can also soak up all the syrup and become hard or stale. To prevent this, make sure to consume them within the recommended time frame or add fresh syrup if needed.

6. USE NATURAL PRESERVATIVES

Some mithais, especially those made with fresh milk, may benefit from a small amount of natural preservatives to extend their freshness. For instance, a pinch of cardamom or saffron not only enhances the flavor but also has antimicrobial properties. You can also add a few rose petals or dried fruits like almonds

and cashews, which act as natural preservatives. Make sure that any additions to the sweets don't overpower the original flavors, but simply enhance them.

7. SERVE MITHAI IN SMALL PORTIONS

Rather than storing large quantities of mithai at once, consider serving them in smaller portions over several days. This will help minimize the risk of spoiling large batches. It's also easier to keep track of how long they've been stored, ensuring you always enjoy them at their freshest.

CONCLUSION

Preserving mithai to maintain its freshness and taste is an art in itself. By following the right storage techniques, such as using airtight containers, refrigerating when necessary, and avoiding freezing unless absolutely required, you can enjoy these delectable sweets for a longer period. The key is to always store mithai in a manner that preserves its flavor, texture, and aroma, so every bite remains as delightful as the first.

Riddhi Bhagat, Strategic Director, Bhagat Hakzai and Founder, Binge on Baked



BEYOND RELIGION: HOW SPIRITUALITY IS BECOMING THE NEW PATH TO FULFILMENT



ATMAN IN RAVI

There was a time when 'Religion' adorned the supreme title. Religious beliefs were so widespread that society thrived on such notions, well above human compassion. You might have probably heard of blind faith. But now, the world has changed. Society has evolved.

SPIRITUALITY: THE NEW BUZZWORD

Spirituality is the new buzzword. Spirituality is beyond religion. Each religion talks

of its Gods, its own scriptures. It discusses its own ways to fruition of both material and spiritual worlds. But the world is now questioning this notion. The notion of having numerous Gods and pathways. The world is wondering about rituals, superstitions or to be precise, the dogmas of religions.

Our roots go as deep as our families do. That's where we start formulating the fundamental beliefs, be it a 'named' God, or a set of principles. We start with worshipping the one we are guided to follow. But ultimately, we must realize that God is not the one upon whom the entirety of a religion is built. God is nameless, formless, birthless, and deathless. The Supreme immortal power doesn't need the address of a religion or religions to prove its validity. This is where spirituality comes into play.



Spirituality is the new path that incorporates the spirit of true achievement and the tranquility of fulfillment. Spirituality is the science of spirit. It's the science of enlightenment which is free of religious labels. Spirituality is the way to graduate from this universe and attain the

Supreme Immortal Power we call God.

WHY RELIGION?

You might find it difficult to find God without religion. But you can't always rely on religion to find the supreme essence of God. Just like in the game of pole vault, even

though you need the pole to cross the bar, you don't always hold onto it. At that perfect moment of anticipation, you let go of the pole. So also, when you hold onto religion, you must make sure it's only aid to achieve the ultimate comfort of your belief. You must let go of su-

perficial practices, rituals, and superstitions just as you would let go of the pole in calculated anticipation.

GOD OR DIVINE ENERGY

God is in me. God is in every creation. From butterflies to giant trees, from seas to mountains, God is the supreme energy that we rely upon. God is energy. Even modern science acknowledges that the whole world is a manifestation of energy. But scientists never say that it's 'GOD'. Quantum Physics, the branch of science that deals with Wave-Particle Duality, states that every molecule of matter is made up of energy. Simply translated, it means that the whole world is a manifestation of divine energy.

SPIRITUALITY: THE PATHWAY TO PEACE

Our Soul gives us life. It

“God is the supreme energy that we rely upon. God is energy. Even modern science acknowledges that the whole world is a manifestation of energy.”

gives you and me the power. We know our bodies won't last forever. The spark of life is the spirit, the Atman. We are unaware of the complexities of birth and death. Our body is formed over 9 months in the womb of our mother. Even the formation of our mortal bodies is part of spirituality. The lore of reli-

gion was compatible with the lives lived long ago. Spirituality, the science of the spirit is replacing the shallow definitions given by religions and is suited to the contemporary age as people have started questioning the reliability of religion. Spirituality is the way and the buzzword in this modern world. Spirituality is the way to attain peace, the ultimate way to realize our purpose.

Spirituality is the way to self-realization. And to realize who or what God is, God-realization. It will not be long before religion gives way to spirituality. Religion is losing ground because people are asking intelligent questions. Spirituality answers these questions. The way to realize God is not through religion but spirituality.

Mindful Exam Prep: Strategies for Success



DR. ARCHIKA SUDHANSHU

EXAMS - Just the mention of the word can bring on a surge of anxiety, stress, late nights, and a desperate dash to stuff as much info as possible into your brain. But what if there was a better way, one that values not only academic achievement, but also your mental and emotional health? Meet mindful exam prep.

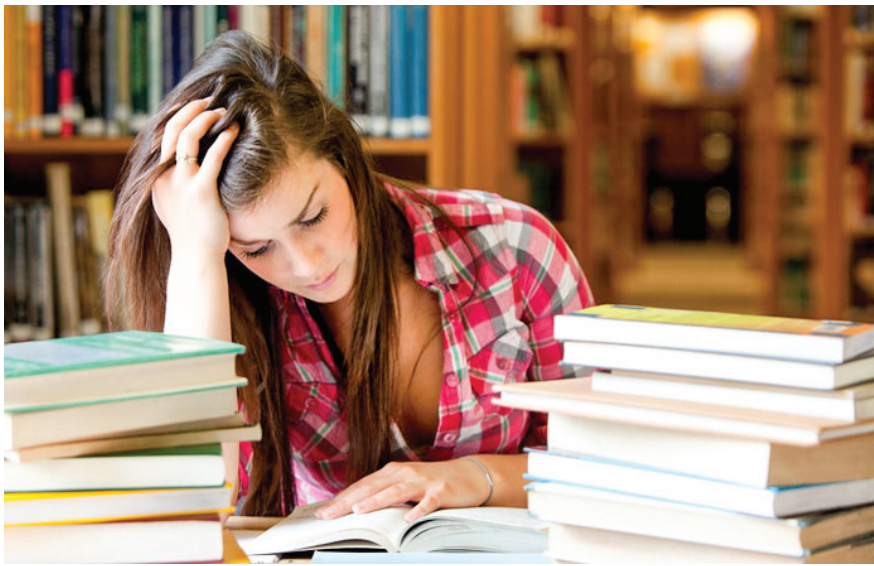
Students with busy college life and high academic stress, teaching mindfulness and self-care techniques are no longer a luxury, but a necessity. Using the integration of these strategies, students can enhance concentration,

enhance productivity, and get through exam time with more peace of mind and assurance.

THE POWER OF MINDFULNESS IN EXAM PREPARATION

Mindfulness is all about paying attention to the present moment without judgment. During exam prep, this translates to:

- Improved Concentration: Mindfulness practices like deep breathing or meditation can help the mind to remain in the moment and minimize distractions. This is essential for information absorption and subsequent retention.
- Less Anxiety: Exam anxiety can be paralyzing. By practicing mindfulness, students can prevent themselves from losing control of their fear and learn to accept and manage worrying thoughts and feelings.
- Enhanced Memory and Recall: When the mind is relaxed and concentrated, it's more effective at processing and recalling in-



formation. Mindfulness can help optimize cognitive performance, leading to improved memory and recall during exams.- Greater Self-Awareness: Mindful students become increasingly aware of their own strengths - study skills, weaknesses - stress points, and learning preferences. Recognizing this about themselves, they are able to modify study plans to be most effective.

PRACTICAL MINDFULNESS STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS:

- Breath Awareness: Let students take periodic breaks to become aware of their breath. A few minutes of slow, deliberate breathing can relax the nervous system and clear the mind.
- Body Scan Meditation: This method includes scanning the body systematically for sensations, leading to relaxation and elimination of

- physical tension.
- Mindful Study Sessions: Educate students to engage in study sessions with concentrated attention, avoiding distractions and remaining in the present with the study material.
- Mindful Movement: Add gentle movement, like stretching or yoga, to study breaks to release physical tension and enhance circulation.
- Gratitude Practice: Ask

students to take a few minutes daily to think about something they are thankful for. This can help them shift their minds from negative thoughts towards positive ones.

SELF-CARE: AN ESSENTIAL PART OF SUCCESS IN EXAMS

- Mindfulness is not enough. Self-care is just as essential in ensuring well-being during stressful times. These are:
- Getting Enough Sleep: Sleep is essential for maximum brain and emotional functioning. Encourage students to get on a regular sleep schedule and enjoy a calming bedtime routine.
- Fueling the Body: Eating well provides the energy and nutrients the brain needs to be at its best. Encourage students to eat healthy meals and drink a lot of water.
- Taking Breaks: Regular breaks are essential in preventing burnout. Ask students to take a break from studying and engage in something they enjoy.

- Seeking Help: Make students to ask for help from friends, family members, or counselors whenever they need it.
- Time Management: Teach students to adopt effective time management skills and avoid procrastination and unnecessary last-minute tensions.
- Setting Realistic Expectations: Students need to be taught to set realistic expectations, and understand that no one is perfect.

CREATING MINDFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

- Schools and educators can do much more than preparing students for exams. There is a lot that can contribute toward a culture of mindful exam preparation.
- Infusing Mindfulness into the Curriculum: Mindfulness practices should be included in students' daily routines such as morning meditation, breathwork, or mindful breathing breaks.
- Providing Resources and

Workshops: Conduct workshops or provide resources on stress management, self-care, and mindfulness techniques.

- Creating a Supportive and Non-Judgmental Environment: Develop a learning environment in which students feel comfortable raising their concerns and seeking help.
- Encourage Discussion and Openness Surrounding Mental Health: Engage in open discussions of mental health and well-being, minimizing stigma and maximizing help-seeking.

By giving students the skills to cope with stress, improve concentration, and put well-being first will help them not only in aching their examinations but also lead a happy and contented life.

Mindful exam preparation is not just about getting grades, it's about building resilience, self-awareness, and a positive relationship with learning.

The author is Spiritual & Meditation Guru.

Krishna and the Kadamba Tree

TDG NETWORK

The captivating Manipuri dance tradition of Raas Leela takes center stage in Krishna and the Kadamba Tree, a photography exhibition by Sanjay Das, curated by Ina Puri. Scheduled from March 25 to 30, 2025, at Museo Camera, Gurugram, the exhibition offers a visual celebration of Radha and Krishna's divine love, depicted through graceful dance performances.

The Raas Leela, introduced in 1779 by Meitei monarch Ningthou Ching-Thang Khomba (Rajarshi Bhagya Chandra), portrays the spiritual bond between Krishna, Radha, and the gopis, who leave behind worldly ties in their devotion. This classical dance form follows seasonal rhythms, with variations like Basanta Raas, performed on a spring full moon, and Maha Raas, staged during winter. Each performance is steeped in devotion, expressed through intricate mudras, exquisite costumes, and symbolic nar-



Sanjay Das

ratives.

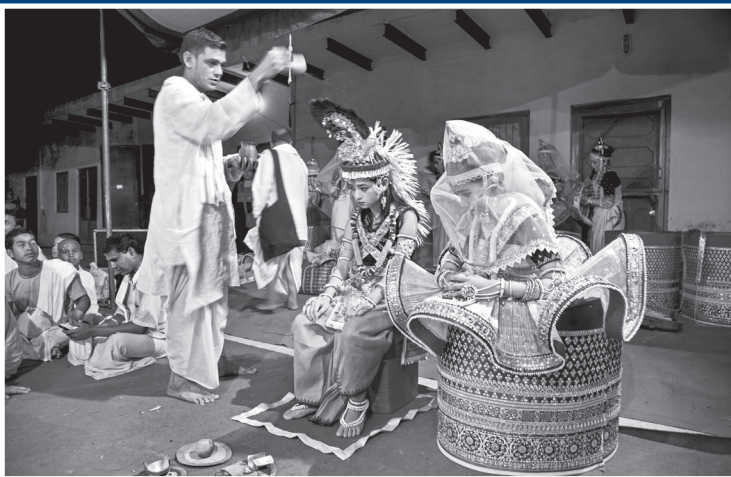
Sanjay Das's journey into documenting Raas Leela began when he was enchanted by the dance's uniqueness and rich cultural symbolism. His photographs, captured over the years, highlight the beauty of the dancers' indigenous costumes and soulful expressions, immersing viewers in the ethereal atmosphere of the medieval temple courtyard of Radhakund near Vrindavan, where Basant Raas is traditionally performed.

Through his lens, Das captures Radha, Krishna, and the gopis, who embody key

figures like Lalita, Vishakha, and Champaklata. His dedication to understanding this art form lends depth and authenticity to his work. Curator Ina Puri describes the exhibition as an immersive experience that reflects Das's passion and research, inviting audiences to discover the timeless beauty of the Raas Leela tradition.

Exhibition by Sanjay Das
Curated by: Ina Puri
Date: 25th March - 30th March 2025
Venue: Museo Camera, Gurugram

Museum Timings: 11 am - 7 pm



DELHI CAPITALS EDGE PAST LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS IN A THRILLING LAST-WICKET VICTORY

AGENCIES
VISAKHAPATNAM

Ashutosh Sharma's late heroics earned Delhi Capitals a thrilling one-wicket win against Lucknow Super Giants in their Indian Premier League season opener here on Monday.

Chasing 210, Delhi Capitals slipped to 7/3 in the second over and limped to 116 for six after 13 overs, but Ashutosh's stunning knock - 66 off 31 balls with five sixes and as many fours delivered his side a sensational win from the jaws of defeat.

Even as wickets fell regularly towards the end, Ashutosh kept his composure and executed stunning bottom-handed strokes to finish the job for his side and give Delhi Capitals a stunning start to their season.



In a contest where fortunes swung from one side to another, DC emerged on top riding on the calm and composed knock from Ashutosh, who hit the winning runs as DC made 211/9 in 19.3 overs.

There was a late twist

in the tale with six runs needed off the final over and one wicket left, LSG skipper Rishabh Pant missed a stumping on the first ball from Shahbaz Ahmed which would have given his side the win but it wasn't meant to be.

LSG, who put on a below-par total on a placid surface here after scoring 209/8, made early inroads to shock Delhi's chase.

A recovery looked largely difficult as Delhi Capitals largely appeared more in damage-control mode than to make a real crack at the target.

However, the pair of debutant Vipraj Nigam (39 off 15 balls, 5x4s, 2x6s) and Ashutosh threatened to turn the tables on LSG with their 55-run stand off only 22 balls for the seventh wicket, but the second strategic break ended their resistance right upon resumption.

Nigam fell to Digvesh Rathi (2/30) and Ravi Bishnoi (2/53) dismissed Mitchell Starc for a second wicket in quick succession as LSG tightened the screws on a faltering Delhi Capitals.

But despite losing Starc as the eighth wicket, Ashutosh smacked two sixes and a four off Bishnoi in the 18th over and hit 10 more runs off the final two balls of the penultimate over from Prince Yadav, even as DC lost Kuldeep Yadav.

Earlier, Delhi Capitals staged a strong comeback after Nicholas Pooran (75) and Mitchell Marsh's (72) blitz to keep Lucknow Super Giants to a sub-par 209 for 8.

LSG were at least 30 runs short on a good batting track losing seven wickets for 61 runs after being 133 for 1 in the 12th over.

With no assistance off the pitch, LSG openers went off the blocks quickly with Marsh bludgeoning half dozen of sixes and an equal number of boundaries, including a 21-ball fifty for his fastest IPL half-century.

Powerlifters Seema, Kumar break national records

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Powerlifters Seema Rani of Punjab registered a lift of 97 kg in the women's elite 61 kg category while Jhandu Kumar of Bihar lifted 206 kg in the men's elite 72kg category to create two new National Records on the fifth day of the Khelo India Para Games 2025. aSeema told SAI Media, "It feels great to set up the new national record and win gold medals in back-to-back Khelo India Para Games. I thank SAI for making world-class arrangements for athletes because without them it is difficult to focus and compete well."

Hailing from Bihar, Jhandu Kumar started his powerlifting journey in 2014. The 28-year-old para lifter has still not made his debut for India but hopes to change that soon. "Khelo India Para



Games is a great platform for para athletes. I had won silver earlier in 2023. It feels great to have converted the silver to gold now," he said.

The Paralympians ruled the roost at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range as Paris 2024 bronze medallist Mona Agarwal struck gold in the Mixed 50m prone SH1 with a score of 243.3. She had already won two silvers in the women's 10m air rifle standing SH1 and the mixed 10m air rifle prone SH2 categories.

On the penultimate day of para shooting, Rajasthan's Nihal Singh, who also qualified for Paris Paralympics, was dominant in the mixed 25m pistol SH1 event, retaining his gold from the first edition of the Khelo India Para Games held in December 2023.

At the time of writing, 160 medals had been decided with Haryana leading the standings with 29 golds. Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan followed with 24 and 22 gold medals, respectively.

Ban on Indian kabaddi federation will be lifted

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

In a respite for Indian kabaddi players, the international governing body of the sport is set to lift suspension imposed on the national federation next month after the court-appointed administrator handed over the charge to the 'elected body'. International Kabaddi Federation (IKF) President Vinod Kumar Tiwari told PTI that the ban will be lifted after an executive council meeting scheduled next month. The IKF had banned the Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India (AKFI) in July last year after the 'elected body' was

not allowed to take charge. "The court-appointed administrator has handed over the charge to the AKFI office bearers who were elected in December 2023. The AKFI office bearers have started functioning from AKFI office at JLN Stadium," Tiwari said in an interview.

"So, the ban on AKFI will be lifted. We will have our executive board meeting (of the IKF) next month and the ban will be officially lifted."

In a February 6 order, the Supreme Court had asked Justice (Retd.) S P Garg, the AKFI administrator, to hand over control of the federation to the office bearers

elected in December 2023.

The SC division bench had, however, clarified that it hadn't recognised the elected body of the federation yet, but was passing the order to allow participation of Indian players in the senior Asian Kabaddi Championship-2025 scheduled in Iran from February 20 to 25.

The top court passed the order after two national Kabaddi players -- Priyanka and Pooja -- sought direction to AKFI for sending them to Asian Kabaddi Championship in Iran.

Tiwari said the IKF had already allowed the Indian players' participation in the Asian Championships.

BCCI announces 2024-25 Women's contracts: Harmanpreet, Deepti, Smriti in Grade A

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced the annual player contracts for India's women's cricket team for the 2024-25 season on Monday.

All-format captain Harmanpreet Kaur, along with prominent batter Smriti Mandhana and elegant all-rounder Deepti Sharma have been placed in Grade A, owing to their steady performances throughout the years, as per ICC's official website.

Fast bowler Renuka Thakur, batter Jemimah Rodrigues, wicketkeeper-batter Richa Ghosh, and opener Shafali Verma have been placed in the 'Grade B' category. Shafali has maintained her position even after being removed from the white-ball squad due to poor performances in the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 in the UAE.

Yastika Bhatia, Radha Yadav, Shreyanka Patil, Titas Sadhu, Arundhati Reddy, Amanjot Kaur, Uma Chetry, Sneha Rana, and Pooja Vastrakar have been placed in the



'Grade C'. India will face Sri Lanka and South Africa in an ODI tri-nation series in Sri Lanka, which is sched-

uled to begin on 27 April. The ICC Women's Championship 2022-25 second-place finishers are also preparing

for the ICC Women's World Cup 2025, which is due to take place on home ground later in the year.

Rawat, Bhowmick win U-15 titles at Dream Sports Championship

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Dream Sports Championship U-15 Table Tennis saw an intense final clash in the boys category with Chandigarh's Sahil Rawat defeating Jammu and Kashmir's (J-K) Ritvik Gupta in a seven-set thriller.

After losing the first set, the 15-year-old came back strong to win the match 6-11, 11-7, 6-11, 11-5, 6-11, 11-9, 11-5, a release said.

In the girls category, which was the final match and main event of the evening, Mumbai's Divyanshi Bhowmick picked a dominating 11-5, 11-6, 11-8, 11-7 win over West Bengal's Shreya Dhar to claim the title.

Olympians Sharath Kamal and Sreeja Akula presented the tournament winners with a Rs 1 lakh cash prize as a reward for their remarkable achievements. The runners-up also received an Rs. 50,000 cash prize.



"I feel elated to win the cash prize. Such incentives will help us athletes secure our future. The tournament was a fantastic opportunity for us youngsters," Sahil Rawat said, according to DSC press release.

Divyanshi, who is India's no. 1 in the Girls U-15 category, said the environment and arrangements at Dream Sports Championship were quite amazing and entertaining.

"It was also encouraging to hear stories from Sharath Sir and Sreeja Ma'am, as they both have played for many years," she said.

Sanjay Kumar Singh elected as United World Wrestling-Asia member

AGENCIES
AMMAN

The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) has announced that its President, Sanjay Kumar Singh, has been elected as a Bureau Member of United World Wrestling (UWW)-Asia. The election took place during the UWW-Asia General Assembly in Amman, Jordan, on Monday, according to a press release from United World Wrestling.

Sanjay Kumar Singh secured an impressive 22 votes out of 38, demonstrating strong support from the Asian wrestling community. His election to this prestigious position marks a significant achievement for Indian wrestling, further strengthening the country's presence on the international wrestling stage.

Expressing his gratitude, Sanjay Kumar Singh said, as quoted in the United World Wrestling press release, "I am deeply hon-



oured to be elected as a Bureau Member of UWW-Asia. This is not just a personal milestone but a testament to the growth and recognition of Indian wrestling at the global level. I look forward to working closely with UWW-Asia to promote and develop the sport across the continent."

The Executive Members of the Wrestling Federation of India [WFI] extend their heartfelt congratulations to Sanjay Kumar Singh, and I wish him great success in his new role. His election is expected to bring new opportunities for Indian

wrestlers and contribute to the advancement of the sport across Asia.

Earlier, on March 11, the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports lifted the suspension on the Wrestling Federation of India, restoring its recognition as a National Sports Federation (NSF) for wrestling.

The Sports Ministry suspended the WFI after its newly elected president, Sanjay Kumar Singh, announced plans to hold the U-15 and U-20 national championships in Nandini Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, in December 2023.

Day 5 of National Women's Hockey League: 5 states claim victory

AGENCIES
RANCHI

On Day 5 of the final phase of the National Women's Hockey League 2024-2025, the Hockey Association of Odisha, Hockey Mizoram, Hockey Maharashtra and Hockey Jharkhand registered wins in their respective matches here at the Marang Gomke Jaipal Singh Astro Turf Hockey Stadium in Ranchi, Jharkhand.

In the first match, the Hockey Association of Odisha defeated Hockey Haryana 2-0 in Pool A. Prativa Kindo (9') and Shibani Lugun (59') scored for their team to take the game away from table toppers Hockey Haryana. The Hockey Association has now moved to the second spot in the pool standings.

In the other match, Hockey Mizoram defeated Hockey Madhya Pradesh 2-1 in Pool A. Lalitachhungi (42') and Manglawmsang (58') scored for Hockey Mizoram, whereas, on the other hand, Sunee-ta Kumari (54') scored the consolation goal for Hockey



Madhya Pradesh. With this win, Hockey Mizoram is now in the third position in the pool standings, whereas Hockey Madhya Pradesh slipped to fifth position.

In the third match, Hockey Maharashtra defeated Hockey Bengal 4-2 in Pool A to secure its first win in the tournament. Sanika Chandrakant Mane (18'), Tanushree Dinesh Kadu (29'), Nikku Gurjar (54') and Khushi (56') scored for Hockey Maharashtra in the second and fourth quarters of the game. In response, Jamuna Ekka (3') opened an account for Hockey Bengal, joined by captain Subila Tirkey (48'), who also scored one goal.

Hockey Maharashtra is in the sixth position, whereas Hockey Bengal is yet to open its account in the pool standings.

In the last match today, Hockey Jharkhand defeated Manipur Hockey 8-0 in Pool A, in a high-scoring thriller. Both Sangita Kumari (2', 21', 48') and Sweetie Dungdung (20', 35', 51') scored a hat-trick for Hockey Jharkhand. Pinki Kumari (23', 37') also scored a brace to take the game further away from Manipur Hockey.

Hockey Jharkhand now holds the fourth position in the pool standings, whereas Manipur Hockey is in seventh place, with one win in the tournament.

ANIL CHAUDHARY ON CRICKET PREDICTA

'CSK crowd is irritating for umpires!'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Chennai Super Kings kicked off their IPL 2025 campaign in style, securing a thrilling four-wicket victory over Mumbai Indians in a high-intensity clash at the MA Chidambaram Stadium. The stadium was packed with passionate CSK supporters, creating an electric atmosphere as the five-time champions took on their biggest rivals.

Mumbai Indians, batting first, posted a modest total of 155/9 in 20 overs. Despite moments of resilience from MI's middle order, CSK's disci-



plined bowling attack ensured that the opposition never gained full control of the game.

In response, Chennai Super Kings chased down the target in 19.1 overs, finishing at 158/6. Their experienced batters held their nerve, steering the team to victory with just five balls to spare. Speaking on the Cricket Predicta show with cricket scholar Sunil Yash Kalra, former international umpire Anil Chaudhary shared his unique perspective on officiating CSK matches. He remarked, "Officiating a CSK match can be challenging for umpires. The crowd noise is so intense that it affects the nerves

connecting the brain to the ears, making communication difficult."

His statement underscores the unmatched passion of CSK fans, whose deafening cheers create an electrifying—and sometimes overwhelming—experience for players and officials alike. With a winning start to IPL 2025, Chennai Super Kings will look to carry forward their momentum in the upcoming matches. Their resilience and ability to handle pressure were on full display in this opening clash, setting the stage for what promises to be another memorable season for the Yellow Army.