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FALSE NARRATIVE CREATED OVER GODHRA RIOTS: PM

“ Courts investigated the matter thoroughly and found us completely innocent. Those who were truly responsible have faced justice from the courts. —PM Modi

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Interacting with podcaster Lex Fridman, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday spoke about the Godhra incident, where people were burned alive, calling it “a tragedy of unimaginable magnitude”. He said that the Godhra train burning incident, where 59 people died, occurred when he was seated in the Gujarat assembly for the budget session.

“On February 27, 2002, we were seated in the Assembly for the budget session. That same day, it had been just three days since I'd become a state representative when suddenly, the horrific Godhra incident occurred. It was a tragedy of unimaginable magnitude. People were burned alive. Of course, this

was tragic for everyone. Everyone prefers peace,” PM Modi said.

He said the discourse around the 2002 post-Godhra riots in Gujarat was an attempt to create a false narrative and his political opponents in power at the Centre wanted him to be punished but the courts cleared his name.

PM Modi said the perception that the 2002 riots were the biggest riots ever in Gujarat was an attempt to push misinformation.

“If you review the data from before 2002, you will see that Gujarat faced frequent riots. Curfews were constantly being imposed somewhere. Communal violence would erupt over trivial issues such as kite flying contests or even bicycle collisions,” Modi said.

The Prime Minister said

the riots in Gujarat in 1969 lasted for more than six months and that was an era when he was nowhere on the political horizon.

Modi said the Godhra train burning incident took place barely three days after he was elected as a legislator of the Gujarat Assembly.

“It was a tragedy of unimaginable magnitude, people were burned alive. You can imagine, against the backdrop of incidents like the Kandahar hijacking, the attack on Parliament, or even 9/11, and then to have so many people killed and burned alive, you can imagine how tense and volatile the situation was,” he said.

“Nothing should happen, we also wish so. Everyone would wish there should be peace,” the prime minister said during the podcast



Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks during a podcast with renowned computer scientist and podcaster Lex Fridman, in New Delhi on Sunday. (ANI Photo)

PM Modi emphasised that he embraced every phase of life with gratitude and never viewed poverty as a struggle.

PM Modi learned from Vivekananda that true fulfillment comes not from personal achievements but from selfless service to others.

Mahatma Gandhi is the greatest leader of not just 20th century but also that of the 21st century and upcoming centuries as well.

‘Pakistan has waged a proxy war against us’

NEW DELHI: In a poignant and introspective interaction with renowned podcaster Lex Fridman Prime Minister Narendra Modi reflected on the tumultuous relationship between India and Pakistan. PM Modi reflected on the painful history between the two nations, citing the partition of the subcontinent and the subsequent bloodshed. He expressed his disappointment that Pakistan chose not to foster a harmonious coexistence, instead waging a proxy war against India. When Fridman asked PM Modi to share his vision for a future where the two nations could coexist in peace and harmony, PM Modi's response was a heartfelt and sombre account of the partition of the subcontinent... **FULL STORY P6**

‘I learned essence, values of life from RSS’

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke about his long association with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and said that he was fortunate to have learned the essence and values of life from an esteemed organisation like the RSS. He further said, “It always felt nice to attend RSS gatherings as a child. I always had one aim in mind, to be of use to the country. This is what ‘Sangh’ (RSS) taught me. RSS completes 100 years this year. There is no bigger ‘Swayamsevi Sangh’ in the world than the RSS... Understanding the RSS is not an easy task; one needs to understand its functioning....

Doval holds talks with Gabbard on India-US ties

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval held a meeting with Tulsi Gabbard, who is America's Director of National Intelligence here in New Delhi on Sunday.

According to sources, Tulsi Gabbard met NSA Doval earlier this evening in New

LeT terrorist behind Rajouri attack shot dead in Pak

AGENCIES
ISLAMABAD

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist Abu Qatal, charged by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in connection with the January 2023 Rajouri attacks, has been shot dead in Pakistan after an assailant opened fire on his vehicle on the Mangla-Jhelum Road, local media reported on Sunday.

An armed guard of Qatal was also killed in the



attack that took place on Saturday night, according to a report in Islamabad-based outlet The News International.

At the time of the attack,

Abu Qatal, whose real name is Zia ur Rehman, was travelling in his black jeep, The News International reported. Both Qatal and his armed guard died on the spot.

Following the attack, the suspected assailant was apprehended, The News International reported, citing sources. However, there has been no official confirmation of the arrest.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) had

AGENCIES
KARACHI

Five people, including three Frontier Corps (FC) personnel, were killed and 30 injured after a paramilitary convoy was attacked by suspected Baloch militants on a highway in Noshki district of restive Balochistan of Pakistan on Sunday.

The attack, in which three terrorists died, was claimed by the banned Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), which hijacked the passenger train Jaffar Express last week.

A police official said evi-



Soldiers stand near the wrecked remains of a bus after separatist militants drove a vehicle laden with explosives into a paramilitary convoy which killed at least five, in Noshki on Sunday.

dence from the site of the attack suggested that a suicide attacker rammed an explosive-laden vehicle

into the FC convoy on the Noshki-Dalbandin National Highway.

Three terrorists were

killed after the suicide bomber first rammed his motorcycle into the FC convoy. “After the blast, some other terrorists opened fire on the FC personnel but in the retaliatory firing, two of them were killed. Two civilians and three soldiers also died,” the police official said.

Noshki Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Hashim Momand said the blast was of high intensity, and injured at least 30 paramilitary soldiers, who have been moved to a hospital for treatment.

Chief of the local police station Zafarullah Sumalani put

Haryana takes down songs promoting gun culture

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

The Haryana government has taken a strict action against songs promoting gun-culture and deleted some songs on social media platforms, a move that has evoked a sharp response from singer Masoom Sharma who has expressed his disappointment over the de-

cision accusing the government of adopting a selective approach.

As per the information several songs of renowned singer Masoom Sharma, a resident of Julana in Jind district, have been removed from YouTube as songs were reportedly promoting gun culture and hooliganism.

Sharma alleged, “Three of my songs Tuition Bad-

mashi Ka,’ ‘60 Mukadme,’ and ‘Khatola’ have been removed from YouTube. If the government does not want such songs to be made, I am with them. But there should be no discrimination in this action.”

“Why are only my songs being targeted? Thousands of songs created on similar theme are still available on

Govt announces one-time settlement scheme for farmers' loan relief

ARVIND PALAWAT
JAIPUR

In a significant move, Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma has approved a one-time settlement (OTS) scheme for loans taken from land development banks. This decision, announced during the budget reply, is expected to provide major relief to farmers and small entrepreneurs while also strengthening the financial health of land development banks facing economic difficulties.

The cooperative land development banks of Rajasthan have played a crucial role in supporting agricultural and economic growth by offering long-term loans to farmers and small entrepreneurs. However, in recent years, natural disasters have impacted the repayment capabilities of many farmers, leading to overdue loans totalling approximately Rs 760 crores. To address this issue, the Chief Minister has intro-



duced the OTS scheme, allocating Rs 200 crores to facilitate the recovery of these loans and improve the banks' financial stability. **100% INTEREST RELIEF FOR FARMERS** Minister of State of Cooperative and Civil Aviation Gautam Dak emphasised that the government remains committed to protecting farmers from financial distress. As part of the ‘Suraj Sankalp’ commitment, the government had already suspended the auction process initiated by land development banks for loan recovery. Now, under the new

A host of world leaders to attend Raisina Dialogue

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Global leaders from across the world are flying into New Delhi to participate in the Raisina Dialogue 2025 for key geopolitics conference.

On Sunday, Foreign Minister of Slovenia, Tanja Fajon, Deputy Prime Minister of Luxembourg, Xavier Bettel, and Peru's Foreign Minister, Elmer Schialer Salcedo and the former President of Maldives, Mohamed Nashed landed here.

Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson, Randhir Jaiswal wrote in a post on X, “More arrivals for @RaisinaDialogue2025! Welcome to India, DPM Xavier Bettel of Luxembourg & FM Tanja Fajon of Slovenia.”

He also mentioned that the former President of Maldives, Mohamed Nashed and Peru's Foreign Minister, Elmer Schialer Salcedo arrived in New Delhi to participate in the conference.



India, New Zealand start talks on Free Trade Agreement

NEW DELHI: India and New Zealand have launched negotiations for a “comprehensive and mutually beneficial” Free Trade Agreement (FTA), the Union commerce ministry said in a statement Sunday, minutes after the Kiwi Prime Minister Christopher Luxon landed in New Delhi for a five-day official visit. “With bilateral trade continuing to grow steadily, surpassing Rs 1 billion during April-January 2025, the FTA negotiations aim to unlock new avenues for businesses and consumers, fostering mutual growth and prosperity of our nations, Union Minister Piyush Goyal said in a post on X.

“Greetings to our esteemed guests arriving for @RaisinaDialogue2025! FM Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa of

Ghana, FM Elmer Schialer Salcedo of Peru & Former President of the Republic



Just after completing the docking, Crew-10 received a welcome from an orbital sunrise. **NASA**

BJP LEADERS AND WORKERS CELEBRATE HOLI AT CM'S RESIDENCE

BJP leaders and workers gathered at Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma's residence to celebrate Fagotsav.

TDG NETWORK
JAIPUR

Electing representatives and workers of the Bharatiya Janata Party from across the state gathered at the Chief Minister's residence on Sunday to meet Bhajan Lal Sharma and join in the celebrations of the Holi festival.

Addressing the gathering at the Fagotsav event at his residence, the Chief Minister said, "Holi is a festival of colours, and it fills our lives with the colours of joy. This festival enhances our mutual harmony and love."

Local artists also presented beautiful renditions of Holi songs, including Dharti Dhoran Ri... Mere Desh Ki Dharti. The Chief Minister applied tilak (sandalwood paste) to all the visitors, greeted them warmly, and joined in the spirit of the Holi celebration.

A DAY FULL OF GOOD WISHES

Representatives and party workers from various districts of the state, including Jaisalmer, Barmar, Jodhpur, Dungarpur, Banswara, Ra-



- BJP leaders and workers gathered at CM Bhajan Lal Sharma's residence for Holi celebrations.
- The Chief Minister emphasised Holi's role in promoting harmony and love during the festival.
- Farmers and BJP officials appreciated the government's welfare initiatives for farmers during the event.

jsamand, Bharatpur, Kota, Baran, etc., arrived at the Chief Minister's residence to offer their Holi greetings. In front of the stage, a group of Shekhawati artists performed with dhols and changes, creating a joyful atmosphere. Famous singer of Rajasthan, Prakash Mali, also captivated everyone with his performance.

In his address, Sharma said, "The state government is working for the welfare of youth, women, workers, and farmers."

He also mentioned, "Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is progressing towards becoming a developed nation. Similarly, our government is working with

full commitment towards a developed Rajasthan."

FARMERS APPRECIATE CM'S VISION

During the event, hundreds of farmers from Ganganagar, Hanumangarh, Bikaner, and Phalodi met with Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma and thanked

him for the announcements made in the previous and current year's budget for the welfare of farmers in the canal irrigation areas. Former Minister Surendra Pal Singh TTI also expressed gratitude to the Chief Minister for his progressive vision towards farmers.

Present at the event were BJP State General Secretary Madan Rathore, Deputy Chief Minister Prem Chand Bairwa, Water Resources Minister Suresh Singh Rawat, Rajya Sabha MP Ghanshyam Tiwari, Rajendra Gehlot, Former State President Arun Chaturvedi, Ashok Parnami, Satish Poonia, Former Leader of Opposition Rajendra Rathore, Chairman of the Farmers Commission CR Chaudhary, BJP State General Secretary Shrawan Bagdi, State Vice President Mukesh Dadhich, State Ministers Bhupendra Saini, Ajit Mandan, State Spokesperson Lakshmi Kant Bhardwaj, along with several MPs, MLAs, elected representatives, state and district office-bearers, and a large number of party workers from across the state.

Devnani presents 'One Year of Innovations' book to Bagade

TDG NETWORK
JAIPUR

Rajasthan Assembly Speaker Vasudev Devnani and Rajya Sabha MP Madan Rathore met Governor Haribhau Bagade at the Raj Bhavan. On this occasion, Devnani presented the Governor a copy of the book "One Year of Innovations" based on the innovations made in the Assembly in the last one year. He told the Governor that along with giving a new look to the working system in the Rajasthan assembly, a diary and calendar have been published in accordance with Sanatan culture.

Bagde congratulated Devnani for the publication and praised the innovations made by the Assem-



bly Speaker. He noted that the steps taken to improve the working system of the assembly, including conducting online sessions, ensuring timely responses to questions, organising all-party meetings, and enhancing the effective functioning of the House, are

inspirational for other assemblies.

Rathore also commended the innovations introduced by Devnani, calling them historic. He added that the Rajasthan assembly is on its way to becoming the best among the country's legislative bodies.

Madan Rathore criticises Karnataka govt, emphasises UCC and farmer welfare

TDG NETWORK
JAIPUR

BJP State President Madan Rathore criticised the Karnataka Congress government for promoting appeasement politics, claiming that Congress has historically divided society for vote-bank politics. Speaking at a press conference, Rathore emphasised the need for a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) across the country to ensure equality and equal opportunities for all citizens. He further stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas" should inspire the opposition to work toward national unity.

Rathore also addressed the farmer community, acknowledging the historic



measures announced in both the central and state budgets to improve the agricultural sector. He expressed confidence that these initiatives would enhance the economic condition of farmers, ensuring their prosperity. Rathore reiterated that the strength of any organisation lies in the commitment and dedication of its workers, and the BJP prioritises addressing the concerns of its workers.

Gehlot urges expansion of Ayushman Bharat Yojana for universal health coverage

TDG NETWORK
JAIPUR

Former Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot took to social media to question the central and state governments on the Ayushman Bharat Yojana, stating that the scheme fails to provide insurance coverage to even 50% of the population. He emphasised that the need of the hour is universal health coverage to ensure financial protection for all citizens.

Gehlot praised the previous Congress government's efforts in Rajasthan, highlighting the implementation



of the Chiranjeevi Yojana, which provided insurance coverage of Rs 25 lakhs to all residents of the state. He stated that this scheme ensured

sufficient coverage for critical illnesses such as cancer, kidney, liver, and heart diseases, as well as organ transplants. He further pointed

out that out-of-pocket medical expenses are rising continuously, making healthcare unaffordable for many. These expenses are unpredictable and can cause severe financial distress to families. Gehlot urged the central government to expand the Ayushman Bharat Yojana to cover all citizens, similar to the Chiranjeevi Yojana in Rajasthan. He stressed that such a move would provide significant relief to people struggling with high medical costs and ensure better healthcare access for the entire population.

Govt issues notification to reduce VAT on CNG and PNG

TDG NETWORK
JAIPUR

The Rajasthan government has issued a notification to reduce the VAT rate on CNG and PNG following the approval of Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma. The new rate will be effective from Monday, March 17. This reduction aims to benefit both the common people and investors. During the discussion on the Finance and Appropriation Bill on March 12, Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma had announced a cut in VAT on CNG and PNG from 10% to 7.5%.

Bhajan Lal Sharma and Bhagirath Chaudhary meet Haribhau Bagade at Raj Bhavan

TDG NETWORK
JAIPUR

Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma met Governor Haribhau Bagade at Raj Bhavan on Sunday. During the meeting, they discussed various issues related to the state's development. The visit was a courtesy call, during which the Chief Minister and the Governor exchanged views on key governance and progress matters.

The meeting highlighted the government's commitment to Rajasthan's development and strengthening coordination between the state administration and the Governor's office.

Additionally, Union Min-



ister of State for Agriculture Bhagirath Chaudhary met Bagade at Raj Bhavan on Sunday. This was a cour-

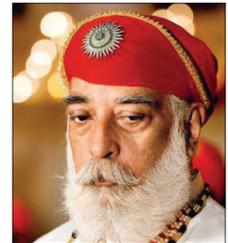
tesy call, during which they discussed various topics related to organic farming and agricultural development.

Former royal family member of Mewar passes away at 80

TDG NETWORK
UDAIPUR

Arvind Singh Mewar, a senior member of the former royal family of Mewar and a descendant of Maharana Pratap, passed away at the age of 80. He had been unwell for a long time and was undergoing treatment at Shambhu Niwas in City Palace, Udaipur. His demise has left the Mewar region and the entire country in mourning.

Arvind Singh Mewar was the younger son of Maharana Bhagwat Singh Mewar and Sushila Kumari Mewar. His elder brother, Mahendra Singh Mewar, had passed away on November 10, 2024. Arvind Singh Mewar completed his schooling at Mayo College, Ajmer, and later pursued an Arts degree from Maharana Bhupal College, Udaipur. He further studied Hotel Management at St Albans Metropolitan College in the UK. The last rites of Arvind Singh Me-



war will be performed on Monday. His final journey will begin at 11:00 am from Shambhu Niwas, passing through Badi Pol, Jagdish Chowk, Ghantaghar, Bada Bazar, and Delhi Gate, before reaching Mahasatiyan for the last rites. This information was shared in a condolence message from City Palace.

During his lifetime, Arvind Singh Mewar played a significant role in managing the properties of the former royal family. His father, Maharana Bhagwat Singh, had leased several royal properties between 1963 and 1983. This decision led to a legal dispute between him and

his elder son, Mahendra Singh Mewar, who challenged the decision in court.

Several political leaders have expressed grief over his passing. Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma, Congress leader Sachin Pilot, Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, former Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, and Congress state president Govind Singh Dotasra shared their condolences on social media. Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma described Arvind Singh Mewar as a guardian of Mewar's glorious heritage, stating that his personality and character will continue to inspire future generations. Sachin Pilot and Gajendra Singh Shekhawat also paid tribute, expressing their deep sorrow and praying for the strength of the bereaved family. The passing of Arvind Singh Mewar marks the end of an era for Mewar, leaving a significant void in the region's royal legacy.

Jaipur Military Station unveils 108-ft high mast National Flag

TDG NETWORK
JAIPUR

A high mast National Flag of 108 feet was inaugurated at Jaipur Military Station, marking a significant milestone for the Sapta Shakti Command. The flag was unfurled by MP and Founder of the Flag Foundation of India, Naveen Jindal, along with Lt Gen Manjinder Singh, Army Commander, Sapta Shakti Command. The ceremony was attended by esteemed guests, including Barinderjit Kaur, Regional President AWWA, as well as veterans, school students, NCC cadets, and military personnel with their families.

Addressing the gathering, Jindal emphasised that the tricolour symbolises the unity, valour, and pride of the nation, representing equality for all. He highlighted that India has the highest number of high mast flags, exceeding 700. The Army Commander also addressed the audience, congratulating all ranks on this significant occasion. He expressed that the Jaipur Military Station



now proudly hosts a national symbol of pride, patriotism, and valour.

He stated that the iconic flag would serve as a great source of inspiration for the people of Jaipur, motivating them towards selfless service and devotion to the nation. He also expressed his gratitude towards Jindal for his dedication to nationalism, environmental sustainability, and public welfare.

The Flag Foundation of India has played a vital role in promoting patriotism and national pride throughout the country. With over 160 monumental flags installed across India, the foundation has been actively working

to foster a sense of unity and national identity. The newly installed high mast National Flag at Jaipur Military Station will stand as a lasting symbol of national pride and unity, serving as a reminder of the sacrifices made by brave soldiers and their families.

As this momentous occasion is celebrated, it honours the spirit of patriotism and national pride that unites the country.

The presence of such an iconic flag at Jaipur Military Station will continue to inspire citizens and military personnel, reinforcing their commitment to the service of the nation.

RPCC meeting focuses on discipline and leadership performance

SHALU SACHDEVA
JAIPUR

The Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee held an important meeting of its extended executive on Sunday in Jaipur, chaired by state Congress president Govind Singh Dotasra. The meeting, which took place at 2 pm, was attended by several senior leaders, including State

In-charge Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa. Leader of Opposition Tikaram Juli, former Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, co-in-charges Ritwik Makwana, Chinraji Rao, and Poonam Paswan. MLAs, MPs, district Congress committee presidents, and other senior Congress leaders also participated.

The meeting focused on key

organisational and contemporary issues. Randhawa took a strong stand against party leaders who are not actively working for Congress and those maintaining ties with other political parties. Speaking to the media, he made it clear that no leader is above the party and that strict action will be taken against those who fail to at-



tend meetings or contribute effectively. He instructed co-in charges and district heads to prepare reports on absent

leaders and submit them to the PCC.

Randhawa reiterated Rahul Gandhi's directive from

Gujarat, stating that those working in collaboration with rival parties will no longer be members of Congress. He emphasised that a report is being prepared on such leaders, and appropriate action will follow. Before the meeting, Randhawa reprimanded leaders who merely carry visiting cards but fail to work for the party.

He stressed that the Congress needs to be strengthened at the grassroots level and that only dedicated workers will be given opportunities in the future. After the executive meeting, the Rajasthan Congress organised a Holi Sneh Milan program, featuring cultural performances by Shekhawati folk artists and poets. Regarding the ongoing

assembly proceedings, Randhawa supported Dotasra's decision not to attend the session. He urged the Assembly Speaker to exercise patience and maintain coordination, citing examples from Parliament where opposition leaders protested in the well but no action was taken against them by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.

MADAN DILAWAR TAKES ACTION ON ANNAPURNA KITCHEN IRREGULARITIES

Madan Dilawar addresses irregularities in Annapurna kitchen and administrative negligence during Holi Milan visit in Kota.

TDG NETWORK
KOTA

Education and Panchayati Raj Minister Madan Dilawar visited various wards of Municipal Corporation Kota South for the second consecutive day as part of the Holi Milan programme. After celebrating Holi Milan in Bhil Basti of Dharampura in Ward No. 8, he reached Banda village, where local villagers informed him about irregularities in the Annapurna kitchen.

The villagers complained that the kitchen operator, Prashant, was charging extra money for food. When the minister confronted Prashant, he admitted that he provided five rotis and

DILAWAR TAKES ACTION

- Madan Dilawar investigated Annapurna kitchen irregularities in Banda village and took action to cancel it.
- The Minister announced Rs 10 lakhs for a community building during Holi Milan event.
- He addressed the water cooler negligence in Banda village, and ordered immediate rectification.



vegetables for Rs 8, but if someone wanted extra, they had to buy another coupon for Rs 10. Upon questioning, Prashant revealed that the kitchen was allotted in the name of Pankaj Vijayvargi-

ya, who had given it to him on lease and instructed him to charge Rs 10 for five rotis.

Dilawar expressed strong displeasure, stating that the government had introduced the Annapurna

kitchen scheme to provide full meals to the poor for Rs 8, while the government covered the remaining Rs 22 of the Rs 30 cost. He accused those involved of exploiting the poor by charging extra.

Taking immediate action, Dilawar called the District Collector of Kota and directed the cancellation of the Annapurna kitchen in Banda village.

During the Holi Milan event, the minister also announced Rs 10 lakhs for the construction of a community building in the village.

Meanwhile, he came across another case of administrative negligence in the village. A water cooler had been installed under his quota, with his photo and that of Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla affixed to it. However, despite being fully set up, the cooler remained non-functional as the officials had forgotten to install a tap.

Devdhara Colony Vikas Samiti holds oath-taking ceremony

TDG NETWORK
JAIPUR

The oath taking ceremony of the newly elected executive of Devdhara Colony Vikas Samiti, Murlipura was concluded. Chief Guest, District Judge Mahavir Prasad Gupta administered the oath to Laxmikant Chaudhary, Umashankar Sharma, Kailash Jangid Patron, Babul Sharma President, Ramchandra Yadav General Secretary, Maliram Chaudhary, Shankar Lal Agarwal Vice President, Ram Avtar Khandelwal, Vinod Kumar Agarwal Treasurer, Govind Sharma, Prahlad Agarwal, Jagdish Sharma. Banshidhar Chaudhary, Ajay Maheshwari, Ajay Agarwal,



Umashankar Sharma, Sitaram Agarwal, Gopal Garg, Ram Singh, Manfol Singh Garhwal, Mohan Sharma, Dharamchand Jain, Bhavani Singh, Ramswaroop Sharma, Maliram Kumawat, Shankar Lal Kumawat, Laxminarayan Sharma took oath as members of the Special Working Committee and Khushboo Agarwal, Poonam Agarwal,

Sandhya Govind took oath as members of the Women's Committee. The special guest of the oath taking ceremony was retired RAS Kaluram Bunkar. Presiding over the function, local councillor Dr Meenakshi Sharma took immediate action on the memorandum given by the committee and assured to resolve the problems.

Hanumangarh police cracks down on drug smugglers, seizes assets worth Rs 81.61 lakh

TDG NETWORK
JAIPUR

The Hanumangarh police continue their zero-tolerance campaign against drug smugglers, taking stringent action against those involved in the illegal trade. Under Section 68-F of the NDPS Act, the police have seized property worth Rs 81.61 lakhs belonging to a notorious drug smuggler gang leader and his family. The gang leader, Swaraj Singh, along with his sons and other family members, had been operating a drug smuggling network for years. A total of 28 cases have been registered against the gang leader and his family in various police stations under the NDPS and Excise Acts.

Superintendent of Police



Arshad Ali has instructed the District Special Team (DST) and all police station officers to take strict action against drug trafficking under the zero-tolerance campaign. In this sequence, Additional Superintendent of Police Janesh Tanwar led a team under the guidance of Deputy Superintendent of Police Karn Singh and Talwara Police Station Officer Rajandeep Kaur. The team identified properties acquired by the gang leader and his family through drug

smuggling activities.

During the investigation, it was found that Tara Singh Raisikh, a resident of Ward No. 1 in Talwara, along with his sons Swaraj Singh and Amrik Singh alias Amirdat, had been engaged in drug trafficking for a long time. The police team compiled a list of properties amassed by the family through the smuggling business, which included 5,508 square feet of land and a residential house constructed over 1,150 square feet.

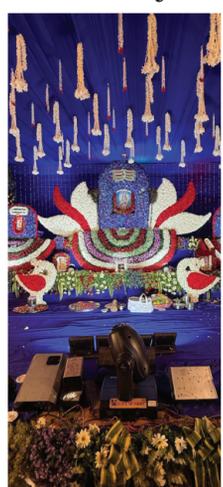
Kalicharan Saraf attends 13th Holi Fagotsav and Shyam Bhajan Sandhya

TDG NETWORK
JAIPUR

MLA Kalicharan Saraf, along with his wife, participated in the 13th grand Holi Fagotsav and Shyam Bhajan Sandhya organised by Shri Shyam Gopal Mandal Lal Kothi.

Mandal directors Natwar Kumawat and Vipul Agarwal stated that for the past 13 years, the Shri Shyam Gopal Mandal Committee has been organising this grand event on Holi. The celebration featured Shyam Baba's Maha Aarti, divine decorations, Chang Dhamal, Pushpvarsha, Akhand Jyot, and a Chhappan Bhog tableau.

Councillor Himanshu Jain, Mohit Mulchandani, Saurabh Agarwal, Vipul



Agarwal, Rishi Agarwal, Vikas, Abhishek, Rahul, and many local residents also attended the event.

TDG NETWORK
JAIPUR

Kanupriya Harish, Executive Director-Trustee of the Jal Bhagirathi Foundation (JBF), recently attended an exclusive Water and Climate Reception at Buckingham Palace, hosted by King Charles III, patron of WaterAid. The event brought together global leaders and policymakers to discuss critical issues related to water conservation and climate resilience.

Under Kanupriya's leadership, JBF has been at the forefront of water conservation in Rajasthan's arid Marwar region. The foundation has restored over 2,000 traditional water-harvesting structures across 700 villages in the Thar Desert, ensuring a sustainable water supply for 550,000 people and their livestock. By combining traditional knowledge with modern techniques, JBF has created a water-



harvesting capacity of over 4,000 million litres annually. Expanding its efforts, JBF has also worked in 90 villages in Jaipur division, promoting the concept of household water-harvesting structures. This initiative has led to the construction of 2,500 household tanks, as well as tanks in 25 schools and village talabs.

During the reception, King Charles III fondly recalled his visits to JBF in 2006 and 2010 and inquired about his friend, Maharaja Gaj Singh of Jodhpur. He expressed his admiration for Rajasthan and his wish to return.

Speaking at the event, Kanupriya emphasised the impact of grassroots initiatives on water conservation. She highlighted how strengthening local institutions and fostering collective action can help communities combat climate change.

The reception at Buckingham Palace provided an important platform for discussing global water security strategies. Harish's participation reaffirmed the importance of community-led conservation efforts in addressing climate challenges and ensuring sustainable water solutions.

Municipal Corporation cancels staff's leaves ahead of Swachhhta Survey

TDG NETWORK
JAIPUR

Ahead of the Swachhhta Survey, Jaipur Municipal Corporation has cancelled the leave of its officers and employees to ensure thorough cleanliness arrangements. On Sunday, which is usually a weekly off, municipal officers and staff were seen inspecting various streets and colonies to assess the sanitation system. Municipal Corporation Commissioner Arun Kumar Hasija also conducted a surprise inspection to monitor and improve the cleanliness situation in the city.

The Swachhhta Survey 2024 team is expected to arrive in Jaipur at any time. Once in the city, the team will inspect different areas to evaluate cleanliness and assess the effectiveness of the measures implemented by the corporation. Anticipating the survey, the Municipal Corporation has gone into full active mode to ensure that Jaipur presents its best possible image.



As part of these preparations, Hasija cancelled the Sunday leave of all municipal officers and employees. Additionally, those who had applied for leave on Monday were also asked to report to work, taking on the responsibility of enhancing the cleanliness system in their designated areas.

Hasija emphasised that the Swachhhta Survey is a crucial event for Jaipur and that the Municipal Corporation is working tirelessly to improve the city's cleanliness ranking. He noted that while the corporation has completed all necessary preparations, public participation is equally important in maintaining cleanliness. He urged citizens to contribute to keeping the city clean and beautiful, which could help Jaipur secure a bet-

ter position in the national cleanliness ranking.

The cleanliness survey is expected to begin in Jaipur on Monday morning. The survey team will conduct surprise inspections across different parts of the city, evaluating not only the sanitation system but also the civic sense of residents. They will assess waste management efforts and other cleanliness measures implemented by the Municipal Corporation. Based on their findings, Jaipur will be assigned a ranking in the national cleanliness assessment.

With municipal officers working diligently and the public being encouraged to participate, the city is making all possible efforts to perform well in the Swachhhta Survey and improve its standing in the nationwide cleanliness rankings.

Nine Kundiya Gayatri Maha Yagya concludes on Gauranga Mahaprabhu's birth anniversary

TDG NETWORK
JAIPUR

On the occasion of the 539th Birth Anniversary of Kaliyugavatar Sriman Gauranga Mahaprabhu (Chaitanya Mahaprabhu) Ji in 2025, a Nine Kundiya Gayatri Maha Yagya was concluded at Aarad Dev Govind Devji Temple on Sunday. Sevadhikari Manas Goswami worshipped Gauranga Mahaprabhu in the presence of Mahant Anjan Kumar Goswami Maharaj. Afterward, special offerings were made in his honour.

Under the direction of Mani Shankar Chaudhary, co-manager of Gayatri Shaktipeeth Brahmपुरi, Dinesh Acharya, Dr Ajay Bhardwaj, Dinesh Marbadiya, and Srishti completed the Yagya with the presentation of Prajna songs. The event began with Guru Vandana and Gayatri Vandana. About three hundred devotees offered oblations with Gayatri Mantra and Mahamrityunjaya Mahamantra in three rounds, lighting the fire of Shat Karma, reciting Swasti, and performing Shodashopachar Pujan, all with the wish for world welfare.

The Purnahuti was done after taking other auspicious resolutions, such



as not spreading garbage, not leaving leftovers, regularly chanting Gayatri Mantra, studying good literature, and giving up one evil habit. Ramesh Agarwal and Kailash Agarwal distributed the book 'Haariye Na Himmat', which promotes positive thinking, as Gyan Prasad to the people for free. A book fair was also organised by Gayatri Chetna Kendra, Janta Colony.

On the coming Sunday, March 23, from 9 am to 11 am, another Nine Kundiya Gayatri Mahayagya will be held at the

Govind Dev Ji Temple.

Under the Gauranga Mahaprabhu Jayanti Mahotsav, Chaitanya Sect Acharya Venu Gopal Goswami from Vyas Peeth gave discourses on various topics during the ongoing Srimad Bhagwat Katha in Talkatora Colony on Sunday. The Jagannath festival was celebrated at the Radha Damodar Ji Temple located in Chowda Radha, where Meenakshi Devi, Gaurang Agarwal, and others worshipped the picture of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Uttam Swami inaugurates development projects and honours Chhaganlal Sharma

TDG NETWORK
SAGWARA

Mahamandaleshwar Ishwar Nand Uttam Swami Maharaj inaugurated several development projects at Government Higher Secondary School in Barbodaniya village, Dungarpur district, on Sunday. He also unveiled a statue of late educationist Chhaganlal Sharma, honouring his

contributions to education and village development.

Speaking at the event, Uttam Swami emphasised that serving parents and following their teachings is the greatest duty in human life. He highlighted the importance of selfless service and societal welfare, stating that true fulfillment lies in working for the betterment of others.

RSS regional pracharak

Shivlahari praised Sharma's efforts in transforming the village through education. Former MP Kanakmal Katara and Sagwara MLA Shankar Lal Dacha also acknowledged Sharma's impact on education and rural development. District Collector Ankit Kumar Singh urged the youth to learn from the struggles and achievements of their elders.



Dr Shailesh Sharma, personal assistant to Union Minister Nitin Gadkari, shared his father's values of perseverance despite hardships. Several other speakers, including Ashok Patel Ranoli and Pt Vaibhav Sharma, also paid tribute to Sharma's legacy.

During the event, newly constructed classrooms, a veranda, and a new school building were inaugurat-

ed. Donors who contributed to these projects were felicitated.

Video messages from Punjab Governor Gulab Chand Kataria, Rajasthan CM Bhajan Lal Sharma, and Delhi CM Rekha Gupta were broadcast, appreciating Sharma's contributions. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks from Rajnikant Sharma.

HOLI AROUND THE WORLD

A TRANSNATIONAL CELEBRATION OF CULTURAL SYNCRETISM AND SOCIAL COHESION

OPINION

SIDDHARTHA DAVE



Holi, an ancient Hindu festival rooted in the Bhartiya subcontinent, has transcended its geographical and cultural origins to become a globally recognized phenomenon. Functioning as both a ritualistic observance and a social unifier, the festival epitomizes the syncretic interplay of tradition and modernity. In contemporary times, Holi has been reinterpreted and adapted by diverse communities worldwide, highlighting its role as a mechanism of cultural transmission, diasporic identity reinforcement, and intercultural solidarity. From the ritualistic commemorations in Nepal to the diaspora-driven celebrations in Mauritius, Fiji, and Australia, Holi continues to symbolize the transcendence of historical narratives into the realm of collective human festivity.

NEPAL: FAGU PURNIMA AND THE RITUALIZATION OF HOLI

In Nepal, Holi assumes the form of Fagu Purnima, an intricate amalgamation of religious devotion, historical tradition, and public rev-

elry. The commencement of the festival is marked by the erection of the 'Chir', a ceremonial bamboo pole adorned with colorful fabric, in Kathmandu's Basantapur Durbar Square. This symbolic act signifies the initiation of a week-long observance, which manifests in diverse forms across Nepal's topographically and culturally distinct regions.

The structural framework of Fagu Purnima is deeply entrenched in Nepalese sociocultural dynamics. In the hilly regions, Holi incorporates performative folk traditions, with regional variations in dance and musical expressions. The Terai plains, on the other hand, emphasize collective participation in vibrant processions, reflecting the cross-cultural intersections between Nepal and North India. Culinary traditions, including the preparation of sel roti and gujiya, further reinforce the festival's embeddedness in Nepalese heritage. The commemoration of Fagu Purnima underscores the integral role of Holi in preserving regional identities while facilitating intercommunal cohesion.

MAURITIUS: A DIASPORIC INTERPRETATION OF HOLI'S CULTURAL ETHOS

Mauritius, a nation with a substantial Indo-Mauritian population, celebrates Holi over two days, maintaining continuity with its subcontinental roots while

simultaneously embedding it within the island's multicultural framework. The first day, Holika Dahan, involves ritualistic bonfire ceremonies that symbolize the annihilation of malevolent forces, a practice derived from the Prahlad-Hiranyakashipu myths. The subsequent day transforms public spaces into arenas of color-laden revelry, with participants engaging in an effusive interplay of music, dance, and community interaction.

Mauritius' interpretation of Holi extends beyond its religious and mythological connotations. The island's celebration integrates elements of chowtaal music, a folk genre preserved by indentured laborer descendants, reflecting the diasporic retention of cultural heritage. Additionally, the participatory nature of the festival facilitates cross-cultural engagement, with non-Hindu Mauritians increasingly embracing the festival as an expression of national inclusivity. Holi in Mauritius thus exemplifies how diasporic communities negotiate between historical fidelity and contemporary multiculturalism.

FIJI: THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONVERGENCE OF HOLI IN THE PACIFIC

In Fiji, Holi has evolved into a festival that embodies the principles of unity and social integration. Given the significant presence of Indo-Fijians, Holi celebrations extend into public institutions, particularly within educational spaces. Schools serve as focal points for the festival, where students engage in color play, folk performances, and thematic dramatizations based on the Holi mythology. These activities serve an educative function, ensuring the inter-



The structural framework of Fagu Purnima is deeply entrenched in Nepalese sociocultural dynamics. In the hilly regions, Holi incorporates performative folk traditions, with regional variations in dance and musical expressions. The Terai plains, on the other hand, emphasize collective participation in vibrant processions, reflecting the cross-cultural intersections between Nepal and North India. Culinary traditions, including the preparation of sel roti and gujiya, further reinforce the festival's embeddedness in Nepalese heritage.

generational transmission of cultural knowledge while reinforcing communal harmony in Fiji's multi-ethnic society.

Holi in Fiji is characterized by a strong communal ethos. Temples, community centers, and familial spaces become sites of both ritualistic

devotion and social festivity. The emphasis on collective storytelling—wherein elders recount the allegorical narratives associated with Holi—strengthens the pedagogical function of the festival. Additionally, the integration of indigenous Fijian music and dance into Holi events high-

lights the festival's adaptive nature within a Pacific Island context, demonstrating how cultural traditions negotiate local specificities while maintaining their core symbolic meanings.

The transnational diffusion of Holi is particularly evident in the West, where

the festival has undergone significant transformation. In the United States, the Festival of Colors has emerged as a large-scale event that amalgamates elements of Indian tradition with contemporary entertainment culture. Organized in cities such as New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, these celebrations often feature Bollywood music, yoga sessions, and food stalls offering Indian delicacies. While the Indian diaspora remains a primary driver of these events, the increasing participation of non-Indian attendees indicates Holi's broader appeal as a festival of inclusivity and multicultural engagement.

In Europe, major metropolitan hubs such as London, Paris, and Amsterdam host Holi-themed festivals that emphasize cultural appreciation and interethnic participation. These events, often sponsored by Indian cultural organizations and tourism boards, contribute to the festival's global branding. However, the commercialization of Holi in Western settings has raised debates about the dilution of its spiritual essence, with critiques centering on its transformation into an aesthetic spectacle detached from its religious and historical underpinnings.

Australia provides a unique case study of Holi's integration into national multicultural discourse. The festival has received official recognition from Australian political leaders, with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese publicly acknowledging its significance. His statement underscores Holi's role in fostering intercommunal solidarity: "Our country will continue to grow and thrive because of the bonds of friendship and understanding that we see so clearly in the celebrations surrounding Holi."

Such governmental en-

dorsements not only validate the festival's cultural relevance but also position it as an emblem of Australia's commitment to diversity. Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong further reinforced this sentiment in her message to Indian External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar, highlighting the festival's ability to strengthen Indo-Australian ties.

CONCLUSION: HOLI AS A CASE STUDY IN CULTURAL TRANSNATIONALISM

Holi's global diffusion exemplifies the dynamics of cultural transnationalism, demonstrating how a localized festival can acquire international resonance through processes of migration, adaptation, and hybridization. From its mythological roots in the Indian subcontinent to its contemporary manifestations in global metropolises, Holi operates as both a site of ritualistic continuity and a platform for cross-cultural interaction.

As the festival continues to proliferate across diverse socio-political landscapes, its evolving interpretations offer insights into broader themes of diasporic identity, cultural commodification, and intercultural exchange. Holi's ability to bridge divides—whether geographic, religious, or social—attests to its enduring power as a celebration of unity, renewal, and shared humanity. In an era marked by fragmentation, Holi stands as a luminous reminder that joy, community, and cultural appreciation remain universal aspirations. *The author is an alumnus of United Nations University, Tokyo, an eminent columnist and a former Lok Sabha Research Fellow. He writes on Foreign Affairs and National Security. Author can be reached at siddhartha.dave@gmail.com*

The rise and fall of a delusional warlord

OPINION

A.J. PHILIP

M.R. Narayan Swamy is no stranger to the Tamil insurgency in Sri Lanka. His earlier work, *Inside an Elusive Mind*, included in this volume, remains one of the most definitive accounts of Velupillai Prabhakaran, the founder of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). In *The Rout of Prabhakaran*, he turns his attention to the final years of the Tamil Tigers, methodically dissecting how an organisation that once struck terror into the hearts of its enemies was wiped off the face of the earth.

This is not just a war story. It is an autopsy of a man and a movement that underestimated its strength, underestimated its enemies, and ultimately condemned

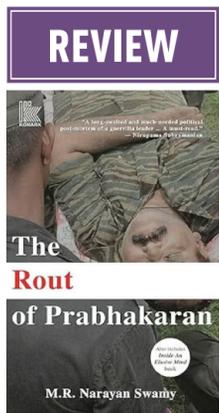
an entire people to suffering.

For many, Prabhakaran was an enigma. He was a man who inspired fanatical loyalty among his followers, a ruthless commander who demanded absolute discipline, and a zealot who believed in his own invincibility. Yet, he was also a paradox, a man who doted on his own children while sending thousands of Tamil boys and girls to die in battle. He forbade his cadres from falling in love, punishing violators with death, while he himself married the woman of his choice. He claimed to be fighting for the Tamil people but did not hesitate to execute fellow Tamils who questioned his authority.

The author dismantles the romanticised image of Prabhakaran with clinical precision. Through extensive interviews and meticulous research, he presents a man who ruled through fear and deception, convinced that he alone knew what was best for the Tamil people.

One of the biggest turning points in the Sri Lankan conflict was India's intervention and its disastrous deployment of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF). The book provides a detailed account of how the Indian military, unprepared for guerrilla warfare, was drawn into a brutal conflict against the LTTE, an enemy that fought by its own rules.

The LTTE's tactics were not just brutal but also morally bankrupt. This reviewer had spoken to a senior Indian Army officer who served in Sri Lanka. He was given a chilling firsthand account of how the Tigers operated. In one instance, a convoy of Indi-



Book: *The Rout of Prabhakaran*
Author: M.R. Narayan Swamy
Publisher: Konark
Pages: 416

an soldiers was ambushed when a remote-controlled bomb blew up one of their trucks, causing heavy casualties.

When the area was searched, a boy was found hiding in a tree, trembling in fear, a remote still clutched in his hands. He had been given simple

instructions — if he saw an Army vehicle cross between two marks on the road, he was to press the button. He had no idea that doing so would kill several people. The Indian soldiers interrogated him, but he knew nothing beyond his small role in the attack.

While this incident reflects the themes explored in the book; how the LTTE's war machine manipulated even the youngest members of the Tamil community, turning them into instruments of destruction. Prabhakaran's biggest blunder, and the one that ultimately sealed his fate, was the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Narayan Swamy delves into the intricate planning behind the murder, the trail of evidence left behind, and how Indian investigators painstakingly pieced it all together.

It all began with an SLR camera found at the assassination site, containing images of Gandhi's final moments, especially one of the suicide bomber, a

woman strapped with explosives, leaning towards him. Prabhakaran, ever the megalomaniac, allegedly wanted photographic proof of Gandhi's death.

With that single act, Prabhakaran turned India from a potential ally into a sworn enemy. The LTTE lost its last source of significant external support. The book illustrates how this marked the beginning of the end for the Tamil Tigers.

For all his tactical brilliance, Prabhakaran was blind to the changing realities of the world. He believed, until the very end, that the Sri Lankan Army could be defeated. He refused to accept negotiations, dismissing any settlement that fell short of full independence. He did not realise that by the 2000s, global patience for violent insurgencies had worn thin.

The author illustrates how, by the final stages of the war, Prabhakaran had become completely detached from reality. As the Sri Lankan Army closed in, he and his loyalists retreated further

into denial. The man who once dictated the course of a brutal civil war now found himself boxed into a shrinking patch of land, abandoned by allies, and despised by the very people he claimed to represent.

His decision to expel thousands of Muslims from LTTE-controlled areas revealed the hypocrisy of his movement. He accused the Sinhalese of ethnic cleansing, yet he was no different. His arrogance led him to believe he could rewrite history. Instead, he became history.

The true tragedy of Prabhakaran's legacy is not his death, but what he left behind. After 25 years of bloodshed, the Tamil cause was in ruins. Sri Lankan Tamils, once a proud and self-sufficient community, were reduced to refugees in their own land. As one former LTTE cadre bitterly admitted, "In 1983, we Tamils were at least standing on our own feet. After a quarter-century of bloodshed, today we are on bended knees".

The only winners in the ethnic conflict were those who fled Sri Lanka and rebuilt their lives in Western countries. For those left behind, Prabhakaran's dream of Tamil Eelam was a nightmare that never ended. The Rout of Prabhakaran is not just a book about a warlord and his downfall. It is a cautionary tale about the dangers of extremism, the perils of blind loyalty, and the devastating cost of a misguided struggle.

Narayan Swamy's narrative is gripping, his analysis razor-sharp. He neither demonises nor glorifies; he simply presents the facts as they are. And the facts make it clear that Prabhakaran was no hero. He was a delusional tyrant who led his people into an abyss. For anyone seeking to understand why the LTTE met its end, this book is indispensable. For those who still romanticise Prabhakaran, it is a necessary wake-up call.

The author is a senior journalist and columnist.

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON SLEEP DEPRIVATION IN INDIA

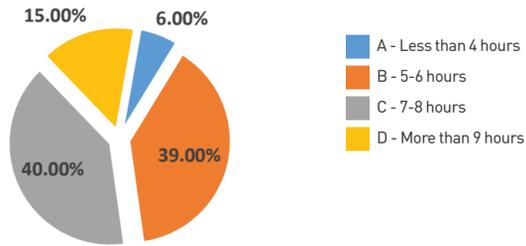
71% believe lack of sleep affects productivity and decision-making

A survey on sleep deprivation in India, conducted on 748 people, reveals concerning trends. 45% experience fatigue due to poor

sleep, while 71% say it impacts productivity. Most (39%) sleep only 5-6 hours, and 23% sought medical help.

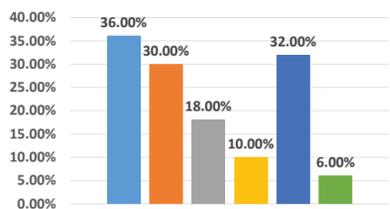
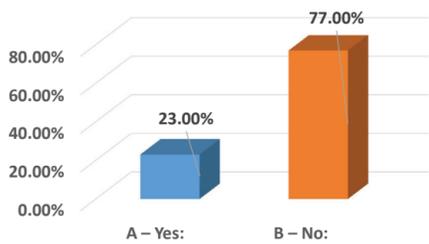
Excessive mobile use and stress are key causes, highlighting serious health and lifestyle concerns.

Q1.
How many hours of good sleep do you get each day?



Q2.
Do you experience Aweakness due to insufficient sleep?

Q3.
Have you ever had to visit a doctor due to sleep problems?



Q4. What do you think is responsible for poor or inadequate sleep?

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON BANGLADESH-INDIA RELATIONS

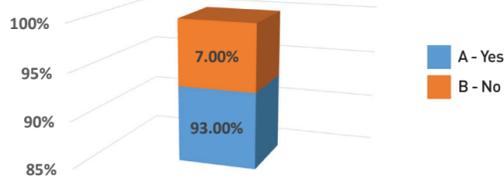
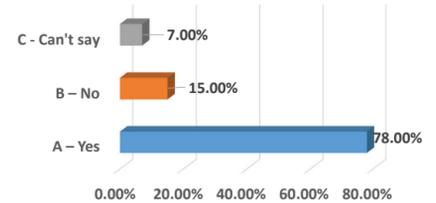
93% believe Bangladesh is becoming unsafe for girls

A survey on Bangladesh-India relations reveals alarming trends. 93% believe Bangladesh is becoming unsafe for girls, and 78% think the govern-

ment fears the truth. 61% say protests by harassed students impacted the government. Holi bans, allegedly due to Islamist influence, raise concerns

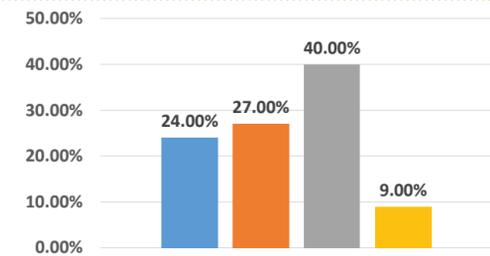
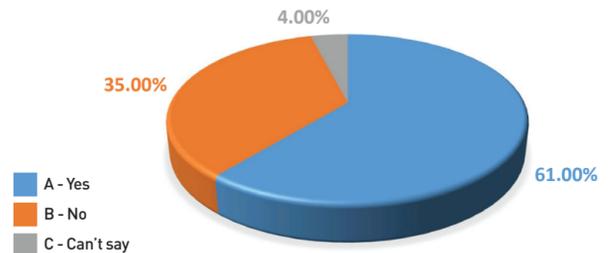
about religious intolerance and governance issues.

Q1.
Has the Yuvraj government revoked the diplomatic status of Rajnath Hasan for criticizing the government? Is the Yuvraj government afraid of the truth?



Q2.
Welcoming harassers released from jail with flowers and garlands—Is Bangladesh becoming hell for girls?

Q3.
Has the protest by harassed female students affected the Yuvraj government?



Q4.
Why did Mohammad Yuvraj ban Holi celebrations in many parts of Bangladesh?

False narrative created over Godhra riots: PM

CONTINUED FROM P1

released on Sunday.

Modi, who was the Gujarat chief minister at that time, said the big incident at Godhra was the spark-point and violence took place. He said that a fake narrative was spread regarding the Godhra case.

"But, the courts investigated the matter thoroughly and found us completely innocent. Those who were truly responsible have faced justice from the courts," he said.

On February 27, 2002, the Sabarmati Express carrying Hindu karsevaks was set on

fire by a mob, resulting in the deaths of 59 people, including women and children.

This was followed by communal riots across the state of Gujarat, where hundreds were killed.

In 2011, a special court convicted 31 people in connection with the Godhra train burning incident, after which the Gujarat High Court in 2014 upheld the conviction of 11 people while acquitting 20 others.

Finally, the Supreme Court of India upheld the verdict given by Gujarat HC, dismissing the appeals filed by the convicts in connection with the Godhra train

burning

The Prime Minister said his political opponents were in power at the Centre when the violence took place and they were keen to see him punished over the allegations.

"At that time, our political opponents were in power, and naturally they wanted all allegations against us to stick. They wanted to see us punished. Despite their relentless efforts, the judiciary analysed the situation meticulously twice and ultimately found us completely innocent," Modi said.

The Prime Minister said the most important thing

was that Gujarat, which used to witness violence almost every year, has not seen riots since 2002.

"Over the past 22 years, there hasn't been a single major riot in Gujarat.

"Gujarat remains completely peaceful," Modi said. PM Modi said his approach has always been to avoid vote bank politics.

"Our mantra has been, sabka saath sabka vikas aur sabka prayas. We have moved away from the politics of appeasement practised by our predecessors to the politics of aspiration," Modi said during his over three-hour interaction.

3 Pak soldiers killed in Baloch attack

CONTINUED FROM P1

the death count of FC soldiers at five but this could not be verified. He also feared that the death toll and number of injured would rise since several of the injured are in critical condition.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, and Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti all condemned the attack and expressed sorrow over the loss of lives.

Sharif, in a statement, said: "Such cowardly acts cannot shake our resolve against terrorism."

He also directed that the injured be provided with the best possible treatment.

"Those who play with the peace of Balochistan would be brought to a tragic end," Bugti said in an official release.

Minister Naqvi strongly condemned the blast and extended condolences to the victims' families and wished a swift recovery for the injured.

Denouncing the attack as an act of brutality, Naqvi emphasised that anti-state elements are attempting to destabilise the country. He asserted that such cowardly acts would not shake the nation's resolve, according to a statement shared by the Ministry of Interior on X.

Balochistan government spokesperson Shahid Rind also condemned the attack "targeting innocents."

Balochistan has witnessed an uptick in terror attacks over the past year. Bordering Iran and Afghanistan, Balochistan is home to a long-running violent insurgency.

Baloch insurgent groups frequently

carry out attacks targeting security personnel, government projects and the USD 60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects in this oil and mineral-rich province.

In the past, the railway tracks in this area have been attacked by Baloch militants using rockets or remote-controlled bombs, and the BLA claimed responsibility for most of the attacks.

Earlier last week, in the same province, the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) militants ambushed the Jaffar Express, carrying 440 passengers, near the mountainous terrain of Gudalar and Piru Kunri in Bolan district on March 11. The militants killed 21 passengers and four paramilitary soldiers before the Army eliminated all 33 terrorists on March 12.

LeT terrorist killed

CONTINUED FROM P1

charge-sheeted five accused, in the case of the January 2023 attacks in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir.

The case RC-O1 & O2/2023/NIA/JMU, relates to a heinous terror attack on civilians at village Dhangri, District Rajouri on January 1 2023, followed by an IED blast the next day, the NIA said.

Seven people, including two children, were killed and several others severely

injured in the attacks. The three charge-sheeted LeT handlers had been identified as Abu Qatal alias Qatal Sindhi, Saifullah whose alias include Sajid Jutt, Ali, Habibullah, Nouman and Mohd Qasim.

While Abu Qatal and Sajid Jutt had been Pakistani nationals, Qasim had crossed over to Pakistan around 2002 and had joined the LeT.

Investigations had revealed that the trio had orchestrated the recruitment and deployment of LeT

terrorists from Pakistan to target civilians, particularly from the minority community in Jammu and Kashmir, as well as security personnel. The attacks had been carried out under their directions.

Abu Qatal had come to India in 2002-03 and was active in the Poonch-Rajouri range, along with other terrorists. It was found during investigations that they had provided logistical support to the terrorists on the directions of Abu Qatal.

Haryana takes down songs

CONTINUED FROM P1

YouTube but the government did not take any action if this continues", he said adding that if such selective approach continues the Haryanvi music industry will collapse, and the youth will once again start listening to Punjabi songs.

Without naming anybody, Sharma accused a senior official saying, "An official from the government's publicity department is behind the removal of my hit songs. This person cannot tolerate

the growth of Haryanvi artists. I have a personal dispute with him, which is why only my songs are being targeted."

As per the information a few songs of other singers like Narendra Bhagana and Ankit Baliyana were also removed.

"Only those songs that had over 100 million views have been deleted. I have hundreds of songs; if the government thinks they are inappropriate, it should remove all of them. But calling a few songs 'gangster songs' while allowing others to pro-

mote vulgarity in the name of folk music is unfair", alleged Sharma in a video message.

He further questioned, "If my songs are misleading Haryana's youth, then are obscene songs about women and family relations having a positive impact on society? Why is there no objection to those? Thousands of double-meaning songs are still on YouTube."

He said that such moves will affect the growing Haryanvi Music Industry badly rendering thousands of people jobless.

Govt announces one-time settlement scheme...

CONTINUED FROM P1

OTS scheme, farmers who repay the principal amount of their overdue medium and long-term loans by July 1, 2024, will receive a 100% waiver on overdue interest.

This initiative aims to ease the burden on farmers and small entrepreneurs, enabling them to regain financial stability. By eliminating interest penalties, the government is ensuring that more farmers can clear their debts without the fear of losing their land or assets.

OVER 36,000 FARMERS TO BENEFIT

The Minister further highlighted that 36,351 defaulting loan members associated with land development banks across the state will benefit from the scheme. These farmers and small entrepreneurs will not only receive interest relief but also gain access to new loans under the government's 5% interest subsidy scheme. This financial assistance will help them invest in fresh agricultural and

non-agricultural activities, ultimately fostering economic growth and stability in rural areas.

Dak expressed his satisfaction with the announcement, stating that farmers had been eagerly awaiting such a relief measure. He praised the Chief Minister for addressing their concerns during the discussion on the Finance and Appropriation Bill and urged all eligible farmers to take full advantage of the scheme.

He said, "The farmers were hoping that the state government would give them relief and implement the one-time settlement scheme. The Chief Minister, while meeting their expectations, has made this big announcement while responding to the discussion on the Finance and Appropriation Bill. All the debtor members, whose loans have become defaulted, should take advantage of this announcement. This announcement of Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma will become a lifeline for the Land Development Banks."

Leaders to attend Raisina Dialogue

CONTINUED FROM P1

of Maldives @Mohamed-Nasheed, arrive to a warm welcome in New Delhi."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will on Monday throw open the three-day Raisina Dialogue, India's flagship conference on geopolitics and geo-economics that will be joined by delegates from 125 countries.

New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon, US Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gab-

bard and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha are among those attending the 10th edition of the conclave.

In a first, a delegation, including a senior security official, from Taiwan is also attending the deliberations reflecting growing cooperation between the two sides in the last few years, Opeople familiar with the matter said. The Raisina Dialogue is being hosted by the leading think-tank Observer Re-search Foun-

dation (ORF) in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). It will witness the participation of representatives from about 125 countries including ministers, former heads of state and heads of government, military commanders, captains of industry, technology leaders, academics, journalists, scholars on strategic affairs and experts from leading think tanks, the MEA said on Sunday.

Doval holds talks with Gabbard

CONTINUED FROM P1

Delhi and they had a detailed discussion on several facets of the Indo-US relationship.

Tulsi Gabbard is visiting India as a part of her multinational visit.

Calling herself a 'child of the Pacific', Gabbard said she will be going to Japan, Thailand, and India, with a brief stop in France.

This is Gabbard's second international trip as a top Trump administration offi-

cial. Immediately after she was confirmed a month ago, she travelled to Germany to attend the Munich Security Conference, as per the New York Times. The Asia leg of Gabbard's trip will culminate in an address on March 18 at the Raisina Dialogue, a multinational gathering of security officials in Delhi, to which she was invited by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. There, Gabbard will hold bilateral meetings with Indian officials and officials

from other countries, a senior Trump administration official said.

The Raisina Dialogue is India's premier conference on geopolitics and geo-economics committed to addressing the most challenging issues facing the global community. It is scheduled to be held in Delhi from March 17-19.

As per the official website of Raisina Dialogue, Gabbard will participate in a keynote conversation with Samir Saran, President, ORF.

PAK ENGAGES IN PROXY WAR INSTEAD OF GOOD TIES: PM

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

In a poignant and introspective interaction with renowned podcaster Lex Fridman Prime Minister Narendra Modi reflected on the tumultuous relationship between India and Pakistan.

PM Modi reflected on the painful history between the two nations, citing the partition of the subcontinent and the subsequent bloodshed. He expressed his disappointment that Pakistan chose not to foster a harmonious coexistence, instead waging a proxy war against India.

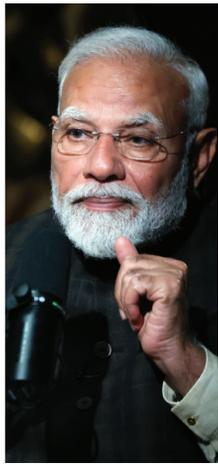
When Fridman asked PM Modi to share his vision for a future where the two nations could coexist in peace and harmony, PM Modi's response was a heartfelt and sombre account of the partition of the subcontinent and the ensuing bloodshed.

He described the traumatic scenes of trains arriving from Pakistan filled

with wounded and dead people and the overwhelming grief that Indians felt as they struggled to come to terms with the painful reality.

"With hearts weighed down by grief and silent tears, Indians embraced this painful reality. However, what unfolded was an immediate heartbreaking saga of bloodshed. Trains filled with bloodied, wounded people and corpses started arriving from Pakistan. It was a harrowing sight. After getting their own way, we expected them to live and let live and yet, they chose not to foster a harmonious coexistence."

Despite the passage of time, PM Modi noted that Pakistan had continued to wage a proxy war against India, fueled by an ideology that thrived on bloodshed and terror. He emphasised that this was not a matter of ideology, but rather a choice that Pakistan had made, and one that had far-reaching consequences for the world.



"I spent time in the Himalayas, embracing the solitude of the mountains. I met many remarkable individuals along the way."

SLOWLY, BUT SURELY, TRUST WILL RETURN: PM MODI ON TIES WITH CHINA

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed optimism about India's relationship with China, emphasizing the importance of learning from each other and understanding one another. Despite ongoing border disputes, PM Modi acknowledged the ancient cultural and civilizational ties between the two nations, noting that there's no real history of conflict between them. He said that the two nations are now working to restore conditions to how they were before 2020, with Modi emphasizing the importance of rebuilding trust, enthusiasm, and energy. Speaking in a podcast with AI researcher Lex Fridman, PM Modi also advocated for healthy competition between the two nations, emphasizing that competition should never turn into conflict. "Look, the relationship between India and China isn't something new. Both nations have ancient cultures and civilizations."

"Whenever I read something from the books, I often found myself feeling inspired, thinking, 'Why shouldn't I shape my own life like that?'"

"I believe that perhaps that small incident in Vivekananda's life left an impression on me too. The thought of, 'What can I give to the world?'"

"I have a close relationship with Russia, Ukraine. I can sit with Prez Putin and say that this is not the time for war... can also tell Prez Zelenskyy war is no solution."

"I believe that with AI, humans are now being forced to reflect on what it truly means to be human. This is the real power of AI... But human imagination is the fuel."

"I deeply respect him (Ramanujan), and everyone in my country respects him... I strongly believe there's a deep connection between science and spirituality."

Take crisis as opportunity: PM Modi's advice to youth

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his interview with podcaster and research scientist Lex Fridman, advised youth to avoid shortcuts in life stating that they though challenges are real they do not define an individual and each and every crisis and challenge should be viewed as an opportunity to grow.

Responding to a question by Fridman regarding youth who were struggling, lost in the world, and trying to find their way, PM Modi said that patience and self-confidence were key to success.

PM Modi said, "I want to tell all the young people no matter how dark the

night may seem, it is still just night, and morning is bound to come. That's why we need patience and self-confidence. The challenges are real, but I am not defined by my circumstances. I am here for a purpose, sent by a higher power, and I am not alone. The one who sent me is always with me. This unwavering faith should always remain within us."

"Difficulties are a test of endurance. They are not meant to defeat me. Hardships exist to make me stronger, help me grow and improve, and not leave me feeling hopeless or discouraged. Personally, I see every crisis and challenge as an opportunity," PM Modi said

He suggested the youth to

have patience.

"There are no shortcuts in life. At our railway stations, there hangs a sign for those who habitually cross the tracks instead of using the bridge, it reads, 'Shortcut will cut you short.'"

I would tell young people the same, shortcut will cut you short. Patience and perseverance are essential. Whatever responsibility we are given, we must pour our hearts into it. We should live it with passion. Enjoy the journey and find fulfilment in it. I truly believe that if this mindset is cultivated, it transforms life. Similarly, abundance alone is not enough. There is no guarantee of success. Even a wealthy person who indulges in comfort and idleness will eventually wither away," PM Modi said.

My only yardstick for my decisions—My country first, says PM

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Interacting with renowned podcaster Lex Fridman, Prime Minister Narendra Modi opened up about his decision-making process. PM Modi stated that his extensive travelling, governance perspective and the mantra of keeping "My country first" guides him.

PM Modi also invoked one of the mantras of Mahatma Gandhi's teachings to determine his decision making process especially in testing times.

"There are many factors to my decision making. First, I'm perhaps the only politician in India who has stayed



overnight in around 85 to 90 per cent of the districts across the country. This was before my current role. I used to travel extensively. I learned a lot from those experiences.

They gave me firsthand knowledge of the ground realities and grassroots level issues, not something asked or heard or learned merely from books.

PM Modi hails Trump's resilience after being shot at

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

In a podcast with AI researcher Lex Fridman, Prime Minister Narendra Modi appreciated US President Donald Trump's unshakeable dedication to his country, particularly in the wake of assassination attempts last year.

Recalling Trump's resilience and determination during campaigning for US elections, even after being shot, he said, "When he was shot during the recent campaign, I saw the same resilient and determined President Trump, the one who walked hand-in-hand with me in that stadium. Even after being shot, he remained unwaveringly dedicated to America. His life was for his nation."

He also drew parallels between Trump's "America First"



ideology and his own "India First" approach, highlighting their shared commitment to prioritizing their nations' interests. This alignment has fostered a strong connection between the two leaders.

"His reflection showed his America First spirit, just as I believe in Nation First. I stand for India first and that's why we

connect so well. These are the things that truly resonate. And I believe that across the world politicians are covered so much by the media that people mostly perceive each other through its lens. People rarely get the chance to truly meet or personally know one another and perhaps third-party intervention is the real cause of tensions."

Pak don claims responsibility over object hurled at YouTuber's house, cops call it 'fame war'

TARUNI GANDHI
JALANDHAR

A grenade-like object was hurled at the residence of YouTuber Navdeep Sandhu, who operates under the name Rozer Sandhu, in Rai-pur Rasoolpur village during the early hours of Sunday. The object was found on the balcony of his house.

Following the incident, Pakistani gangster-turned-social media influencer Shehzad Bhatti posted a video claiming responsibility, alleging that Sandhu had made objectionable remarks against the Muslim community. In the video, Bhatti warned of "bigger action" if Sandhu was not arrested and claimed that gangsters Zeeshan Akhtar, the mastermind behind the Baba Siddique murder, and US-based terrorist Happy



Passia assisted him in the act.

A police team led by Jalandhar (Rural) SSP Gurmeet Singh reached the spot and initiated an investigation. However, authorities dismissed the claim of an attack, stating that the incident appeared to be a "fame war" between rival YouTubers. Kartarpur DSP Surinder Pal remarked,

"No gangster is involved. It is just a rivalry between two content creators, who have been engaged in online spats for some time."

DIG Jalandhar Range Naveen Singla stated, "A metal object was hurled at Rozer Sandhu's house, but it was not a grenade. There was no explosion. Forensic examination is underway, and preliminary findings

A police team led by Jalandhar (Rural) SSP Gurmeet Singh reached the spot and initiated an investigation.

suggest it was an attempt to create panic rather than a serious attack. We are verifying Bhatti's claims regarding the involvement of Akhtar and Passia."

Meanwhile, Sandhu released a video denying any content against Islam and claiming the incident was orchestrated for publicity. The police are set to record his statement before lodging an FIR.

Mann will complete full term: Kejriwal

TARUNI GANDHI
CHANDIGARH

AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday dismissed opposition claims that Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann would be removed from his post, asserting that Mann would complete his five-year term. Kejriwal's remarks came as he and Mann visited the Golden Temple to mark three years of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in Punjab.

During his visit, Kejriwal acknowledged that drugs and corruption remain the biggest challenges in the state, where AAP has been in power since 2022 after securing a massive mandate with 92 out of 117 Assembly seats. "Three crore people of Punjab have come together to fight against drugs and corruption... this is a battle for nyaya (justice)," he said.

Kejriwal arrived in Amritsar



on Saturday after completing a 10-day Vipassana meditation retreat in Hoshiarpur. He was accompanied by his wife, Sunita Kejriwal, and senior AAP leaders, including Minister Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal. Before visiting the Golden Temple, the AAP convener stayed at the residence

of former minister and Chief Khalsa Diwan president, MLA Dr. Inderbir Singh Nijjar.

Speaking to reporters, Kejriwal reaffirmed Mann's leadership, stating, "Mann saab will complete five years, you do not need to worry... he will complete the next five years

as well." His statement was in response to recent claims by Punjab Congress leader Partap Singh Bajwa, who alleged that 32 AAP MLAs were in touch with him and that Mann was in talks with the BJP.

Meanwhile, CM Bhagwant Mann reiterated his government's commitment to making Punjab a 'rangla Punjab' (prosperous state). He highlighted his administration's efforts, stating that 52,000 government jobs have been provided to Punjab's youth and that a crackdown on drugs and corruption is underway.

"The work done in these three years has not been achieved even in the last 70 years," Mann asserted. He reaffirmed his commitment to fulfilling all promises made to the people and vowed to continue efforts to eliminate drug abuse in the state.

Punjab police to arrest 7 aides of Amritpal Singh in Ajnala police station attack case

TARUNI GANDHI
CHANDIGARH

In a decisive move to uphold the rule of law and ensure justice, Punjab Police is all set to bring back seven key aides of Amritpal Singh of Waris Punjab De (WPD) from Dibrugarh Jail to Punjab and formally arrest them in Ajnala Police Station attack case to face the law and consequences of their actions, said Director General of Police (DGP)

Punjab Gaurav Yadav here on Sunday.

The DGP further stated that those who are being brought back to Punjab, have been identified as Basant Singh of Daulatpura Ucha in Moga, Bhagwant Singh alias Pradhan Mantri Bajke of village Bajke in Moga, Gurmeet Singh Gill alias Gurmeet Bukkanwala of village Bukkanwala in Moga, Sarabjeet Singh Kalsi alias Daljeet Singh Kalsi of West Punjabi Bagh in New

Delhi, Gurinderpal Singh Aujla alias Guri Aujla of Phagwara, Harjeet Singh alias Chacha of village Jalpur Khara in Amritsar and Kulwant Singh Dhaliwal alias Kulwant Singh of Rauke Kalan in Moga.

Presently, all these individuals are detained under the National Security Act (NSA) in Assam's Dibrugarh jail from last two years.

DGP Gaurav Yadav said that a high-level strong police party headed by Su-



Presently, all these individuals are detained under the National Security Act (NSA) in Assam's Dibrugarh jail from last two years.

perintendent of Police (SP) Harinder Singh Gill is stationed at Dibrugarh Jail to execute the arrest of the seven detainees upon completion of their NSA detention period. The Punjab Police will subsequently produce them before the Hon'ble Court in Dibrugarh to secure transit remand, ensuring their swift return to Punjab to face trial, he added.

As per the information, on February 23, 2023, Amritpal Singh and his supporters

took refuge under Sri Palki Sahib with parkash of Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji and attacked Ajnala Police Station to free their associate identified as Lovepreet Singh alias Toofan. In this regard, Amritsar Rural Police had registered a case FIR no. 39 date 24/2/2023 under sections 307, 353, 186, 332, 333, 506, 120-B, 427, 148 and 149 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) at Police Station Ajnala.

Sharing more details, Deputy Inspector General of

Police (DIG) Border Range Satinder Singh accompanied by SSP Amritsar Rural Maninder Singh, while addressing a press conference, said that starting from Monday, seven of the 10 detainees will be brought back to Punjab to face trial in different cases registered across the state. "We will make their (seven individuals) formal arrest in FIR no. 39/23 registered at Ajnala Police Station to begin investigations in the case," he said.

MAUGANJ VIOLENCE PERPETRATORS WILL NOT BE SPARED: MP CM YADAV

One police official killed, several injured in Mauganj mob attack on Friday

TDG NETWORK
BHOPAL

Calling the Mauganj incident which claimed the life of a police official, 'unfortunate' Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Sunday stated that the perpetrators of the incident will not be spared. The Chief Minister stated that the senior police officials are present at the spot and the situation is under control.

A police official was killed, and several other police personnel were injured in a mob attack in Madhya Pradesh's Mauganj district. The incident occurred on Friday in the Gadra village of Ramnagari Panchayat of Mauganj district when a police team went to a village to intervene in a clash between two groups and rescue a man who had been held hostage and later killed.

MP CM Mohan Yadav said, "The Mauganj incident is unfortunate. The perpetrators will not be spared... My condolences to the bereaved family.

SIX HELD AFTER COMBING OPERATION

- The Chief Minister stated that the senior police officials are present at the spot and the situation is under control.
- Police launched a combing operation in Gadra village, located about 25 km from Mauganj, and arrested six persons. A search is underway to trace others.
- According to the police, there was a dispute going on between two groups in the village, which the police had reached to calm down. But the villagers suddenly took an aggressive stance and attacked the police team.



Senior police officials are at the spot, and the situation is under control... Earlier, CM Yadav instructed officials to take strict action against all the accused of the "inhuman" and "unfortunate" Mauganj incident. Taking to social media post on X, the Chief Minister also expressed his condolences on the demise of the ASI (Assistant Sub-Inspector) Ramcharan Gautam. Yadav stated that to main-

tain law and order, Section 163 has been imposed in the area. Senior police officials, including DIG Rewa, SP Mauganj, and others have reached the scene to control the situation. Police launched a combing operation in Gadra village, located about 25 km from Mauganj, and arrested six persons. A search is underway to trace others.

The Chief Minister further informed that the other injured policemen in the inci-

dent had been sent to Rewa Hospital for treatment. "An ASI of our police, Ramcharan Gautam, died in retaliatory action in an unfortunate attack on the police team including the Tehsildar, SHO, who had reached Gadara village of Shahpur police station area in Mauganj district on the information of a dispute between two groups.

My deepest condolences are with the bereaved family. Other injured policemen

in the incident have been sent to Rewa Hospital for treatment. Immediately after the incident, Section 163 was imposed in the area and DIG Rewa, SP Mauganj and other police officers reached the spot and controlled the situation.

ADG Rewa Zone is reaching the spot, along with that I have directed DG Police to reach the spot and supervise. Instructions have been given to take strict action against all the accused of this inhuman and unfortunate incident," CM Yadav posted on X. The injured officials have been receiving treatment at Civil Hospital and Ashirwad Hospital in Mauganj. According to the police, there was a dispute going on between two groups in the village, which the police had reached to calm down. But the villagers suddenly took an aggressive stance and attacked the police team. During this, the policemen were attacked with sticks and stones, due to which many of them were injured.

64 Maoists surrender before police in Telangana

TDG NETWORK
BHADRADRI KOTHAGUDEM

A total of 64 members of the banned CPI (Maoist) surrendered before the police in Telangana's Bhadradi Kothagudem district on Saturday, choosing to abandon Naxalism and reintegrate into society, police officials said. The surrendered CPI (Maoist) members included cadres from various ranks, including an Area Committee Member (ACM) from Chhattisgarh and members from bordering villages of Telangana.

"64 Maoists of various cadres i.e. ACM (01), Party Members (10), RPC Committee (09), RPC Militia (19), RPC DAKMS/KMS (11), RPC CNM (06) and RPC GRD (08), decided to leave the path of Naxalism and lead a peaceful life with their family members have surrendered before the IGP Multi Zone -1 and District Police today," the police said in a statement.

Inspector General of Police (Multi Zone-1) S Chandrasekhar Reddy, Kothagudem Superintendent of Police Rohith Raju, Bhadrachalam ASP Vikrant Kumar Singh, and CRPF officials were present during the surrender.

BJP releases list of 3 candidates for MLC bypolls in Maha



TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Sunday announced the names of three candidates for the upcoming Maharashtra Legislative Council by-elections, following approval from the party's Central Election Committee (CEC).

The three candidates announced are: Sandip Diwakarrao Joshi, Sanjay Kishanrao Kenekar and Dadarao Yadavrao Keche.

The by-polls are being held to fill vacant seats in the Legislative Council, and the BJP, aiming to strengthen its presence in the state legislature. Five seats in the state legislative council fell vacant af-

ter the existing MLCs won last year's state assembly election.

The Election Commission of India announced the details of the bypolls for these five seats on March 3. The sitting MLAs would vote for electing the five new MLCs.

The counting of votes would take place on March 27 after the completion of the voting process. Meanwhile, the Maharashtra Assembly Election last year witnessed a decisive victory for the BJP-led Mahayuti alliance, which secured a landslide win with 235 seats. The results marked a significant milestone for the BJP, which emerged as the single-largest party with 132 seats.

Congress alleges massive land conversion scam in Goa

TDG NETWORK
PANAJI

Goa Congress leader Girish Chodan-Congresskar has accused a senior minister in the Goa Govt led by the BJP of orchestrating a massive scam, alleging that crores in bribes were collected to manipulate land classification. In a strongly worded post on social media platform X, Chodankar claimed that landowners paid over Rs1,000 per square meter to have their properties removed from private forest classifications.

He wrote, "Everyone knows the 'rates'--Rs1000+ per sq. meter--to remove land from private forest & convert zones. Crores in bribes were collected, and now he must return the money! So, what does he do? He wants to waste taxpayers' money to challenge a ruling that protects Goa's land--just to safeguard his investor



friends who paid those heavy bribes." As per the post, "The 'Land Conversion Minister' has been hit with a double setback! First, the Supreme Court stopped the sale of private forests, and now the High Court has crushed his corrupt 17(2) land scam." Despite these rulings, Chodankar warned that the minister is planning to challenge the High Court decision--using taxpayer money--to

protect those who had allegedly paid bribes. "This is shameful! He must be sacked immediately! Goa cannot afford ministers who sell our land for personal gain," Chodankar stated. Meanwhile, India's first-ever auction of exploration licences, a significant reform aimed at unlocking the nation's untapped critical and deep-seated mineral resources, was held in Goa. On Thursday, Union Minister G Kishan Reddy and Chief Minister of Goa Pramod Sawant jointly launched the auction of 13 Exploration Licence blocks, covering critical minerals such as Rare Earth Elements (REE), Zinc, Diamond, Copper, and Platinum Group Elements (PGE). "This initiative, facilitated through a transparent online bidding process, is set to accelerate systematic mineral exploration, enhance private sector participation, and reduce import dependency," said the Ministry of Mines in a statement.

4% quota in contracts for all minorities: DKS

TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Saturday said 4 per cent reservation is for minorities and backward classes, and not just for Muslims.

Responding to a question on BJP's allegation that the government is giving 4 per cent reservation in government contracts to Muslims, the DCM stated, "Who said we are giving 4 per cent to Muslims? It is for minorities and backward classes. Minorities also include Christians, Jains, and others."

Shivakumar defended the move after being accused of appeasement politics by the Bharatiya Janata Party, clarifying that the reservation is not only for Muslims, but for all minorities.



"The (Congress) High Command and the CM (Siddaramaiah) have told me to attend the meet."

Speaking to reporters at the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee's office, Shivakumar said,

"The reservation of contracts for minorities is only up to Rs 2 crores. In the past, similar arrangements

were done for SC/STs. This is for all minorities and not just for Muslims." When asked about the BJP's accusation that the reservation was appeasement politics, he said, "They also need livelihood, right? The BJP must keep remembering us; then only will we become stronger."

The Karnataka Deputy CM is also set to attend the meeting on delimitation called by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on March 22 in Chennai. "The (Congress) High Command and the CM (Siddaramaiah) have told me to attend the meet. The CM is not attending as doctors have advised him to rest due to the knee pain. I will be representing the government," he said.

'New entrants in police force should be trained to combat drug mafia'

TDG NETWORK
THRISSUR

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said that new members of police force should add more strength to the effort to free the country from the clutches of the drug mafia. He was speaking after accepting the salute at the passing out parade of 118 Sub-Inspector trainees of the 31st B batch of Kerala Police Academy in Ramavaramparam, Thrissur, according to the press statement.

The drug mafia, which has been spreading uncontrollably in recent times, is destroying society regardless of age and gender. Synthetic drugs are dehumanising hu-



mans. The police and excise are effectively intervening against this. There is also an increase in cybercrimes that misuse modern technologies. The Chief Minister said that there should be a collective effort to combat

and defeat these. He asked that the primary duty of the police is to maintain law and order, but people see the police as saviours and that new members of the force should be trained to perform high-level duties accordingly.

BJP slams Telangana govt for protest ban in Osmania varsity

TDG NETWORK
HYDERABAD

Bharatiya Janata Party Leader Ramchander Rao on Sunday condemned the banning of agitations, dharnas, and demonstrations at Osmania University and said that there is an "undeclared emergency" in Telangana by the State government. "There is an undeclared emergency in Telangana by the government.

The government has directed the Osmania University authorities to ensure that no Dharna or gathering happens on the university campus. The university campus has been the hotbed of agitation, and it was students who helped carve out the state of Telangana," the BJP leader said. "The university is doing it at the behest of the government.

The government want to suppress the students and their demands regarding employment and other things. BJP condemn such act of the government," he added. This comes after Osmania University prohibited agitations, dharnas and demonstrations within its departments, colleges, centres, and administrative buildings. The decision comes citing disruptions to academic and administrative activities.

Bajrang Dal demands removal of Aurangzeb tomb, threatens protest

TDG NETWORK
PUNE

Bajrang Dal leader Nitin Mahajan has demanded the removal of the Aurangzeb tomb in Sambhajinagar and said that if the government fails to do so, then the tomb will meet the same fate like Babri Masjid.

"In Sambhajinagar, a (Aurangzeb's grave) grave is being worshipped. The grave of Sambhaji's murderer is being built... When such graves are worshipped, then the society also develops in that manner... At that time, we were helpless...but now Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal are demanding that it should be removed...

The letter dated March 15, reads, "I hope this letter finds you in good health and high spirits.

On March 17, we will demand to the government that it should be removed... We will greet the government if they remove it, but if that does not happen, then VHP and Bajrang Dal will come out on the streets and launch a huge agitation." Nitin Mahajan said "And we know what happens when the Hindu community carries out an agitation concerning its existence, we all saw what happened in Ayodhya to remove the Babri structure... If the government

does not remove the grave, then we will do Karseva and do so ourselves," he added. Earlier, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and Goshamahal MLA T Raja Singh had written a letter to Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat seeking detailed information regarding the funds allocated and spent by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) on the maintenance of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb's tomb, located in Maharashtra's Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar district.

'Jo karega jaat ki baat, uske kass ke maarunga laa', mocks Gadkari

TDG NETWORK
NAGPUR

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari addressed the Convocation ceremony of the Central India Group of Institutions in Nagpur on Saturday, emphasizing the importance of equality and rejecting caste-based politics.

Gadkari asserted that an individual's worth should be determined by their qualities rather than caste, religion, language, or gender. "A person is not known by

their caste, sect, religion, language or sex, but only by their qualities. That is why we will not discriminate against anyone based on caste, sect, religion, language, or sex," Gadkari said, stressing the need for equality and fairness.

Despite being in politics, a field where caste-based identity often plays a significant role, Gadkari reiterated that he would not engage in such practices, even if it might cost him votes. "I am in politics, and



here all of this goes on, but I refuse this even though

it may or may not get me votes," he stated. Gad-

Gadkari asserted that an individual's worth should be determined by their qualities rather than caste, religion, language, or gender.

kari further recalled how many people approached him based on their caste identities, but he remained steadfast in his principles. He shared an anecdote with the audience, saying, "I told 50,000 people, 'Jo karega jaat ki baat, uske kass ke maarunga laa,'" mean-

ing he would not entertain caste-based discussions. "My friends told me that I may have caused self-harm by saying this. But I am not concerned about it; one does not lose his life if he loses elections. I will stick to my principles," Gadkari added.

Whitewashing of Sambhal mosque begins after HC order

TDG NETWORK
SAMBHAL

The work of whitewashing of Jama Masjid in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal has begun after the Allahabad High Court granted permission on March 12.

Contractor assigned by the ASI to whitewash the Sambhal Jama Masjid, stated that the work is likely to be completed within a week and a total of eight people have been working on it.

"A total of eight people

are at work. The work of whitewashing has been started... We will finish the work within a week. We have been only directed to whitewash the mosque. We have been assigned by the ASI," he said. While hearing the case of the Sambhal Jama Masjid on March 12, the Allahabad High Court gave permission to whitewash the mosque from the outside and also decorate it with lights without tampering with anything.

A HOMECOMING FROM THE HEAVENS

SpaceX's Crew Dragon approaches the International Space Station for docking during the Crew-10 mission, carrying a relief crew to bring home two stranded astronauts.



NASA astronauts Sunita Williams and Barry Wilmore pictured ahead of their Boeing Starliner spacecraft flight. (PTI)

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

In the quiet darkness of early morning, a bright white spacecraft drifted slowly toward the International Space Station (ISS). Inside SpaceX's Crew Dragon capsule, four astronauts from three different countries peered out the windows as the station grew larger against the black of space. On the ISS, NASA astronauts Sunita "Sunni" Williams and Barry "Butch" Wilmore were waiting anxiously. This moment was nine months in the making. What was meant to be a routine week-long trip to space had turned into an unexpected odyssey — and now, their ride home was finally here.

AN UNPLANNED MISSION EXTENSION

Williams and Wilmore's journey began in June 2024 with triumph and trepidation. They had launched on the first crewed test flight of Boeing's Starliner — a new spacecraft meant to ferry astronauts to the ISS. The plan was simple: fly to the station, spend a week assisting with tests and logistics, then return to Earth aboard Starliner.

But fate had other plans. Shortly after reaching orbit, Starliner began experiencing serious technical problems — a series of helium leaks and thruster failures that crippled the ship's performance. Mission controllers faced an agonizing decision: they ultimately ordered Starliner to return home empty, without its crew, rather than risk a human ride in a malfunctioning spacecraft.

That decision left Williams and Wilmore stranded aboard the ISS, effectively becoming unexpected long-term crew members. What was supposed to be an eight- or ten-day mission stretched out to nine months. NASA quickly reassigned them as part of the station's Expedition crew, integrating them into daily station life.

The two astronauts adapted with professionalism and humor. "Eventually we wanna go home... but we have a lot to do up here before we go," Williams said during a live video update, smiling in zero-g. She even joked that the ISS had become her "happy place." Despite the delay, they didn't feel like castaways abandoned in orbit — they felt like part of the team.

Their extended mission had purpose. Over those months, Wilmore and Williams became integral



The docking of the capsule, with only a dummy on board, was concluded nearly 400 kms over the Earth. X

TDG EXPLAINER

to the ISS crew, performing maintenance tasks like plumbing repairs, computer updates, and even preparing for extravehicular activities. They celebrated milestones far from home — witnessing a U.S. election, Thanksgiving, and Christmas from 260 miles above Earth.

NASA ensured they had what they needed: resupply ships delivered fresh clothes, food, and even holiday treats. But the isolation was hard. Wilmore watched his daughter's final year of high school from orbit, and Williams missed the simple feel of Earth under her feet. They knew NASA was working tirelessly on a plan to bring them home — but when, and how, remained uncertain.

CHALLENGES IN MODERN SPACE RESCUE

Devising a return plan highlighted the intricacies of modern space exploration. In the early days of human spaceflight, being "stranded" in space could have meant waiting indefinitely or an emergency evacuation. But today, with multiple spacecraft and international partnerships available, NASA had options — if they could navigate the technical and diplomatic hurdles.

Since Starliner was out

of commission, NASA turned to SpaceX's Crew Dragon, developed under the Commercial Crew Program. Fortunately, a SpaceX capsule was already scheduled to fly to the ISS in September 2024 on a routine crew rotation mission (Crew-9). NASA made the extraordinary decision to fly that mission with a "downsized" crew of two instead of four — leaving two empty seats for Williams and Wilmore.

In late September, the Dragon spacecraft — fittingly named Endurance

— arrived at the ISS, delivering NASA astronaut Nick Hague and Russian cosmonaut Aleksandr Gorbunov. The two empty seats were now parked in orbit, awaiting Williams and Wilmore's return.

But nothing in spaceflight is simple. Wilmore and Williams couldn't leave immediately. NASA needed to launch a relief crew on another SpaceX Dragon (Crew-10) before they could come home. The Crew-10 mission was scheduled for February 2025, but last-minute technical problems — a set of faulty batteries — forced SpaceX to swap out the capsule for an older, flight-proven model. The delay pushed the launch to mid-March, extending

the astronauts' stay by several more weeks.

Through it all, international cooperation proved essential. Crew-10's roster reflected global teamwork: NASA pilots Anne McClain and Nichole Ayers, JAXA astronaut Takuya Onishi, and Roscosmos cosmonaut Kirill Peskov. NASA and Boeing worked to troubleshoot Starliner's issues on Earth, while SpaceX managed schedules and safety checks for Dragon. Russian and Japanese partners not only approved the plan but actively participated in the rescue mission. Communication between Houston, Hawthorne, Moscow, and Tsukuba was continuous, underscoring how the ISS truly functions as a worldwide alliance.

LIFE IN PROLONGED WEIGHTLESSNESS

For Williams and Wilmore, life aboard the ISS became both remarkable and routine. They followed the station's daily rhythm: waking in their sleeping pods as Earth dawned below, working through science experiments and maintenance checklists, exercising two hours a day to stay fit, and ending with an evening conference with mission control.

But an extended stay in space takes a toll. Muscles and bones weaken in microgravity because they no longer bear weight. Even with rigorous exercise — resistance machines and jogging on a treadmill strapped in place — astronauts can lose up to 20% of muscle strength and 1-2% of bone density per month. Williams and Wilmore pushed themselves daily on the exercise equipment, knowing they would need to be strong for re-entry.

Microgravity also affects cognition. Studies show it can slow down processing speeds and impair attention. Williams and Wilmore occasionally participated in cognitive tests, and while their results showed some slowing, they knew their thinking would return to normal on Earth. The two astronauts leaned on each other and their crewmates, maintaining their humor and professionalism.

They found joy in small things: taking photos of Earth, identifying wildfires in California, and shar-

ing inside jokes. Looking out the cupola window at the stars reminded them of why they became astronauts in the first place. That mix of curiosity and resilience carried them through the long wait.

THE DRAGON ARRIVES

On March 15, 2025, their long wait ended. A Falcon 9 rocket roared to life at Kennedy Space Center, carrying the Crew-10 Dragon toward orbit. After a 28-hour orbital chase, the Dragon steadily closed in on the ISS.

At 12:04 a.m. Eastern Time on March 16, the Dragon gently docked to the ISS's Harmony module. Even though docking was automated, the moment was tense and emotional. "Contact and capture confirmed," came the call from Houston — and a cheer erupted in Mission Control.

Williams and Wilmore shared a relieved embrace. After 270 days in space, help had finally arrived.

The station commander presented Williams and Wilmore with a playful award — an "extended mission patch" drawn with a marker — to commemorate their record-setting stay. It was a moment of shared relief and celebration.

HOMEWARD BOUND AND SPLASHDOWN

On March 19, Williams and Wilmore finally undocked from the ISS aboard Endurance alongside Hague and Gorbunov.

A series of thruster burns aligned them with their return trajectory.

Re-entry was intense. As the capsule slammed into the atmosphere, gravity returned with crushing force. Plasma created a fiery light show outside the windows. Moments later, Endurance deployed its parachutes and splashed down off the coast of Florida.

Recovery teams secured the capsule and opened the hatch. Wilmore and Williams smiled at the rescue crew. After being in zero gravity for nine months, they were carefully lifted out and placed in reclining stretchers. Despite weakened muscles, they gave a thumbs-up and waved to the cameras — they were home.

REHABILITATING EARTHLINGS: RECOVERY AND REFLECTION

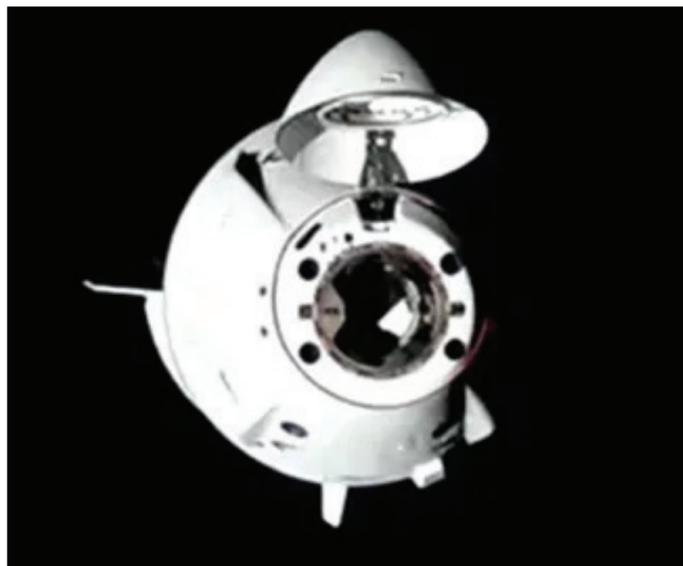
NASA's post-landing protocols swung into action immediately. After nine months in microgravity, Williams and Wilmore faced weeks of rehabilitation. They had to rebuild muscle strength and balance through a structured 45-day program. Cognitive tests and vision checks would ensure that any microgravity-related changes were temporary.

Emotionally, returning home was a sensory overload — the feel of a breeze, the sound of rustling leaves, the taste of fresh food. Both astronauts reunited with their families — Wilmore hugged his daughter, who had nearly finished high school, and Williams was greeted by her husband and siblings.

LESSONS FOR FUTURE EXPLORATION

This mission underscored the resilience and adaptability required for future space travel. As humanity sets its sights on the Moon and Mars, the ability to handle unexpected failures will be critical. The cooperation between NASA, SpaceX, and international partners showed that a network of spacecraft and global teamwork can make the difference between crisis and success.

For Williams and Wilmore, their record-setting mission will be remembered not only as a triumph of engineering but also as a testament to human endurance and teamwork. Their journey home from the heavens stands as a beacon of confidence for the future of space exploration — a reminder that even when the plan changes, the mission can still succeed.



Axiom Mission 3. Wikipedia

RED SEA ON EDGE: HOUTHIS' WAR BEYOND YEMEN

Houthis' Red Sea attacks, linked to the Gaza war, are disrupting global trade and escalating US-Houthi tensions.

The Houthis, officially known as Ansar Allah, are a Zaidi Shia Muslim rebel group from northern Yemen. The movement emerged in the 1990s as a religious and political opposition to Saudi Arabian influence and what it viewed as the Yemeni government's corruption and marginalization of Zaidis. Over time, the Houthis transformed into a powerful insurgent force.

In the early 2000s, the Houthis fought multiple rebellions against Yemen's long-time authoritarian president, Ali Abdullah Saleh, demanding greater autonomy for their northern stronghold. During the 2011 Arab Spring, President Saleh was forced to transfer power to his deputy, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, whose government struggled with political instability. Taking advantage of the turmoil, the Houthis seized the northern province of Saada and later captured the capital, Sanaa, in



US and UK warplanes bomb Yemen, targeting Hajjah with 2 airstrikes and Hodeidah with 4 airstrikes. (X/fisherofsea)

2014.

In 2015, they expanded their control over western Yemen, forcing Hadi to flee the country. This led to a Saudi-led military intervention, backed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the United States, to restore Hadi's government. Despite years of airstrikes and ground fighting, the Houthis retained control over much of northern and western Yemen.

IDEOLOGY AND ALLIES

The Houthis align themselves with Iran's "Axis of Resistance", which includes groups such as Lebanon's Hezbollah and Hamas. They openly declare their opposition to Israel, the US, and Western powers.

Their leader, Abdul Malik al-Houthi, succeeded his brother Hussein al-Houthi, who was killed by

Yemeni forces in 2004.

The US and Saudi Arabia accuse Iran of arming the Houthis with drones, ballistic missiles, and cruise missiles, violating a UN arms embargo. These weapons have been used in attacks against Saudi Arabia and the UAE. While Iran denies direct involvement, reports suggest it has helped the Houthis develop domestic drone and missile production. The group also receives military support from Hezbollah, according to US and European intelligence sources.

HOUTHIS-CONTROLLED AREAS

The Houthis govern Sanaa and northwestern Yemen, including parts of the Red Sea coastline. Most of Yemen's population lives in these regions, where the Houthis operate a de facto government, collecting taxes and print-



US-led coalition strikes Yemen on February 3, 2024, responding to Houthi aggression in the Red Sea. (US Central Command)

ing currency. Meanwhile, the internationally recognized government is based in Aden, overseen by the Presidential Leadership Council since 2022.

WHY ARE THE HOUTHIS ATTACKING RED SEA SHIPS?

Since November 2023, the Houthis have launched drone and missile attacks on ships passing through the Red Sea, claiming to target vessels linked to Israel, the US, and the UK in response to the war in Gaza.

- November 19, 2023 - The Houthis hijacked the commercial ship Galaxy Leader.

Since then, they have launched dozens of attacks, damaging at least 34 vessels.

- February 2024 - The cargo ship Rubymar sank after being hit by a Houthi missile.

- March 6, 2024 - A

missile attack on the Barbados-flagged ship True Confidence killed three crew members.

Although the Houthis initially claimed to target Israel-linked ships, many attacked vessels had no connection to Israel. In retaliation for US-UK airstrikes, the Houthis expanded their attacks to ships owned or operated by US and UK companies.

IMPACT ON GLOBAL TRADE

The Red Sea is a critical maritime route, handling nearly 15% of global seaborne trade via the Suez Canal. Due to Houthi threats, major shipping companies have rerouted vessels around Africa's Cape of Good Hope, leading to higher fuel costs, longer transit times, and supply chain disruptions.

US AND UK BOMBING YEMEN

To counter Houthi attacks, the US and UK launched airstrikes on January 11, 2024, targeting drone launch sites, missile storage facilities, and radar systems.

- January 2024 - Initial US-UK airstrikes hit Houthi military positions.

- February 2024 - The US shot down drones and missiles aimed at Red Sea ships.

- March 2024 - Despite continued airstrikes, the Houthis intensified attacks on shipping.

President Joe Biden defended the strikes as a "direct response" to attacks on Red Sea vessels, emphasizing that the US aims to protect global trade and maritime security.

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS OF US-HOUTHICONFLICT

- The ongoing confrontation between the Houthis and the US risks expand-

ing beyond Yemen. Increased US military action - If Houthi attacks persist, the US may escalate airstrikes or deploy additional naval forces.

- Iran's Role - The US has warned Iran against further arming the Houthis, but Tehran continues to deny direct involvement.

- Regional Stability - The conflict could draw in other players like Saudi Arabia, which has tried negotiating a peace deal with the Houthis since a UN-brokered truce in April 2022.

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

The war in Yemen has killed over 160,000 people, according to Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED).

More than 4 million people have been displaced, with Yemen experiencing one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.



Trump ordered airstrikes that killed Houthi members in Yemen. (X/ThePatriotOasis)

WHAT'S NEXT?

While Saudi Arabia seeks a political settlement, the US and its allies remain focused on military deterrence. With the Houthis showing no signs of backing down, the Red Sea remains a volatile hotspot, posing risks to global trade and regional stability.

TDG NETWORK

Abu Qatal- Ghost from LeT who worked in the shadows killed

A significant blow for Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) came in the form of senior terrorist Abu Qatal, alias Qatal Sindhi, who was killed by unknown gunmen in Jhelum, Sindh, Pakistan, on Saturday evening. The killing is a significant setback for the terror group, as he was directly responsible for planning several high-profile attacks in Jammu and Kashmir.

To better understand his killing, we must know in detail about his life in terrorism. What was his role in the 'Hindu Pilgrims Attack' and 'Rajouri Attack'? How was he connected to 26/11 plotter Hafiz Saeed and how did he fall into the 'most wanted' category of Indian security organizations? Let's read about Qatal in detail:



Reasi bus attack. X/Contrarian_View

WHO WAS ABU QATAL?

Abu Qatal was a high-priority target for Indian security organizations because of his extensive role in planning and conducting attacks on security personnel and civilians in Jammu and Kashmir. He was well-connected with the mastermind behind the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, Hafiz Saeed, and was among LeT's most senior handlers spearheading the terror campaign within the region.

One of the most notorious actions he was involved in was the June 9, 2024, bus attack on Hindu pilgrims in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir. Nine individuals and seven out-of-state pilgrims were killed, and 41 were injured in the brutal attack.

Qatal's name also came up in relation to the January 2023 Rajouri attack, where terrorists attacked civilians in Dhangri

village, killing seven people, two of whom were children, and injuring several others. The attack was preceded by an IED explosion the following day, furthering the destruction.

His extended engagement in such acts of violence rendered him a prime suspect for various probes by India's National Investigation Agency (NIA). The agency had indicted Qatal in a February 2024 chargesheet, along with other Pakistan-based LeT commanders Saifullah alias Sajid Jutt and Mohd Qasim.

ABU QATAL'S ROLE IN LASHKAR-E-TAIBA

Active in Poonch-Rajouri area since the early 2000s, Qatal gradually moved up the Lashkar-e-Taiba ranks to become a central figure controlling cross-border terror activities. He coordinated attacks by keeping close links with PoK-based

militants.

Aside from his personal role in terror operations, Qatal played a key role in the establishment of two proxy terror organizations: 'People's Anti-Fascist Force' (PAFF) and 'The Resistant Force' (TRF). These groups were established to serve as a front organization for LeT and Jaish-e-Mohammed's activities and have plausible deniability.

PAFF was designated as a terrorist organization by India's Ministry of Home Affairs on January 7, 2023, due to its role in orchestrating several attacks on civilians and security forces in Jammu and Kashmir.

THE ATTACK THAT LED TO HIS DEATH

Even though Abu Qatal was enjoying the security cover of LeT militants and plainclothes men, as well as the protection of

Pakistan's armed forces, he was gunned down in the Dina area of Jhelum near Zeenat Hotel.

Unknown attackers sprayed his convoy with a number of shots, fatally injuring Qatal and one of his security personnel in the process. Another security guard was left seriously injured during the attack.

IS THE THREAT OVER NOW?

Qatal's demise has been considered a major setback for Lashkar-e-Taiba, as he was spearheading terror activities and was responsible for managing proxy organizations. But security analysts warn that LeT's resistance to change and flexibility could indicate that the group will continue its activities despite the loss of a key figure.

Indian security establishments are cautious and vigi-



Security personnel paid tribute to the soldiers who lost their lives in the Poonch terror attack in Rajouri in July 2024. Indian Army

lance as LeT and its associated networks' circumstances are such since the group's resili-

One of the most notorious actions he was involved in was the June 9, 2024, bus attack on Hindu pilgrims in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir. Nine individuals and seven out-of-state pilgrims were killed, and 41 were injured in the brutal attack.



Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist Abu Qatal. X/erbmjha

ence from leadership loss has been well documented previously.

While Qatal's demise weakens the terror group, his violence and violence network

continue to test regional security.

TDG NETWORK

PICTURE PERFECT



Kareena Kapoor poses for her social media. (INSTAGRAM)

AR RAHMAN DISCHARGED FROM HOSPITAL AFTER ROUTINE CHECK-UP

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Music Maestro AR Rahman, who was admitted to the Apollo Hospital on Sunday after suffering from dehydration symptoms, was discharged after a routine check-up, the hospital said in a statement.

The Oscar-winning music maestro was hospitalised after a bout of dehydration and neck pain following travel, his team said today.

"AR Rahman visited Apollo Hospitals, Greams Road this morning with dehydration symptoms and got discharged after routine check-up," the medical bulletin of the hospital read.

Earlier today, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin shared a health update on Oscar-winning musician AR Rahman after he was hospitalised in Chennai due



to dehydration and neck pain.

Stalin took to his Twitter handle to share the present health condition of music composer Rahman. He stated that the music maestro is fine and will be back

home soon. He wrote, "As soon as I heard the news that Isaipuyal @arrahman had been admitted to the hospital due to ill health, I contacted the doctors and inquired about his health!

They said he is fine and will be back home soon! Happy!"

The music maestro's team also refuted "fake" reports, which claimed he had been admitted to hospital following "chest pain".

"It's fake news (on heart issues) spreading now. Rahman went to hospital because he got dehydrated and has neck pain due to travel," AR Rahman team said

Rahman, 58, is currently busy with his music projects and several gigs. The singer had joined Ed Sheeran during his Mathematics Tour concert performance in Chennai last month.

He is also set to compose music for the Dhanush and Kriti Sanon starrer 'Tere Ishk Mein', which is a spiritual sequel to the blockbuster film Raanjhana. It is directed by Anand L Rai.

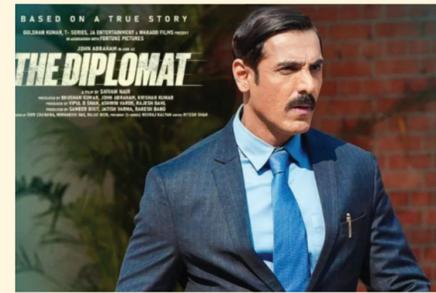
John-starrer 'The Diplomat' earns Rs 4.68 cr at box office on 2nd day

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

"The Diplomat" starring John Abraham earned Rs 4.68 crore net at the box office on its second day, the makers announced on Sunday. Directed by Shivam Nair, the film released in theatres on Friday and collected Rs 4.03 crore on its opening day. Following, it made Rs 4.68

crore on Saturday. The total box office collection of the film stands at Rs 8.71 crore net.

Production banner T-



Series shared a poster depicting the box office numbers. "Negotiations mastered, victory secured. #TheDiplomat shines

at the Box Office. Book your tickets now. #TheDiplomat in cinemas now," read the caption of the post.

"The Diplomat" is produced by Abraham's JA Entertainment along with T-Series, Vipul D Shah, Ashwin Varde, Rajesh Bahl of Wakao Films, Sameer Dixit and Jatish Varma of Fortune Pictures and Rakesh Dang of Seeta Films. Inspired by true events, the film features Abraham in the role of diplomat JP Singh, who steps in to rescue an Indian woman named Uzma, played by Sadia Khateeb of "Raksha Bandhan" fame, from Pakistan.

Sonu Sood asks people to be kind to Ibrahim-Khushi

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Actor and philanthropist Sonu Sood has spoken out in support of newcomers in the film industry amid growing online criticism of Ibrahim Ali Khan and Khushi Kapoor, who were recently seen in the Netflix film Nadaaniyan.

On Saturday, Sood took to his Instagram Story to share a message urging people to be "kinder to debutants." He also emphasized that "nobody is perfect" when

starting out, as every artist learns and improves with experience.

"Be kind to debutants in the film fraternity and elsewhere. Nobody was perfect when they started. We all learn with experience. Only a handful get a second chance. A good or bad performance in any field is the collective responsibility of every technician involved. We are all learners. Let's support and encourage them. Spread love," read his Instagram post.

Take a look

The film, starring Khushi and Ibrahim, premiered on Netflix on March 7.

'Nadaaniyan' is directed by Shauna Gautam and produced by Karan Johar, Apoorva Mehta, and Somen Mishra under Dharmatic Entertainment. It also marked Ibrahim Ali Khan's debut in the industry.

The film also boasts an impressive supporting cast, including Mahima Chaudhary, Suniel Shetty, Dia Mirza, and Jugal Hansraj in key roles.



BRAIN PICKING



One last try can change our whole life.

— NEETU KAPOOR
(Indian Actress)

Varun, Janhvi-starrer 'Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari' release date postponed

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

'Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari', a romantic entertainer starring Varun Dhawan and Janhvi Kapoor in the lead roles, has a new theatrical release date. According to the makers, the film will hit the big screens on September 12 this year.

Originally slated for a release on April 18 this year, the makers have now postponed the release date due to undisclosed reasons. The film is written and directed by Sashank Khaitan.

Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari is one of the highly anticipated films of the year



as it marks the second film collaboration of Varun Dhawan and Janhvi Kapoor after the movie 'Bawaal' in 2023. The film also stars Sanya Malhotra, Rohit Saraf, Maniesh Paul, and Akshay Oberoi in prominent roles.

It is produced by Hiroo Yash Johar, Karan Johar, Apoorva Mehta, and Shashank Khaitan.

Varun Dhawan, who plays Sunny in the film, often

shares behind-the-scenes videos and photos from the sets of the movie. In one of the BTS videos, the 'Badla' actor was joined by the director Sashank Kha

Varun Dhawan dropped a funny behind-the-scenes video from the sets of his upcoming film 'Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari' on Thursday. He was joined by the director Shashank Khaitan in the clip.

'War 2': Hrithik Roshan-Jr NTR set to unleash mayhem

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Yash Raj Films has finally revealed the release date of War 2, the highly-awaited sequel to the 2019 blockbuster War. Starring Hrithik Roshan, Jr NTR and Kiara Advani in lead roles, the actioner, helmed by Ayan Mukerji, is set to hit the theatres ahead of Independence Day, on August 14, this year.



YRF announced the release

date amid delay rumours due to Hrithik's recent knee in-

jury. Taking to their official X handle, they re-shared a fan-made video and wrote, "Must say... you have set it up brilliantly even before we have started our marketing of #War2... there will be mayhem in cinemas on 14 August 2025, worldwide..."

Meanwhile, Jr NTR revealed in an interview last year that he had creative differences with War 2 di-

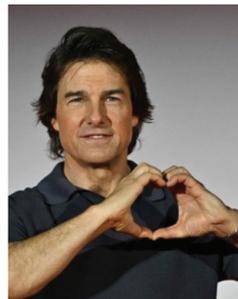
rector Ayan Mukerji. He said, "When I was shooting for War 2, Ayan did not know what was going to come. Because he was trying to bring it out from me, that's how this was going to come out. I told him, 'Ayan, I am very instinctive; kuch na kuch aa jayega (something will come)'. Now, he is not used to doing this at all; he loves prep, and I am completely the opposite.

Tom Cruise, Ana de Armas fuel dating rumours with their second appearance

AGENCIES
LONDON

Hollywood actors Tom Cruise and Ana de Armas have once again fueled dating rumors after being spotted together in London earlier this week, reported People.

The actors, who have been seen together multiple times in recent months, were recently photographed arriving at the London Heliport, leading fans to speculate if their relationship is more than 'just friendship.'



Meanwhile, this isn't the first time the duo has been seen at the heliport together. According to People magazine, Cruise and Ar-

mas were also spotted there on Thursday night.

Earlier, on February 13, Cruise was spotted with Armas during a night out

in London. In the pictures captured by paparazzi, the 'Blonde' actress was seen carrying two bags of takeout from a restaurant as the pair greeted fans stationed outside before getting into a taxi. At the time, a source informed People magazine that the two were simply friends having dinner with their agents to discuss "potential collaborations down the line," and also mentioned that the pair "appeared to have no romantic connection, just friends."

Meanwhile, on the work

front, the Tom Cruise will be seen in 'Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning'. Set to release on May 23, 2025, The Final Reckoning is the sequel to the 2023 film Dead Reckoning Part One.

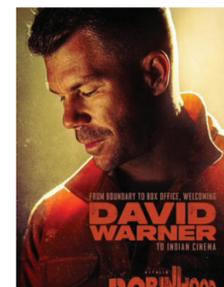
Newcomers to the franchise include Holt McCallany, Janet McTeer, Nick Offerman, Hannah Waddingham, Katy O'Brian, and Stephen Oyung, adding further excitement to this highly anticipated film directed by Christopher McQuarrie, as per Deadline.

Cricketer David Warner to feature in Telugu movie 'Robinhood'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

David Warner's fans in India are in for an exciting treat as the former Australian cricketer, renowned for his explosive batting, is set to make his debut in Telugu cinema.

On Saturday, Warner took to his X account to announce that he would be making a special appearance in the upcoming film Robinhood, which stars Nithiin and Sreeleela. He shared the film's poster, giving fans a



glimpse of his look and revealing the release date.

"Indian Cinema, here I come. Excited to be a part of

#Robinhood. Thoroughly enjoyed shooting for this one. GRAND RELEASE WORLDWIDE ON MARCH 28th," Warner wrote in his post.

Directed by Venky Kudumula and produced by Mythri Movie Makers, Robinhood is expected to be an action-packed entertainer. The film also features music by GV Prakash Kumar and marks the second collaboration between Nithiin and Venky Kudumula after their successful film Bheeshma.

SHEETLA ASHTAMI - A FESTIVAL OF PURITY, HEALTH, AND DEVOTION



DR KAILASHE PRAGY SUTHAR

Basoda Puja is dedicated to Goddess Sheetla and celebrated on Krishna Paksha Ashtami after Holi. Basoda is also known as Sheetla Ashtami. Usually it falls after eight days of Holi but many people observe it on first Monday or Friday after Holi. Sheetla Ashtami is more popular in North Indian states like Gujarat, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

According to Basoda customs families don't lit fire for cooking. Hence most families cook one day before and consume stale food on Sheetla Ashtami day. It is believed that Goddess Sheetla controls smallpox, chickenpox, measles, etc. and people worship her to ward off any outbreak of those diseases.

In Gujarat, the similar ritual as Basoda is observed just a day before Krishna Janmashtami and is known as Shitala Satam. Shitala Satam is also dedicated to Goddess Sheetla and no fresh food is cooked on the day of Sheetla Satam.

Sheetla Ashtami, also known as Basoda, is a Hindu festival dedicated to Goddess Sheetla, the deity associated with cleanliness, hygiene, and protection from diseases, especially smallpox. Cel-

ebrated on the eighth day (Ashtami) of the Krishna Paksha (waning phase of the moon) in the Hindu month of Chaitra, this festival holds immense significance in North India, particularly in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, and Madhya Pradesh. Devotees observe this day with great reverence, offering prayers and following unique rituals to seek the goddess's blessings for good health and well-being.

Sheetla (means the "one who cools" in Sanskrit) Ashtami is dedicated to Goddess Sheetla and celebrated 8 days after the festival of Holi.

The Idol of Goddess Sheetla

She is holding a pot of water, a broom with a dustpan, and Neem leaves. She is sitting on a donkey. The relevance as simply unzing the importance of cleanliness, staying hydrated, and using herbs such as Neem that act as natural antibiotics for the body.

The Rituals

Since this day falls during the transition from spring to summer, the ritual is to eat meals prepared during the previous day. It is a reminder that this is the last day of the year when you can consume previous days' food.

The upcoming summer season will not allow for the same, with rising temperatures and growth in microorganisms (refrigeration just postpones their growth, but microorganisms are in the air once temperatures rise).

Mythological Significance

The legend of Sheetla Ashtami finds mention in



ancient Hindu scriptures like the Skanda Purana and Bhavishya Purana. According to mythology, Goddess Sheetla is considered an incarnation of Goddess Parvati or Shakti. It is believed that she rides a donkey and holds a broom, a fan, and a pot of cold water, symbolizing cleanliness and the cooling effect she brings to those suffering from heat-induced ailments like smallpox, measles, and chickenpox.

One of the most popular legends associated with Sheetla Ashtami is that of King Birat. According to the story, his kingdom was once struck by an epidemic that caused widespread suffering. Upon seeking guidance from sages, he was advised to worship Goddess Sheetla and observe a fast in her honor. As soon as he and his subjects followed the prescribed rituals, the epidemic subsided, reinforcing faith in the goddess's power to cure and prevent diseases.

Rituals and Observances

Sheetla Ashtami is marked by a unique set of customs and traditions. Unlike other



Hindu festivals, where fresh food is prepared for offerings, Sheetla Ashtami is characterized by the practice of consuming food cooked a day before (Basoda). This tradition signifies the goddess's association with health and hygiene, as well as the cooling properties of stale food, which was believed to be beneficial during the onset of summer.

1. Fasting and Worship

Devotees wake up early, take a holy bath, and visit Sheetla Mata temples to offer prayers. Many women observe a day-long fast, seeking blessings for their family's well-being. The goddess is offered special offerings like curd, rice, roti, jaggery, and sweet dishes prepared a day in advance.

2. Basoda Tradition

The term 'Basoda' literally means 'the day of stale

food.' On this day, families consume food that was prepared the previous night. Popular dishes include puris, kheer, sweet rice, and besan laddoos. This practice is rooted in the belief that fresh cooking generates heat, which might lead to health problems in the warm season.

3. Sheetla Mata Temples and Pilgrimage

Devotees flock to Sheetla Mata temples, such as the renowned Sheetla Mata Temple in Gurgaon, Haryana, and Sheetla Mata Dham in Rajasthan. They offer flowers, turmeric, and vermilion while singing devotional songs and bhajans.

4. Community Feasts and Charity

Many communities organize special feasts where devotees distribute food among the needy. Donations of grains, clothes, and money to the poor are considered auspicious on this day.

5. Avoidance of Fire

One of the key aspects of this festival is refraining from lighting a fire for cooking. The symbolic practice underscores the importance of cooling and relaxation, preventing excess heat generation in the body and environment.

Regional Celebrations

The observance of Sheetla Ashtami varies across different regions, each having its unique customs and beliefs.

1. Rajasthan

In Rajasthan, especially in Jaipur and Udaipur, grand celebrations take place at Sheetla Mata temples. Women prepare large quantities of food a day before and offer it to the goddess before partaking in the meal with their

families. Special fairs are organized, where devotees gather to sing hymns and perform aartis.

2. Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh

In these states, households follow strict fasting rituals. People also bathe in sacred rivers like the Ganges and Yamuna before visiting temples. Folk songs praising Sheetla Mata are sung in villages, and devotees apply turmeric paste as a mark of devotion.

3. Gujarat

In Gujarat, the festival is known as Sheetla Satam, observed a day before Janmashtami. Families avoid cooking and consume cold meals. Special prayers are held in temples dedicated to Sheetla Mata.

Health and Hygiene Connection

Sheetla Ashtami emphasizes the importance of hygiene and disease prevention, a belief that resonates with modern health principles. The festival serves as a reminder of the significance of cleanliness and sanitation in maintaining overall well-being. The practice of consuming pre-cooked food indirectly highlights the necessity of food preservation and safe consumption methods. It also aligns with the idea of giving the digestive system a break by avoiding freshly cooked heavy meals.

Scientific Perspective

From a scientific standpoint, the traditional practices followed during Sheetla Ashtami align with certain health benefits:

- **Cooling Effect:** Eating pre-cooked food allows the body to cool down, preventing heat-related

illnesses.

- **Disease Prevention:** The emphasis on cleanliness and hygiene resonates with modern health awareness campaigns.

- **Immunity Boost:** Observing fasts and consuming simple foods can aid digestion and detoxify the body.

Modern Relevance

In today's fast-paced world, where stress and pollution contribute to various health issues, the essence of Sheetla Ashtami remains relevant. The festival underscores the importance of:

- Following proper hygiene practices to prevent infections.
- Recognizing the role of diet in maintaining health.
- Honoring traditions that promote physical and mental well-being.
- Encouraging communal harmony through collective worship and charitable acts.

Sheetla Ashtami is not just a religious festival but also a cultural and health-centric tradition that underscores the importance of cleanliness, disease prevention, and devotion. The observance of this auspicious day is a beautiful amalgamation of faith, science, and community spirit. Whether through the practice of consuming pre-cooked food, observing fasts, or engaging in acts of charity, the festival imparts valuable lessons that remain relevant across generations. By celebrating Sheetla Ashtami with sincerity and awareness, devotees continue to uphold the rich traditions that promote holistic well-being and spiritual fulfillment.

Gangaur: Rajasthan's vibrant festival of devotion, tradition, and colours

TDG NETWORK

Gangaur is one of the most vibrant and significant festivals celebrated in Rajasthan, deeply rooted in the culture and traditions of the state. Observed with great enthusiasm by women, this festival honors Goddess Gauri (Parvati), the consort of Lord Shiva, symbolizing marital bliss, devotion, and prosperity. Gangaur is not just a religious festival but also a grand social and cultural event, bringing communities together in a colorful celebration.

SIGNIFICANCE OF GANGAUR

Gangaur derives its name from 'Gan' (Lord Shiva) and 'Gaur' (Goddess Parvati), representing the divine union of the two deities. The festival is primarily observed by married and unmarried women, who pray for the well-being of their husbands or future spouses. It is believed that Goddess Parvati observed rigorous penance to win the love of Lord Shiva, making this festival a symbol of dedication, love, and harmony in married life.

Gangaur holds immense importance in Rajasthan, where women observe fasts, dress in traditional attire, and participate in processions, making it a spectacular event that showcases the state's rich heritage.

DURATION AND TIMING

The festival lasts for 18 days, starting from the first day of Chaitra (March-April) and concluding on the third day of Shukla Paksha in the same month. Gangaur

is celebrated with great enthusiasm across Rajasthan, especially by women, as a festival dedicated to Goddess Gauri (Parvati), symbolizing marital bliss, devotion, and prosperity. The festival lasts for 18 days, starting from the first day of Chaitra (March-April), and involves a series of rituals, fasting, and grand processions.

KEY RITUALS AND TRADITIONS OF GANGAUR CELEBRATION

1. **CLAY IDOLS AND WORSHIP**
 - Women create and decorate clay idols of Lord Shiva and Goddess Gauri at home.
 - These idols are worshipped daily with devotion, using flowers, wheatgrass, and sacred offerings.
 - The worship continues for 18 days, with special songs and prayers dedicated to the goddess.
2. **FASTING AND DEVOTION**
 - Married women observe fasts for the well-being of their husbands.
 - Unmarried girls also fast, praying for a suitable life partner.
 - Some women eat only one meal a day, while others follow more rigorous fasting traditions.

This period coincides with the onset of spring, signifying renewal, fertility, and prosperity.

Gangaur is marked by a series of elaborate rituals, each carrying deep symbolic meaning:

1. PREPARATION AND FASTING

Women begin preparations well in advance by crafting



small clay idols of Shiva and Parvati, decorating them beautifully. They observe strict fasting during the 18 days, with some women eating only once a day and others refraining from food altogether on certain days.

2. MEHENDI AND TRADITIONAL ATTIRE

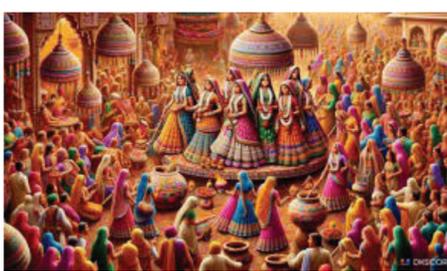
Applying mehendi (henna) on hands and feet is an essential part of Gangaur, symbolizing prosperity and marital happiness. Women dress in colorful lehengas, odhnis, and traditional jewelry, reflecting the grandeur of Rajasthan's royal heritage.

3. SONGS AND FOLK PERFORMANCES

During the festival, women sing traditional Gangaur songs, narrating tales of Goddess Parvati and her devotion. Folk performances, including Ghoomar dance and puppet shows, add to the festive spirit.

4. PROCESSION OF IDOLS

On the final day, grand processions take place across Rajasthan, with beautifully adorned idols of Gauri and Shiva carried in decorated



palanquins. These processions are accompanied by traditional music, folk dances, and vibrant celebrations.

SINJARA - A CELEBRATION OF LOVE AND BONDING

Sinjara is an essential part of Gangaur, celebrated with great enthusiasm, especially among women. It takes place a day before the main Gangaur festival and is a symbol of love, prosperity, and

1. EXCHANGE OF GIFTS

Sinjara is a day when married women receive gifts from their parents or in-laws. These gifts typically include traditional attire, jewelry, cosmetics, and sweets. This gesture is a token of love and blessings for a happy and prosperous married life.

2. MEHENDI AND TRADITIONAL ATTIRE

Applying mehendi (henna) on hands and feet is an integral part of Sinjara. Women adorn their hands with intricate henna designs, which are believed to bring happiness and good fortune. They also dress in colorful traditional out-



fits, such as lehengas and odhnis, making the festival even more vibrant.

3. SPECIAL DELICACIES

Sinjara is incomplete without delicious traditional sweets. Ghewar, malpua, and gujiya are among the special treats prepared and exchanged among family members and neighbors. These sweets add to the festive spirit and are enjoyed by everyone.

4. SOCIAL GATHERINGS AND FESTIVITIES

Women come together to celebrate Sinjara by singing folk songs, performing Ghoomar dance, and sharing joyous moments with family and friends. The festival fosters a sense of unity and strengthens social bonds.

Gangaur is more than just a festival; it is a beautiful expression of devotion, love, and cultural

heritage in Rajasthan. Celebrated with vibrant attire, grand processions, and traditional rituals, it strengthens family bonds and showcases the rich traditions of the state. Whether through fasting, prayers, or festive gatherings, Gangaur continues to be a cherished occasion, preserving Rajasthan's timeless customs and bringing communities together in joyous celebration.

REGIONAL CELEBRATIONS

While Gangaur is celebrated across Rajasthan, certain cities observe the festival in a uniquely grand manner:

1. JAIPUR

Jaipur hosts one of the most spectacular Gangaur processions, featuring elephants, camels, chariots, and folk artists. The royal family actively participates in the

celebrations, making it a majestic affair.

2. UDAIPUR

In Udaipur, Gangaur is celebrated with boat processions on Lake Pichola, adding a picturesque charm to the festival. The event attracts tourists from across the world.

3. JODHPUR AND BIKANER

These cities observe Gangaur with grand fairs, where local artisans showcase traditional crafts, and cultural performances are held.

Gangaur is more than just a festival; it is a reflection of Rajasthan's deep-rooted traditions, devotion, and artistic heritage. With its vibrant rituals, colorful processions, and cultural significance, Gangaur remains a cherished celebration that continues to thrive in Rajasthan's social and spiritual landscape.

ARSENAL CLOSES THE GAP ON LIVERPOOL AFTER 1-0 WIN AGAINST CHELSEA

AGENCIES
LONDON

Mikel Merino led Arsenal to a 1-0 win against Chelsea in the Premier League on Sunday. Merino's first-half header settled the London derby at the Emirates Stadium and saw second-placed Arsenal move within 12 points of leader Liverpool.

In another all-London clash, Fulham beat Tottenham 2-0. Arsenal's title hopes have faded in recent weeks, but it closed the gap on Liverpool, which was playing Newcastle in the English League Cup final later in the day.

Merino rose in the 20th minute to flick Martin Odegaard's near post corner beyond Chelsea goalkeeper Robert Sanchez. It was enough to secure a first league win for Mikel Arteta's team since February 15. Defeat for fourth-placed



Chelsea means it missed the chance to extend its one-point lead over Manchester City in fifth and boost its chance of qualifying for the Champi-

ons League next season. Arsenal, on 58 points, is 10 clear of four time defending champion City. Spurs blow Another setback for Tottenham

is likely to increase the pressure on coach Ange Postecoglou heading into the international break. Spurs, in 14th, have only won one of their last five

Merino rose in the 20th minute to flick Martin Odegaard's near post corner beyond Chelsea goalkeeper Robert Sanchez. It was enough to secure a first league win for Mikel Arteta's team since February 15.

in all competitions and this was a 15th league defeat of the season. Rodrigo Muniz gave Fulham the lead in the 78th at Craven Cottage and Ryan Sessegnon doubled the home team's lead 10 minutes later. Fulham is eighth and four points behind Chelsea in the race for a Champions League place.

Chahal hails Kuldeep as world's best wrist spinner

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI



Indian leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal has praised his compatriot Kuldeep Yadav, calling him the best wrist spinner in world cricket ahead of the highly anticipated IPL 2025 season. Chahal and Kuldeep, famously known as 'KulCha', formed a formidable spin duo for India in the late 2010s and early 2020s, terrorizing batters with their variations and attacking mindset.

While Chahal has found himself on the fringes of the Indian team in recent years, Kuldeep has cemented his place as a key player for the Men in Blue.

India ends Special Olympics Games with 33 medals

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

India clinched 12 medals in four events on the last day, concluding their campaign at the Special Olympics World Inter Games with a total of 33 medals in Turin, Italy. India's medal tally included 8 gold, 18 silver, and 7 bronze medals. In Snowshoeing, India secured four more medals, adding to the six won earlier in the competition.

Vasu Tiwari, Shalini Chauhan, and Tanya each claimed a silver medal in the 25m Snowshoeing event, while Jahangir bagged a bronze in

the same category. Akriti demonstrated remarkable endurance in Cross Country Skiing, bagging a bronze medal in the 100m Classical Technique (FO2 category). In the Floorball event, Indian Women's Traditional Team showcased their teamwork and skill, claiming a bronze medal.

While India recorded 10 medals each in Snowshoeing and Alpine Skiing, six medals came in Snowboarding. Short Track Speed Skating, Cross Country Skiing and Floorball brought the country four, two and one medal respectively.



Nair looks to replicate domestic cricket success in IPL

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

After a dazzling show in domestic cricket where he excelled in different formats, premier batter Karun Nair is confident of reclaiming his India cap but won't speculate much on his comeback to the national fold.

Nair also wants to carry his spectacular form into the upcoming IPL season and help Delhi Capitals win their maiden title.

A vital cog in Vidarbha's wheel, Nair has been in ravishing form in domestic cricket.

He relished a record-scripting run in the 50-over Vijay Hazare Trophy, where he smashed 779 runs in nine games, laced with five centuries and one fifty at a mind-boggling average of 389.50 and carried the momentum into red-ball cricket.

The unbeaten 132 on the fourth day of the Ranji Trophy final against Kerala was his fourth ton in the tournament, where he amassed 860 runs at 57.33.

"I have been playing cricket for a while, I have seen ups and downs and it's all about how you come back from the downs and treat the ups. I have learnt how to react to those situations," Nair said during a media interaction. "Obviously it has been tough times, something that helped me to bring myself to this stage, push me for more motivation and hunger all the time. I think I am closer but don't know how close I



The unbeaten 132 on the fourth day of the Ranji Trophy final against Kerala was his fourth ton in the tournament, where he amassed 860 runs at 57.33.

am. That's not my focus but it's at the back of the mind.

"The only focus right now is to prepare well and what I need to do in the IPL and contribute in every game that I play. Go out there, play with freedom and express myself. Basically I am relaxed and taking the confidence into IPL. Just keep doing whatever is in your control, rest will take care itself," he added.

He was roped in by Delhi Capitals for Rs 50 lakh for the upcoming IPL season.

"I am really happy to be back at the Delhi Capitals, I am excited to join the side and to play with everyone. I will

treat the game as important as the last one. I didn't change much at all, I just trusted the process and kept it going throughout the tournament and that's what was planned for this season," Nair said during an interaction with media.

"I will find my process, my rhythm as soon as I can and I will like to start well early and will try to get better as the tournament goes on. The only thing that I have done is playing according to the situation, added a few shots and built the confidence to execute them when needed. I also now try to stay relaxed," he added.

Pakistan getting bowled out for 91 runs against New Zealand

AGENCIES
CHRISTCHURCH

With this win over Pakistan in the first T-20 by nine wickets, the Kiwis are 1-0 up in the five-match T20I series. After bundling Pakistan out for just 91 runs in 18.4 overs, NZ chased it down in just 10.1 overs with just one wicket lost. With this loss against New Zealand, Pakistan has registered their biggest loss in terms of remaining balls (59), as per a report by Wisden.

Fiery spells from pacers Jacob Duffy and Kyle Jamieson did not allow a new-look Pakistan led by Salman Agha to kickstart their new era with their fearless cricket as intended, and the visitors were crushed by nine wickets in the first T20I on Sunday. Pakistan's most significant defeat while batting second also occurred against the Black Caps at Wellington in 2016. In the match, New Zealand posted a total of 196-5, and Pakistan was dismissed



for 101 in 16.1 over, falling to a record loss by 95 runs. Pakistan's worst men's T20I defeats, batting first in terms of balls remaining, first against the Kiwis on Sunday, March 16, second came back in 2018 at Harare against Australia, where AUS won by nine wickets, balls remaining in that match was 55. Pakistan's worst men's T20I defeats batting second in terms of runs. Pakistan's biggest loss in terms of runs

also came against the Kiwis; their second biggest defeat came against Australia back in 2012 at Dubai. Australia won the match by 94 runs. This was Pakistan's lowest total in NZ, outdoing their 101 against the Kiwis at Wellington back in 2016. The 2025 Champions Trophy was where Pakistan was the host and was also the first team to be eliminated from the tournament. After CT 2025, Pakistan went to New

Zealand with fresh faces and a new captain, Salman Agha. Pakistan came into the match featuring a revamped top order, having omitted veterans Mohammad Rizwan and Babar Azam from the team after their failures in the Champions Trophy. Nevertheless, they experienced a disastrous beginning. Pakistan struggled against the Kiwis, and their batters found it difficult to bat against the NZ quickies.

Kohli bats for families' presence on India's tours

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI



Virat Kohli has advocated for the presence of families on tours, emphasising the balance he felt they bring to players who might be going through tough times on the field.

"It's very difficult to explain to people how grounding it is to just come back to your family every time you have something which is intense, which happens on the outside," Kohli said during the RCB Innovation Lab Indian Sports Summit ahead of IPL 2025, when asked about the role his family had played on tough tours.

Bala Devi's hat-trick gives Sribhumi FC full points

AGENCIES
BARRACKPORE

India international Ngangom Bala Devi struck a hat-trick as hosts Sribhumi FC snatched full point from Sethu FC with a 3-2 victory in the Indian Women's League 2024-25 at the Bibhuti Bhushan Stadium on Sunday, March 16, 2025. The teams were locked 1-1 at half time. The class and experience of Bala Devi were in full display as the mercurial striker scored for the winners in the 39th, 49th (penalty), and 65th minutes after Sethu took the lead through Hadijah Nandago in the 37th minute.

PCB issues legal notice to Bosch for breaching contractual obligations

AGENCIES
LAHORE

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has served a legal notice to South African all-rounder Corbin Bosch for breaching his contractual obligations with the Pakistan Super League (PSL) on Sunday.

Corbin Bosch was selected by Peshawar Zalmi in the PSL player draft on January 13 in Lahore. However, Indian Premier League (IPL) Mumbai Indians had also signed him as a replacement for his compatriot injured Lizaad Williams.



Bosch's signing means he will forgo his PSL contract, as the IPL begins on March 22 and overlaps with the PSL's April-May schedule. According to the report, the player is alleged to have violated the terms of his contract. Pakistan Cricket Board has sent a legal notice to all-rounder Corbin

Bosch through his agent. The PCB management has outlined the implications and potential consequences of his withdrawal from the 10th edition of the Pakistan Super League. "Bosch was picked by Peshawar Zalmi in the Diamond category during the tenth edition of HBL PSL Player Draft, held in Lahore on 13 January," the PCB said in a statement on Sunday. "The legal notice was served through his agent, and the player has been asked to justify his actions of withdrawing from his professional and contractual commitments."

'The team is achieving its targets': Harmanpreet Singh

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

India men's hockey team captain Harmanpreet Singh on Saturday expressed his delight at the team's consistent international performances.

Speaking at the Hockey India 7th Annual Awards 2024, where he was honoured with the Balbir Singh Sr. Award for Player of the Year (Men), Harmanpreet highlighted India's



progress in recent years. "I am very happy... I think the consistency can be seen now. Last time in Tokyo, this

time in Paris [Olympics], last time the Asian Champions Trophy happened in Chennai, we won; this time

it happened in China, we won there also. The team is performing really well, and as a team, we are achieving our targets," he told ANI. Reflecting on India's campaign in the FIH Pro League, Harmanpreet emphasized the importance of maintaining momentum in the upcoming matches.

"We won 5 out of 8 games, and we are standing in a good position. There are still 8 matches to go, and we

will try to do well so that we can qualify for the World Cup directly," he stated. With India continuing to perform at a high level, Harmanpreet's words reflect the squad's confidence and determination as they aim for greater success on the global stage. The Hockey India 7th Annual Awards 2024 brought together the Indian hockey fraternity in New Delhi on March 15.



Alabama forward Jarin Stevenson (15) loses the ball against Florida forward Thomas Haugh (10) during the second half of an NCAA college basketball game in the semifinals of the Southeastern Conference tournament in Nashville, Tenn. (Agency)