



2 HARYANA BUDGET SESSION BEGINS WITHOUT CONGRESS' LOP IN HOUSE



11 ISRAELI FORCES DISMANTLE WEAPONS DEPOT, EXPLOSIVES LABORATORIES IN TULKAREM



16 PRANAV VENKATESH WINS WORLD JUNIOR CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

INDIA-US TRADE PACT IN THE WORKS TO CUT TARIFFS

Talks on Bilateral Trade Agreement are in advanced stage

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India and the US are gearing up to negotiate a landmark Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) that could potentially boost trade between the two nations amid US President Donald Trump's plans to impose reciprocal tariffs on US trading partners, including India.

In a weekly briefing, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said the agreement aims to strengthen and deepen India-US two-way trade in goods and services, increase market access, and reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers.

"The two governments are in the process of advancing discussions on a multi-sector Bilateral Trade Agreement. Through the BTA, our objective is to strengthen and deepen India-US two-way trade in the goods and services sector, increase market access, reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers, and deepen supply chain integration between the two countries," said Jaiswal.

The announcement comes after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US in February 2025, where both sides expressed interest in negotiating a mutually ben-



Open up agri market, says US

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The US on Friday pitched for a macro, large and grand trade agreement with India, and not 'product-by-product' arrangement to boost bilateral ties between the two countries.

US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said India needs to open its agriculture market, emphasising that it can not be 'off the table' when the country is negotiating with its largest trading

partner.

"Because India is so gigantic, and the US is so gigantic, the right way to do it (trade pact) is a macro, and that's why we think we can get it done. The US is interested in doing a macro, large-scale, broad-based trade agreement with India that takes everything into account and that I think it can be done. "...it's time to do something big, something grand, something that connects India and the US together, but does it

P5

eficial, multi-sector BTA. Commerce and Industries Minister Piyush Goyal also recently met his US counterparts to advance discussions on the agreement.

"During PM's visit to the US in February 2025, both sides announced plans to negotiate a mutually beneficial, multi-sector Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA). The Commerce and Industries Minister was in the US and met his counterparts," said Jaiswal.

A key aspect of the BTA is its focus on supply chain integration between India and the US. The agreement could pave the way for increased trade in goods and services by reducing barriers and increasing market access, benefiting both economies.

While India has trade agreements with over 50 countries, including the Asia Pacific Trade Agreement and the South Asia Free Trade Agreement, a BTA with the US could have significant implications for India's economy.

As negotiations progress, India will likely push for greater market access for its goods and services, while the US may seek increased agricultural exports to India. The outcome of these negotiations will be closely

P5

'Elephant-dragon ballet only right choice'

AGENCIES
BEIJING



A ballet between the elephant and the dragon contributing to each other's success is the "only right choice" for India-China relations, Foreign Minister Wang Yi (in pic) said on Friday as he acknowledged positive strides in bilateral ties after the end of the military standoff in eastern Ladakh.

There is every reason for us to support each other rather than undermine each other or undercut each other, Wang, who is also a member of the powerful political bureau of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC), said at

P5

India minces no words, says UK 'indifferent'

SECURITY BREACH IN LONDON

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

India on Friday pressed the UK to take action against the pro-Khalistan elements involved in the breach of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's security in London and said the incident showed the "licence" accorded to such forces as well as "indifference" to their "intimidation and threats".

A pro-Khalistani protester attempted to break barricades while some others were shouting anti-India slogans as Jaishankar was leaving the Chatham House after concluding an interactive session at the institute on Wednesday evening.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal suggested that the sincerity of the British authorities over the incident would be measured on the action they take against the culprits involved.

"We have conveyed our deep concern to the UK au-



thorities about the breach of security arrangements by UK-based separatist and extremist elements during the external affairs minister's visit," he said.

"There is a larger context to the incident. It brings out both the licence accorded to such forces, as well as indifference to their intimidation, threats, and other actions aimed at impeding our legitimate diplomatic activities in the UK," he said.

While India has noted the statement issued by the UK Foreign Office on the mat-

ter, our view of its sincerity would depend on the action taken against culprits on this and previous occasions, Jaiswal added.

The Foreign Office condemned the incident.

Jaishankar was in London in the first leg of his six-day visit to the UK and Ireland from Tuesday.

India on Thursday condemned the incident of security breach and said it expects the host government to fully live up to their diplomatic obligations in such cases and deplored the "misuse of democratic freedoms" by those elements.

The charge d'affaires at the British High Commission was also called to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and was served a demarche on the matter.

In March, 2023, certain pro-Khalistan elements pulled down the Indian flag at the Indian high commission in London, triggering strong reaction from India.

Giani Raghbir Singh removed as Akal Takht Jathedar

TARUNI GANDHI
CHANDIGARH

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) has removed Giani Raghbir Singh from his position as the Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht Sahib and appointed him as the Chief Granthi of Harmandir Sahib. This decision was made during a meeting of the SGPC's interim committee on Friday.

The committee also removed Giani Sultan Singh from his post as the Jathedar of Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib.

Following these changes, Giani Kuldeep Singh Gadgaj has been assigned the responsibility of Sri Kesgarh Sahib and will also take on

P5

PM's dig at Cong: Those with zero seats can't count zeros in Rs 32 lakh cr MUDRA loans

AGENCIES
SURAT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday took a swipe at the Congress, saying those who have zero seats may not be able to count the zeros in Rs 32 lakh crore loans disbursed by the Centre under the Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana targeted at micro enterprises.

Notably, the Congress failed to open its account in the February 5 assembly polls in Delhi, where the BJP emerged victorious. In the process, the Grand Old Party earned the dubious distinction of scoring a hat-trick of zeros in Delhi assembly polls.



The PM, addressing a gathering in Surat city of Gujarat, noted there was a time when the poor were not even allowed to enter a bank if he

wanted to take a loan for his small business.

"Banks used to ask for a guarantee against loans. From where a poor person would arrange his guarantee? Thus, a poor mother's son, Modi, decided to become the guarantor of every poor," said the PM.

"We have disbursed Rs 32 lakh crore to poor citizens under MUDRA so far. Those who abuse us, those with zero seats may not be able to count the zeros in Rs 32 lakh crore," said the BJP stalwart, taking potshots at the Congress.

Launched in 2015, the

P5

Delimitation: Stalin ups the ante, writes to CMs

TDG NETWORK
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Friday called for a joint effort from various political parties to raise their voices against delimitation. He wrote to his counterparts in Kerala, Karnataka, Telangana, West Bengal, Punjab, Odisha and party heads as well. He invited them to join hands with Tamil Nadu and be part of a Joint Action Committee (JAC) for an "uncompromising fight" over delimitation of Lok Sabha seats.

Stalin proposed the inaugural JAC meeting in Chennai on March 22 and urged the leaders to join forces to chart a "collective course forward." Writing to CMs and leaders, Stalin said reports suggest that the delimitation exercise is being considered based on population, with two potential approaches.

In the first case, the existing 543 seats could be redistributed among the states, and in the second case, the total number of seats could be increased beyond 800. "In both scenarios, all the states that have successfully imple-

P5

Writes to party heads, proposes Joint Action Committee meet in Chennai on March 22



Jairam Ramesh backs Stalin

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Friday opposed any move to penalise states that have successfully implemented family planning measures, in the context of delimitation and language policy and underscored the importance of linguistic diversity saying that any form of 'linguistic imperialism' is unacceptable.

Jairam Ramesh emphasised that states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu, which were pioneers in achieving population stabilisation, should not be disadvantaged in terms of parliamentary seat allocation.

"No state should be penalised for its success in family planning. Kerala and Tamil Nadu - the South Indian states were the first states in India to have success in family planning.

P5

4% quota for Muslims in public works in K'taka

AGENCIES
BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah while presenting Karnataka government's Budget on Friday confirmed that 4 per cent of public works contracts will now be reserved for Muslims under a category called Category-II B.

Reservation will be provided in the procurement of goods and services under various government departments, corporations, and institutions for suppliers belonging to SC, ST, Category-I, Category-II A, and Category-II B, up to

P5

10 Indians found in West Bank brought to Israel

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Friday confirmed that 10 Indian workers were found in the West Bank and have been brought back to Israel.

The Israeli government authorities discovered the Indian workers in the construction sector in the West Bank and the Israeli authorities facilitated their return to Israel, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated.

"10 Indian workers in the construction sector were found in the West Bank. Israeli government brought them back to Israel. The matter is being investigated, and the embassy is in touch with Israeli authorities. They are in Israel and being looked after," said Jaiswal.

Jaguar fighter jet crashes in Panchkula

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

An Indian Air Force (IAF) fighter jet crashed in Mandalay village near Raipur Rani of Haryana's Panchkula, on Friday. The pilot survived the incident as he ejected safely using a parachute before the crash.

As per the information, Jaguar fighter aircraft had taken off from the Ambala airbase for a routine training sortie but crashed at



around 3:45 PM.

"A Jaguar aircraft of the IAF crashed at Ambala, during a routine training sortie today, after encountering system malfunction. The pilot manoeuvred the aircraft away from any habitation on ground, before ejecting safely. An inquiry has been ordered by the IAF, to ascertain the cause of the accident," the Indian Air Force (IAF) posted on X.

P5

IAF's transport aircraft AN-32 meets with 'accident' in Bengal

AGENCIES
BAGDOGRA (WEST BENGAL)

An Indian Air Force (IAF) AN-32 transport aircraft met with an "accident" at Bagdogra airport in West Bengal on Friday, the IAF said. The IAF added that the aircraft is being recovered from the site and confirmed that its crew is safe. "An accident involving an AN-32 transport aircraft at Bagdogra airport has come to light today. The aircraft is being recovered from the site. The crew of the aircraft is safe," IAF said in a statement. Further details are awaited.

Earlier in the day, a Jaguar fighter aircraft

crashed in Ambala, Haryana, due to a system malfunction. The Air Force confirmed that the pilot manoeuvred away from any habitation before he ejected safely.

According to officials, the aircraft had taken off from the Ambala Air Force base for a routine evening sortie when it encountered a system malfunction and crashed.

"The pilot manoeuvred the aircraft away from any habitation on the ground before ejecting safely. An inquiry has been ordered by the IAF to ascertain the cause of the accident," the IAF added.

HARYANA BUDGET SESSION BEGINS WITHOUT CONGRESS LoP IN HOUSE

Chief Minister Nayab Saini to present state Budget on March 17

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

The Haryana Assembly's Budget Session for 2025-26 started on March 7 with Governor Bandaru Dattatreya addressing the House. He spoke about the government's efforts to uplift the poor and support farmers and athletes. The governor also urged legislators to use their time in the Assembly wisely and focus on public welfare.

After the governor's speech, the House paid tributes to former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, former Haryana Chief Minister O.P. Chautala, and other notable personalities who passed away since the last session. The House also honoured 21 brave soldiers from Haryana who

USE TIME IN HOUSE WISELY: GUV

- Governor spoke about the government's efforts to uplift the poor and support farmers and athletes.
- The governor also urged legislators to use their time in the Assembly wisely and focus on public welfare.
- The Assembly will take a break on March 8 and 9 and resume on March 10, when discussions on the Governor's address will take place



sacrificed their lives for the nation. Vidhan Sabha Speaker Harvinder Kalyan, Congress leader Bhupinder Singh Hooda, and INLD's Arjun Chautala read out

obituary resolutions. Former Chief Minister Hooda remembered Dr. Manmohan Singh as a great economist who introduced key reforms. He

also recalled how Haryana benefited from various development projects during Singh's tenure as Prime Minister. The Assembly will take a break on March 8 and

9 and resume on March 10, when discussions on the Governor's address will take place. Chief Minister Nayab Saini, who is also the Finance Minister, will present the state budget on March 17.

This will be his first budget, and it is expected to be around Rs 1.98 lakh crore, higher than last year's Rs 1.89 lakh crore presented by former CM Manohar Lal.

Meanwhile, the Congress is attending the session without a Leader of Opposition, as the party has not yet appointed anyone for the role. With important issues like law and order, unemployment, the drug menace, and rising state debt, the Opposition parties are preparing for heated debates in the session, which will continue until March 28.

BJP Govt pushing Odisha into economic doldrums, says BJD

ANAND SINGH
NEW DELHI

Even as Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on February 17, 2025 presented the State's annual Budget for 2025-26 with total outlay of Rs 2,90,000 crore, prioritising capital expenditure which is pegged at Rs 65,012 crore – 6.1 per cent of Gross State Domestic Product, the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) has casted apprehensions that present BJP government in Odisha, is pushing the state towards a form of political and economic doldrums and the day is not far that the state might end up in bankruptcy.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in Odisha presented the State Budget for 2025-26 on February 17 with a total Budget size of Rs 2,90,000 crore.

The Budget document underlined the government's vision for 'Samruddha Odisha' by 2036, aiming to become a \$500 billion economy.

Highlighting the role of former Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik in brining



present BJP government in Odisha, is pushing the state towards a form of political and economic doldrums and the day is not far that the state might end up in bankruptcy."

He cited lack of vision from the BJP as a reason for the same and added that their action is going to pose a major problem for the state of Odisha in the coming days.

His remarks came following the unimpressive fiscal performance by the BJP government over the last nine months.

Figures presented in the State Legislative Assembly highlighted that the government's spending in almost all sectors has been noticeably low.

The figures further highlighted that by January end expenditure for the 2024-25 fiscal year remained below 50 per cent in at least 16 departments, including many prominent sectors such as Energy, Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water, Transport, and Housing and Urban Development.

out the state from bankruptcy to budget surplus, BJD Rajya Sabha MP Sasmit Patra said that Odisha as an economy was in the doldrums with complete bankruptcy when he became the Chief Minister in the year 2000.

Patra said that during his 24 years regime between 2000 to 2024, Patnaik ensured that the state went into a budget surplus state.

The BJD leader said that when Patnaik demitted office in June 2024, he left more than Rs 48,000 crores in the treasury as surplus.

Taking a swipe at the BJP government in the state, Patra said, "Unfortunately, the

ECI forced to admit its voter lists flawed: Cong

ANAND SINGH
NEW DELHI

Amid the debate on the voter duplication row in electoral rolls, the Congress on Friday hit back at the Election Commission of India saying that the panel has issued a duplicitous response on the issue of same voter IDs being allotted to multiple voters and it has been forced to admit that its voter lists are flawed and not trustworthy.

Congress' Empowered Action Group of Leaders and Experts (EAGLE) consisting of Ajay Maken, Digvijaya Singh, Abhishek Manu Singhvi, Nitin Raut, Praveen Chakravorty, Pawan Kherra, Gurdeep Singh Sappal and Vamshi Chandra Reddy made a detailed response to the poll panel.

The Congress' EAGLE in its response stated, "The Election Commission has issued a duplicitous response on the issue of same voter IDs being allotted to multiple voters. The ECI, in its response, hides behind its processes to offer a feeble explanation.



Shockingly but not surprisingly, the ECI has been forced to admit that its voter lists are flawed and not trustworthy."

It said that the Commission, in a letter issued on September 18, 2008 to Chief Electoral Officers of all States, had said that 'voter-IDs are unique'.

"However, the ECI today says, the issue of duplicate voter-IDs is a 'decades long issue'. Firing salvos at the Commission, it asked, "Which statement of the ECI should the citizens of India believe? Why should an average Indian voter today trust the Election Commission?" Targeting the ECI, the EAGLE said, "Further, how is it that 17 years later, ECI speaks of constituting a body to clean up this process

of multiple voter-IDs? Was the ECI then all along misrepresenting to the voters of India that the 'voter-IDs were unique? If yes, then what are the other processes which ECI has been misrepresenting to its citizens?" It further said that the initial response of the Election Commission to these questions was to defend itself by stating that 'this could happen only across states.' "But there are instances with clear evidence of many voters with the same voter-ID in the same assembly constituency in the same state," it said, adding, "Is the ECI then lying? As the issue of duplicate voter-IDs clearly is not across different states, but rather in the same state and, in many cases, in the same constituencies."

The Congress' EAGLE also mentioned that Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi had made categorical demand along with other concerned political parties, for the poll panel to provide a copy of the Maharashtra voter rolls.

"Why has there been a deafening silence on this? This only reaffirms what the Congress party has been asserting - voter lists under the current ECI are dubious and flawed," it said. The Congress Party rejects this feeble and duplicitous explanation by the ECI and reiterates its demands to come clean on the sanctity of voter lists in India, it added.

The response from Congress came after the poll panel announced that it will resolve the longstanding issue of duplicate Electors Photo Identity Card (EPIC) numbers within the next three months. ECI's statement said, "The Commission has now decided to resolve this decades-long issue of duplicate EPIC numbers within 3 months."

Haryana sets up 4 special courts to speed up cow protection cases

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

The Haryana government has set up four special courts to quickly handle cases related to cow protection. These courts will ensure faster legal action under the Haryana Gauvansh Sanrakshan and Gausamvardhan Act, 2015, which strictly prohibits cow slaughter in the state.

According to a government notification issued on March 4, the special courts will operate in Nuh, Palwal, Ambala, and Hisar. They will have jurisdiction over all districts in Haryana. The notification was issued with the approval of the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

The court in Nuh will cover cases from Nuh, Rewari, Narnaul, Charkhi Dabri, and Bhiwani. The Palwal court will handle cases from Palwal, Faridabad, Gurugram, Jhajjar, Rohtak, Sonapat, and Panipat.

Cong doubles down on new IT Bill giving powers to officials

ANAND SINGH
NEW DELHI

Congress on Friday once again targeted the BJP-led NDA government at the centre over the new Income Tax Bill giving sweeping powers to the Income Tax officers to access the phones, computers of the persons receiving the summons by dubbing it as a gross violation of Fundamental Right to Privacy, upheld by the Supreme Court.

An uproar has erupted on the new clauses giving powers to the IT department officials to check the social media accounts, emails and other personal details.

In a post on X, Congress leader Gurdeep Singh Sappal, who is also the party's Permanent Invitee to the CWC said, "The new Income Tax Bill gives sweeping powers to income tax officers to access the phones, computers of anyone who receives IT summons. It gives power to the officers to override



any password of any device and gain access to all content including cloud server, phone data, social media and of course, income related data." "This is a gross violation of Fundamental Right to Privacy, upheld by the Supreme Court," Sappal, who is also the coordinator of office of Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge said.

Targeting the government, he pointed out that the judgement clearly lays down various facets of privacy which include communication privacy, associational privacy, information privacy, decisional privacy, intellectual privacy, and behavioral

privacy. "The data privacy related to phones and computers covers most of these," the Congress leader said.

Citing the details of the Supreme Court judgement, he said that it also lays down triple test if any law requires overriding of fundamental right to privacy by the state/government.

"The test includes: (a) There must be a law to justify encroachment of privacy. (b) Test of reasonableness mandated by Article 14, which is a guarantee against arbitrary state action and (c) The action is proportional to object and need of the law," he said.

Sappal said that the fundamental rights are granted as a guarantee against the state arbitrariness and to ensure protection of life and personal liberty. "The Supreme Court had already held that has ruled that the right to privacy is an intrinsic part of the right to life and liberty," he said.

Five arrested by police as fake job gang busted in Haryana

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

A gang that cheated job seekers by offering fake government jobs—just like in the famous Bollywood movie Special 26—has been caught by the police. The gang operated by creating a fake website, conducting exams and interviews, and even issuing fake appointment letters to unsuspecting candidates.

According to the police, the fraudsters appointed 25 people for fake positions like Area Inspector, Field Supervisor, and



spector Vikas. Sub-Inspector Vikas of the Bhiwani Cyber Police Station stated that five individuals have been arrested in this case. The police have recovered Rs 1.57 lakh in cash, frozen Rs 1.21 lakh in their bank accounts, and seized two silver coins, two rings, a computer, 13 mobile phones, 11 passbooks, 11 ATMs, 43 registers, 8 payment slips, and various office supplies from them. These accused acted as a government department under the name Shagun Gramin Health and Family Council.

The gang used to charge between Rs 2 lakh to Rs 4 lakh per candidate for these fake job offers. They had set up an organization called Shagun Gramin Health and Family Council to make the scheme look real, said Cyber Cell In-

pector Vikas. Sub-Inspector Vikas of the Bhiwani Cyber Police Station stated that five individuals have been arrested in this case. The police have recovered Rs 1.57 lakh in cash, frozen Rs 1.21 lakh in their bank accounts, and seized two silver coins, two rings, a computer, 13 mobile phones, 11 passbooks, 11 ATMs, 43 registers, 8 payment slips, and various office supplies from them. These accused acted as a government department under the name Shagun Gramin Health and Family Council.

Pursuing case against him under law: MEA on Lalit Modi

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Responding to a question on reports of former IPL boss Lalit Modi's acquisition of citizenship of Vanuatu, the Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated that they are aware of his application for surrendering his passport in the High Commission of India in London and they are continuing to pursue all cases against him as per the law.

The Spokesperson further added, "The same will be examined in light of extant rules and procedures. We are also informed that he has acquired citizenship in Vanuatu. We continue to pursue the case against him as required under law."

Lalit Modi, who previously served as the vice-president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), is accused of bid-rigging, money laundering, and violating the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA). He left India in 2010 while under investigation for financial misconduct, including unauthorized fund transfers.

Meanwhile, regarding Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri's visit to Russia, MEA briefed the press, "Regarding Foreign Secretary's visit. The Foreign Secretary



is visiting Moscow for Foreign Office consultations. When you have Foreign Office consultation, all aspects of the relationship, political relations, economic matters, other issues, events, energy, partnership, all these matters are discussed and the meeting is going on in Moscow." He further added, "So hopefully once the meeting finishes, we'll have more details."



But just to tell you that he's gone there as part of Foreign Office consultation. This is a routine consultation that we have. The last Foreign Office consultations were held

here in Delhi towards the end of 2023."

Earlier External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday had met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Johannesburg, where they discussed the ongoing progress of bilateral cooperation between India and Russia.

During that meeting, the two discussed the Ukraine conflict and Lavrov's recent meeting in Riyadh. Sharing a post on X, Jaishankar had then said, "Glad to meet FM Sergey Lavrov of Russia this evening in Johannesburg. Reviewed the continued progress of India-Russia bilateral cooperation."

Yogi Govt unveils GIS-based Master Plan to transform 59 cities into smart urban hubs

TIKAM SHARMA
NEW DELHI

In a significant move toward modernizing Uttar Pradesh's urban infrastructure, the Yogi government has introduced a Geographical Information System (GIS)-based master plan to develop 59 cities using state-of-the-art technology and advanced infrastructure.

This ambitious initiative is designed to streamline urban expansion and strengthen the core infrastruc-

ture of multiple cities across the state. As part of this master plan, modernization proposals for 35 cities have already received approval, while the remaining cities are expected to be cleared soon.

Among the selected cities are Ayodhya, Aligarh, Saharanpur, Deoria, Gorakhpur, Varanasi, Meerut, Mathura, Azamgarh, Prayagraj, Bareilly, Ghazipur, Ramnagar, Moradabad, Firozabad, Shahjahanpur, and Muzaffarnagar, among others. The



initiative places special emphasis on leveraging technological advancements and improving infrastruc-



ture to facilitate sustainable urban development.

The Yogi government plans to make these cities

more scientific and data-driven through the application of GIS technology. This system will be instrumental

in creating well-planned urban spaces by prioritizing road networks, drainage systems, green areas, traffic management, public amenities, and environmental sustainability. The objective is to curb unregulated urban expansion while ensuring strategic and well-organized infrastructural growth.

As part of this master plan, the integration of cutting-edge technology will transform these cities into smart urban centers. Sophisticated traffic management sys-

tems will be implemented to address congestion, while modern drainage infrastructure will be developed to mitigate waterlogging issues during monsoons. Public transport services, including buses and metro networks, will be enhanced for greater efficiency and commuter convenience.

Furthermore, green belts will be established, and large-scale tree plantations will be carried out to promote ecological balance. Beyond infrastructural

improvements, this initiative is expected to generate employment opportunities. Large-scale construction projects, the development of smart infrastructure, and technology-driven services will create both direct and indirect job prospects for thousands of individuals.

The GIS-based approach will also introduce greater transparency in urban planning, allowing authorities to efficiently oversee projects and make necessary adjustments.



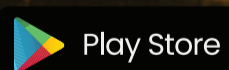
THE GLOBAL ENTERTAINMENT PHENOMENON CELEBRATES



YEARS



DOWNLOAD THE APP ON



JAIPUR, RAJASTHAN

8TH & 9TH MARCH, 2025

16TH MARCH 2025, 7:30PM



Presenting Sponsor: NEXA | Co-Presenting Sponsor: SOBHA REALTY | Broadcast Partner: ZEETV | Brand Partners: hi, FabriCare | Knowledge Partner: JAIPUR NATIONAL UNIVERSITY | Recycling & Sustainability Partner: MATERIAL RECYCLING ASSOCIATION OF INDIA | Sustainable Fashion Partner: VIRGIO | Travel Partner: EaseMyTrip

Hospitality Partners: HYATT REGENCY, INTERCONTINENTAL, NOVOTEL, JECC | Media Partners: THE LaLIT, NS, TheDailyGuardian, newsX, INDIA न्यूज़

BIG BENGALURU INFRA PUSH IN K'TAKA BUDGET

Siddaramaiah presents 4.9 lakh cr Budget, hikes allocation to Bengaluru from 3,000 cr to 7,000 cr

TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah while presenting the Budget claimed that the state government has maintained fiscal deficit of the state for the financial year 2025-26. The total expenditure estimated for the financial year 2025-26 is Rs.4,09,549 crores which includes revenue expenditure of Rs. 3,11,739 crores, capital botem expenditure of Rs. 71,336 crores and loan repayment of Rs. 26,474 crores.

According to the Karnataka government's Budget, for the financial year 2025-26, revenue deficit is estimated to be Rs. 19,262 crores, which is 0.63 per cent of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP). Fiscal Deficit is estimated to be Rs. 90,428 crores, which is 2.95 per cent of GSDP. Total liabilities at the end of 2025-26 is estimated to be Rs. 7,64,655 crores, which is 24.91 per cent of GSDP.

"By keeping fiscal deficit and total outstanding liabilities within the limits mandated under Karnataka Fiscal Responsibility Act, we have maintained fiscal discipline in the financial year 2025-26," said the Chief Minister.

The Karnataka govern-

'FOCUS ON BALANCED DEVELOPMENT ACROSS STATE'

■ Launches new scheme called the Chief Minister's Infrastructure Development Program (CMIDP) with Rs 8,000 crore investment to ensure balanced development across the state, focusing on minor irrigation, roads and urban infrastructure in all legislative assembly constituencies of the State

■ Announces Additional Rs 450 over and above the Rs 7,550 per quintal under the Minimum Support Price (MSP) scheme for the procurement of toor dal with a total expenditure of Rs 138 crore.

■ State to disburse Rs 28,000 crore in agricultural loans to 37 lakh farmers in the financial year 2025-26.



ment in this Budget has given priority to basic infrastructure in Bengaluru city and announced measures to battle traffic congestion in the city. In this budget, the yearly grant of Rs. 3,000 crores which was being provided to Bengaluru city, has been enhanced to Rs. 7,000 crores in the current year.

Additionally, a new Special Purpose Vehicle will be established to utilise these grants and implement major developmental works on priority.

According to the Budget, Bruhat Bengaluru Mah-

anagara Palike (BBMP) has yielded an additional revenue of Rs. 4,556 crores through various reforms and substantially increasing property tax collection. The government has stood guarantee to Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) for an amount of Rs. 19,000 crores for undertaking the North-South and the East-West corridors (tunnels) at a cost of Rs. 40,000 crores.

To mitigate vehicular congestion and to intend to make major roads of Bengaluru ensure smooth move-

ment of traffic, a 40.5 km double decker flyover will be constructed at a cost of Rs. 8,916 crores along with Namma Metro Phase - 3 Project.

A network of 300 kms additional roads will be constructed at a cost of Rs. 3,000 crores utilising canal buffer zones. The arterial and sub-arterial road network in BBMP area measuring 460 km will also be developed at a cost of Rs. 660 crores. Flyovers and Grade Separators of length 120 km will be built in the Bengaluru city.

In order to strengthen the 'Brand Bengaluru' Plan, Rs. 1,800 crores have been set aside for 21 schemes during the FY 2024-25. A 'Comprehensive Health Programme' will be implemented over the next 3 years under Brand Bengaluru Plan Rs. 413 crores with the goal of making a cost of Bengaluru a city of global health standards.

The state Budget 2025-26 has also given specific focus to minorities. To provide formal education along with religious education in madrasas, computers, smart boards and other necessary basic facilities will be provided to the students to prepare them for writing SSLC examination through NIOS.

Minority youth will be encouraged to launch new start-ups through Karnataka Minority Development Corporation. For repair and renovation of Waqf properties and for providing infrastructure and protection of Muslim burial grounds an amount of Rs. 150 crores has been provided.

The Chief Minister further stated, "An Action Plan for Rs. 1,000 crores has been prepared under 'Chief Minister's Minority Colony Development Programme'. Works will be implemented in the FY 2025-26."

Tamil language 'precious ornament': Amit Shah amid lingual debates

TDG NETWORK
THAKKOLAM

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday emphasized the significance of the Tamil language, culture, and traditions, calling them a "precious ornament of Indian culture."

While addressing the 56th Raising Day Parade of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) in Thakkolam, Tamil Nadu's Ranipet district, he asserted that the entire country acknowledged this fact.

"Tamil language, culture, and traditions are a precious ornament of Indian culture, and the whole country accepts this fact," the Home Minister said.

Shah's statement comes as debates over linguistic identity and federalism continue to shape Tamil Nadu's political landscape. The state has long witnessed resistance to Hindi imposition, with successive governments advocating for Tamil pride and linguistic autonomy.

His remarks may be seen as an attempt to bridge the gap between regional aspirations and the central government's vision of unity.

Tamil Nadu has historically opposed policies perceived as diluting its linguistic heritage, from the Anti-Hindi Agitations of the 20th century to recent concerns over language policies in education and governance.



Union Home Minister Amit Shah being presented with a memento from Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) chief RS Bhatti during the 56th Raising Day of CISF, at Arakkonam in Ranipet on Friday. ANI

The Home Minister's recognition of Tamil's cultural importance may aim to reassure the state's people, though it remains to be seen how it will be received in a region known for its strong linguistic consciousness.

In continuation, the Home Minister said, "I am happy to announce that today we are renaming this CISF training centre in honor of the great Chola warrior, Rajaditya Chola."

He said it was on this very land that Rajaditya Chola scripted many tales of valour, sacrificed his life, and carried forward the great traditions of the Chola dynasty.

"I pay my humble tributes to the great warrior, Rajaditya Chola."

Shah further said that he has come to Tamil's soil and would

like to request the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to take inspiration from the other states that have made efforts to introduce medical and engineering-related education in their native language.

The Home Minister later expressed his wish that the state also introduce medical and engineering courses in the Tamil language as soon as possible.

"This will not only strengthen the roots of the Tamil people but also render them equal opportunities in the fields. I hope that the Tamil Nadu CM takes steps to fulfil this vision. I have been expressing this vision for two years, but no steps have been taken yet to realize it. I hope that CM will reflect on it and implement the required measures going forward," he added.

Supreme Court refuses to stay Dharavi Redevelopment Project awarded to Adani

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to impose the status quo on the Dharavi Redevelopment project on Friday while hearing a plea filed by Dubai-based SecLink Technologies challenging the Maharashtra government's award of the Dharavi Redevelopment Project to the Adani Group.

A bench of Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar noted that the project has already commenced after Senior Advocate Mukul Rohatgi, who appeared for Adani Group, submitted that significant



funds have been invested and over 2,000 workers have been employed in the Asiad project. However, the Court agreed to examine SecLinks' plea and issued notices to the Maharashtra government and the Adani Group.

In December 2024, the Bombay High Court upheld the project awarded to the Adani Group under a new

tender, asserting that the state authority responsible for issuing the tender was best suited to assess its requirements. The High Court also dismissed SecLink's claims, noting that the company's grounds presented lacked merit. The initial tender, awarded to SecLink, was later cancelled, and in October 2022, a new tender was

issued, in which the Adani Group was allegedly selected as the highest bidder. SecLink argues that the 2022 tender was designed to exclude its participation. The Maharashtra government issued a fresh tender in 2022 in view of its decision to incorporate railway land in the project. Today, the Supreme Court agreed with the Bombay High Court that the development of railway land has now been included in the project. The top court, however, noted SecLink's submission that certain conditions in the new tender were tweaked to exclude their participation and stated that it would examine the matter.

Five killed, 10 injured in bus-lorry collision in Tamil Nadu

TDG NETWORK
TIRUVALLUR

At least five people were killed, and ten others were critically injured in a collision between a tipper lorry and a bus at KG Kandigai area near Thiruttani town of Tamil Nadu's Tiruvallur district, police said.

According to officials, the accident occurred on Thursday.

"Five people died in a collision between a tipper lorry and government bus near Thiruttani in the KG Kandigai area," Thiruttani police said, adding that 10 injured people have been admitted to Thiruttani General Hospital.

Telangana CM demands all-party meet over delimitation

TDG NETWORK
HYDERABAD

Telangana Minister Ponnab Prabhakar said on Friday that they will hold an all-party meeting to protest against the injustice caused by the delimitation.

Telangana CM Reddy also slammed BJP for delimitation exercise and accused BJP of 'revenge politics' through delimitation, demands all-party meet

The BJP is pursuing "revenge politics" against the southern states through the proposed delimitation exercise, Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy alleged on Friday and urged the Centre to convene an all-party meeting to discuss the issue.

Speaking at a media conclave, he claimed that the BJP wanted to reduce south India's parliamentary representation through the delimitation of parliamentary seats, which would adjust constituencies based on population.

"The BJP has no representation in the south. Therefore, it is taking revenge through delimitation. The BJP wants to finish the south through this exercise that will benefit only the northern states," the Congress leader said.

Telangana Minister for Transport and BC Welfare Ponnab Prabhakar spoke to the media persons after the Telangana state Cabinet meeting and said, "Several issues were discussed, including the injustice done to



the Southern states through delimitation. We are going to hold an all-party meeting under the leadership of Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and senior leader Kunduru Jena Reddy to fight this injustice. We won't allow injustice to be done to Telangana. We will take along all South Indian states and fight against the central government which is thinking of doing this injustice."

He added, "On SC categorisation, after getting 71 recommendations, the one-man Judicial Commission, the High Court retired judge, Justice Shameem Akhtar gave a report to us. We put the report in the Cabinet and permitted to proceed further."

Further he added, "For the backward classes, a bill for 42% reservation in political, education and employment sectors will be put in the Assembly and then it will be proposed to the Centre. Many other issues like future cities, Gram Pal officer in every village were discussed. We will

take forward all the promises of the Congress party in the coming days." "We have prepared a tourism policy.

Soon the Miss World competition will take place in Hyderabad. We are making all the preparations for this in the city. Taking forward our vision of making every woman a millionaire, we have given them free buses, introduced them in the power sector. We are also planning to bring in more schemes. All these days, we did not have a tourism policy, we have introduced a new Tourism policy aiming to attract Rs 15,000 crore investments and create three lakhs jobs," Prabhakar said.

BJP leader N Ramchander Rao said that the Congress and other Non-BJP governments in the South are trying to mislead the people on the issue. "The non-BJP governments, especially from South India, are trying to mislead the people with regards to delimitation and the language policy.

MUDA scam case: Karnataka HC quashes ED summons to Siddaramaiah's wife, minister

TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court on Friday quashed the summons issued by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to CM Siddaramaiah's wife, Parvathi, and Urban Development Minister Byrathi Suresh in connection with the Mysore Urban Development Authority (MUDA) case.

The judgement pronounced by High Court Justice M Nagaprasanna comes as a huge relief to Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. Parvathi and Minister By-

rathi Suresh had approached the High Court to appeal for cancelling ED summons in connection with the MUDA scam.

The petition demanding a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe was also dismissed by the High Court, saying that it was not required given that another agency (Lokayukta) was conducting an enquiry.

This development follows after Karnataka Lokayukta SP Udesb submitted an interim 8,000-page B Report on Thursday in connection

with the MUDA scam case. The notice, issued by Udesb, declares the case "not actionable," leading to the submission of a final report to the competent court.

The Lokayukta concluded that the allegations against the four accused individuals were either civil in nature, outside the scope of a criminal investigation, or based on misinterpretations of legal provisions. Earlier, the Karnataka Lokayukta Police had issued a notice to complainant Snehmayi Krishna stating that the allegations in the

MUDA scam case could not be substantiated due to a lack of evidence.

On February 20, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar lashed out at the BJP and JDS for conspiring on the MUDA issue and said that their conspiracy can't go on forever. Speaking to reporters at his Sadashivanagar residence, he said, "I had said long back when BJP and JDS took out a padayatra from Bengaluru to Mysuru that it is a politically motivated ploy. When there is no signature of CM Siddaramaiah in any of

the documents, where is the question of his involvement?"

Karnataka Minister Priyank Kharge had said, "Lokayukta is an independent investigative agency...if they have given a clean chit to CM, I welcome that. CM has already said that there was no scam and no involvement of any family members, which has been proved in the investigation...we are not here to satisfy the BJP, the same Lokayukta gave clean chit to the BJP in many cases and that time, Lokayukta was fine for them..."

Alarming figure on obesity, says PM Modi, asks people to cut cooking oil intake by 10%

TDG NETWORK
SILVASSA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday flagged the issue of obesity and urged people to reduce their consumption of cooking oil by 10 per cent

The Prime Minister addressed the rising concern of lifestyle diseases, particularly obesity, which has become a significant health threat and referred to a recent report predicting that by 2050, over 440 million

Indians will suffer from obesity.

"This alarming figure indicates that one in every three people could face serious health issues due to obesity, potentially making it a life-threatening condition", PM Modi stated.

The Prime Minister urged everyone to take proactive steps to "reduce obesity" and emphasized the importance of reducing the consumption of cooking oil by 10 per cent each month, asking people to "commit to

using 10 per cent less oil in their daily cooking."

"India is committed to achieving the vision of a developed nation. Only a healthy nation can achieve such a goal," PM Modi emphasised.

He also encouraged the inclusion of regular physical activity, like walking a few kilometers daily, to maintain a healthy lifestyle and prevent obesity.

Earlier, on February 23, during the 119th episode of his Mann Ki Baat radio pro-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with a beneficiary of Sylvan Didi Scheme during the inauguration and foundation stone laying ceremony of various development projects worth Rs 2,587 crore, at Silvassa in Dadra and Nagar Haveli on Friday. ANI

He pointed out that one in every eight people in India is affected by obesity, with an even more concerning rise in cases among children.

gram, PM Modi addressed the growing problem of obesity in India, especially

among children, and urged citizens to make small but significant changes in their daily diets.

The Prime Minister shared alarming statistics, revealing that obesity cases have doubled in recent years. He pointed out that one in every eight people in India is affected by obesity, with an even more concerning rise in cases among children.

In his bid to widen the campaign's reach, PM Modi used his X handle to nominate prominent

personalities to spread awareness about obesity and the benefits of reducing oil consumption. He tagged several influential figures, including business magnate Anand Mahindra, actor-politician Dinesh Lal Yadav (Nirahua), athlete Manu Bhaker, weightlifter Mirabai Chanu, actors Mohanlal and R. Madhavan, singer Shreya Ghoshal, and author-politician Sudha Murthy, asking them to take up the challenge and nominate 10 more people each.

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON CHAMPIONS TROPHY FINAL MATCH

51% of people have the highest expectations from Virat Kohli

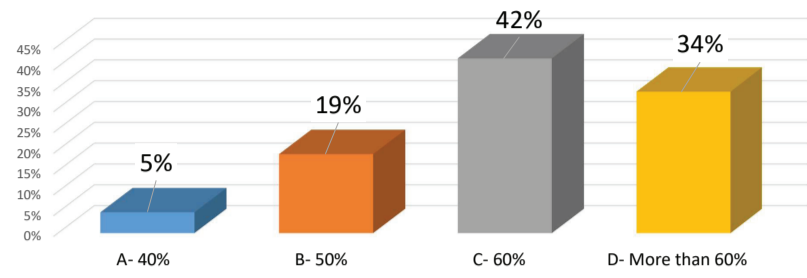
India, New Zealand Set for ICC Champions Trophy 2025 Final in Dubai after 18 days and 14 matches. India and New Zealand will face off

in the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 final on Sunday at 1 PM (09:00 GMT) in Dubai. Due to political tensions, India's matches were

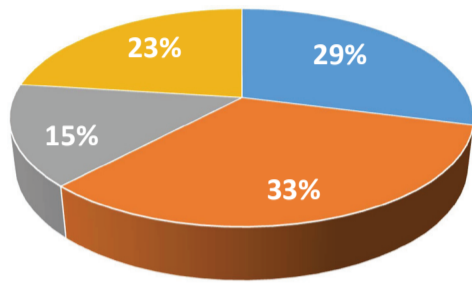
hosted in Dubai instead of Pakistan. India remained unbeaten, while New Zealand secured their spot despite a loss to India.

Q1.▶

What are the chances of India winning the Champions Trophy final?



■ A- Rachin Ravindra
■ B- Kane Williamson
■ C- Mitchell Santner
■ D- Matt Henry

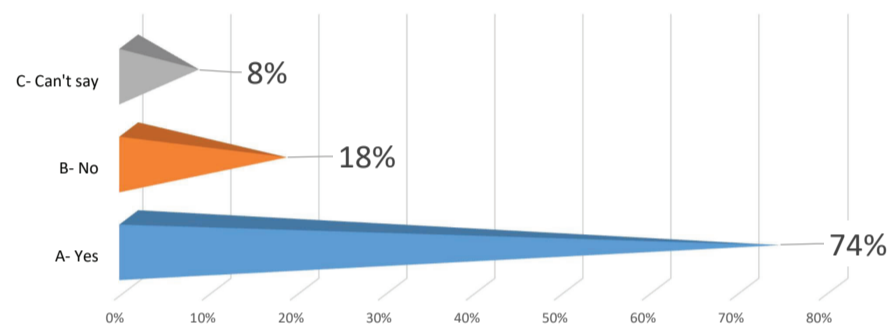
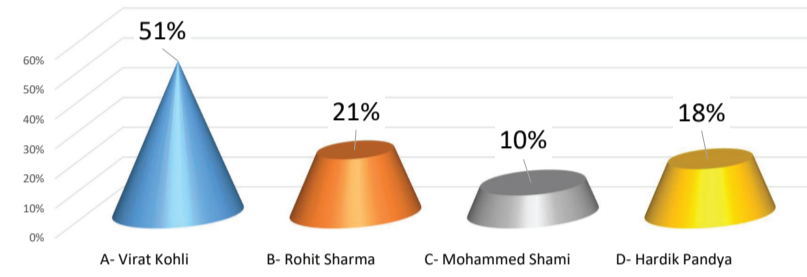


Q2.◀

Which New Zealand player should Team India be most cautious of?

Q3.▶

Which player from Team India do you have the highest expectations from in the final?



Q4.◀

Will India's continuous experience of playing in Dubai be beneficial in the final?

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON SMARTPHONES USE IN TOILET

58% of people do not sanitize their mobile phone after using it in the toilet

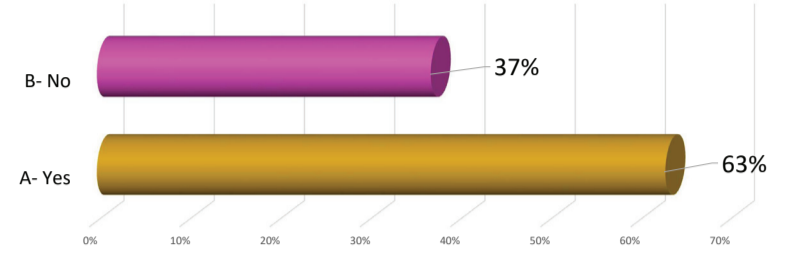
A study found that 61.6% of people use smartphones in toilets, mainly for social media. Experts warn this

habit spreads germs, as phones can carry ten times more bacteria than toilet seats. Pathogens like Staphy-

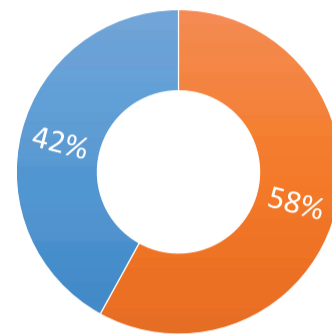
lococcus can survive for 28 days, causing infections. Avoiding phones in washrooms is advised.

Q1.▶

Are you in the habit of using your phone while sitting on the toilet seat?



■ A - Yes
■ B - No

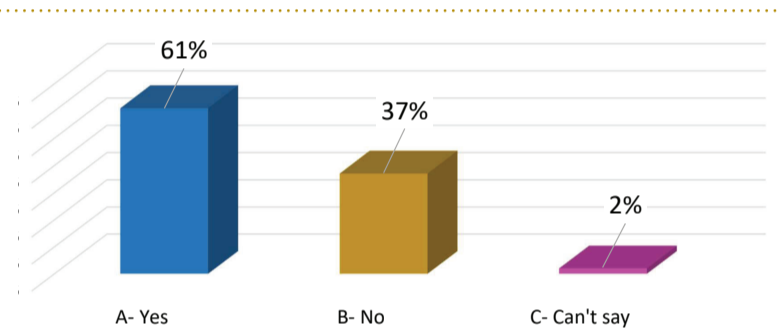
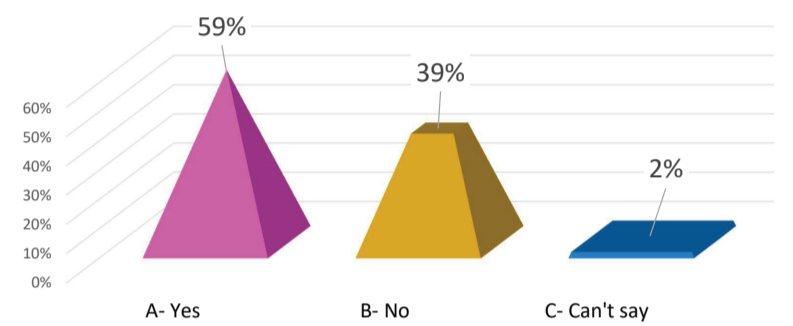


Q2.◀

Are you aware that using your phone while sitting on the toilet seat can lead to bacterial infections and skin-related diseases?

Q3.▶

Do you feel that using your phone while sitting on the toilet has increased your back and neck pain issues?



Q4.◀

Have you ever noticed that using your mobile phone in the toilet makes you lose track of time?

India-US trade pact in the works

CONTINUED FROM P1

watched, as it could set the tone for India-US trade relations in the years to come.

US President Donald Trump had earlier targeted India's import duties in a speech to a joint session of Congress. Trump specifically targeted India's tariffs on automobile imports, saying, "India charges us auto tariffs higher than 100%."

While addressing a joint session of the US Congress, Trump said that the re-

iprocal tax will kick in on April 2. He had said that the US has been ripped off for decades by nearly every country on earth and vowed not to "let that happen any longer."

Trump had said, "Under the Trump administration, you will pay a tariff and in some cases a rather large one. Other countries have used tariffs against us for decades, and now it's our turn to start using them against those other countries. On average, the

European Union, China, Brazil, India, Mexico, Canada, and countless other nations charge us tremendously higher tariffs than we charge them. It's very unfair. India charges us auto tariffs higher than 100 percent."

He had also spoken about the tariffs imposed by the European Union, China, Brazil and Mexico and had announced that the US will impose tariffs on other nations based on what they do to the US.

Open up agri market, says US

CONTINUED FROM P1

on a broad scale, not product-by-product, but rather the whole thing. Let's bring India's tariff policy towards America down," he said at an event here.

In the agriculture sector, he said the Indian agriculture market has to open up, and it can not just stay closed.

"Now, how do you do that? And the scale by which you do that? Maybe you do quarters. Maybe do limits. You can be smarter when you have your most important trading partner on the other side of the table. You can't just say...it's off the table. That's just not an attractive way of doing business," Lutnick said.

The right way to do business is to put everything on the table, but do it smartly and do it thoughtfully, he said, adding that quotas or limits can be used.

During the recent visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Washington, India and the US announced their commitment to more than double the two-way commerce to USD 500 billion by 2030 and negotiate the first tranche of a mutually beneficial, multi-sector Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) by fall of 2025.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal is in Washington since Monday for the trade talks with US Trade Representative (USTR) Jamieson Greer and Lutnick.

Lutnick also said that

countries like India have one of the highest tariffs in the world, and that is why US President Donald Trump is talking about imposing reciprocal tariffs.

Tariffs are import duties imposed and collected by the government and paid by the companies to bring foreign goods into the country. "How you treat us is how we would like to treat you. And I would like to tell you that India has some of the highest tariffs in the world, and that will require a rethinking of the relationship, the special relationship, between India and the United States," he said.

He suggested India to cut down the tariff levels and look at the trading opportunities with America in a special and unique way.

Jaguar fighter jet crashes in Panchkula, pilot safe

CONTINUED FROM P1

The jet was blown to bits and pieces. On hearing the commotion, passers-by immediately gathered around the site where blown-up pieces of the jet were on fire. Looking for survivors, they discovered the pilot with his parachute stuck to him.

The local police rushed to location. A few moments later, officials from the Ambala

unit of IAF also reached the site and escorted the pilot back to their base.

Officials said the jet was completely damaged and the debris was scattered across the area.

The British-French supersonic Jaguar jet aircraft, has been a mainstay of the IAF since the late 1970s and mostly used for deep penetration strikes.

'Elephant- dragon ballet'

CONTINUED FROM P1

his annual press conference here. A "cooperative pas de deux" between the dragon and the elephant is the "only right choice for both sides," Wang said while replying to a question on how Beijing views the course of bilateral ties after the two countries ended the four-year stalemate in the ties.

Bilateral relations be-

tween the two Asian giants froze after the Galwan valley clash in eastern Ladakh in June 2020. The four year military standoff ended last year. China-India relations have made positive strides over the past year after last year's breakthrough, he said.

The successful meeting between President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Kazan last

October provided strategic guidance for the improvement and development of the bilateral ties, he said.

After that "both sides have earnestly followed through on the important common understandings of our leaders, strengthened exchanges and practical cooperation at all levels, and achieved a series of positive outcomes," he added.

4% quota for Muslims

CONTINUED FROM P1

Rs 1 crore, in which Category-II B refers to Muslims.

BJP leader Amit Malviya strongly opposed the decision, saying it undermines the rights of Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) as laid out in the Indian Constitution. Malviya argued that providing reservations based on religion is

unconstitutional and that such measures should not be allowed.

He added that the Congress party's actions were a part of their broader strategy to undermine the rights of these communities, as enshrined in India's Constitution.

BJP has accused Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah of presenting a "Halal Budget," labelling it

as a form of appeasement at its peak. The party criticised the Budget for focusing heavily on provisions aimed at benefiting the Muslim community, while overlooking the needs of other marginalised groups such as SCs, STs, and OBCs.

The BJP has termed it a "scam" and accused the Congress of playing vote-bank politics with the state's resources.

Giani Raghbir Singh removed

CONTINUED FROM P1

additional duties at Sri Akal Takht Sahib, Giani Baba Tek Singh has been appointed as the Jathedar of Sri Damdama Sahib. SGPC member Jasant Singh Pudaen stated that the removal of both Jathedars was linked to a previous decision taken on December 2. He cited two main reasons: First, Giani

Raghbir Singh was making decisions without informing the committee. Second, he was traveling abroad without prior notice. Senior SGPC Vice President Sardar Raghujet Singh explained that the Sikh community is currently facing serious challenges, with efforts being made to weaken Sikh institutions both in India and abroad.

PM's dig at Congress

CONTINUED FROM P1

Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana is a flagship scheme of the Centre to extend affordable credit to micro and small enterprises.

Modi was addressing the gathering after launching a food security saturation campaign in Surat city.

He said the Surat Food Security Saturation Campaign will serve as an inspiration for other districts to achieve the goal of 100 per cent saturation of various government schemes. "No one will be unhappy when no one is left behind (in journey of growth). We want to leave behind the system of appeasement and achieve satisfaction. In Surat, nearly 2.25 lakh new beneficiaries have been identified by the administration. Now, they will get free ration under the PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana," averred Modi.

The PM said he can very well understand the pain of the poor when it comes to securing food.

Modi pointed out his government has streamlined the public distribution system (PDS) by weeding out five crore bogus ration cards.

The Centre's goal is to provide proper nutrition to every family of the country to fight problems like malnutrition and anemia, he emphasised. Targeting past Congress governments, the PM asserted the people of India were tired of hearing the "garibi hatao (remove poverty)" slogan for nearly 50 years. "People were tired of hearing garibi hatao slogan for nearly 50 years. This slogan was raised in every election campaign, but no one was able to remove poverty. My government succeeded in lifting 25 crore people out of poverty in the last 10 years".

Delimitation: Stalin ups the ante, writes to CMs

CONTINUED FROM P1

mented population control measures stand to lose significantly if the exercise is based on post 2026 population. We should not be thus penalized for effectively controlling population growth and upholding national development goals," he said. Calling upon state units of

national parties and regional parties to send a senior representative for the JAC, he tagged the BJP, Congress, TDP, Jana Sena Party, AITC, Janata Dal, Aam Aadmi Party, Akali Dal, Communist Party of India (Marxist), CPI, AIMIM and multiple other state units for the meeting.

CM Stalin had pointed in his letter to other CMs that,

the previous delimitation exercises were conducted in 1952, 1963, and 1973, but were frozen by the 42nd Amendment in 1976 until the first census after 2000.

The freeze was extended in 2002 until the census after 2026. However, with the 2021 Census delayed, the delimitation process might happen earlier

than expected, potentially affecting states that have controlled their population and achieved better governance. The CM stated that if the exercise is based on population after 2026, states with better population control would face a reduction in parliamentary representation, which he called unjust.

Jairam Ramesh backs Stalin

CONTINUED FROM P1

The first success was in Kerala. It reached replacement levels of fertility in 1988. Tamil Nadu reached it in 1993. Then, after that, we had undivided Andhra, we had Karnataka, and then, of course, other states followed. States that have not taken family planning

seriously should not be rewarded disproportionately in terms of increases in seats. Linguistic imperialism is also not acceptable. Everybody is entitled to learn in their mother tongue."

Speaking on the three-language policy Ramesh said that with 22 official languages listed in Sched-

ule 8 of the Constitution and numerous other regional languages spoken across the country, there must be equal respect for all languages.

"We respect all languages. We must respect all languages. And of course, there are 22 official languages in Schedule 8 of the Constitution, but there are

so many languages. India is a multi-linguistic country. Our unity comes from our diversity," said Jairam Ramesh.

The Congress statement comes amidst a heated debate between the Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin and the centre on both delimitation and the three-language policy.

'GOVT TO OPEN JANAUSHADHI KENDRAS NEAR HOSPITALS,' SAYS CM GUPTA

CM plans to expand Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendras in Delhi, as per HC guidelines.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Friday said that the government will expand the network of Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) Kendras across the city as per the applicable regulations. She made the statement while interacting with people at her residence.

Speaking to the reporters, Gupta said, "The government before us did not implement the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana. Maybe because the word 'Pradhan Mantri' was attached to the name of this public welfare scheme."

She further asserted, "Today, on the occasion of the seventh Jan Aushadhi Diwas, I want to congratulate the people of Delhi on the decision to open Janaushadhi Kendra everywhere where the rules allow in Delhi... We will follow the decision of the High Court, which says that there should be a Janaushadhi Kendra within 500 meters of every hospital."

AAP opposes closure of mohalla clinics, calls it blow to city's healthcare

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Senior AAP leader Satyendar Jain on Friday strongly criticised the reported plan of the BJP government in Delhi to shut down 250 mohalla clinics, calling it a move that would paralyse the city's healthcare infrastructure.

Addressing a press conference here, Jain requested the government to increase rather than reduce the number of the neighbourhood clinics, which were introduced by the previous AAP government to provide accessible primary healthcare to Delhi's residents.

He emphasised that the mohalla clinics offer basic medical facilities, including doctor consultations and 365 types of free diagnostic tests.

The initiative was designed to ensure that people do not have to travel long distances

EXPANSION OF PMBJP KENDRAS

- Gupta criticized the past government for not implementing the PMBJP scheme, potentially due to its association with the Prime Minister.
- Gupta held a session with traders to gather feedback for the 2025 Delhi Budget, focusing on issues like bureaucracy and infrastructure.
- Gupta highlighted the neglect of industrial areas and the lack of basic amenities in places like Lajpat Nagar.
- The government aims to align the budget with PM Modi's vision of a developed Delhi.



Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta inspects the quality and availability of the stock of medicines on the occasion of 'Jan Aushadhi Diwas', Ashok Vihar Jan Aushadhi Kendra in New Delhi. ANI

discussion, highlighting key issues the business community faces.

Speaking to the media, CM Gupta acknowledged the challenges raised during the session and outlined the government's plans to resolve them.

"As part of the Viksit Delhi Budget 2025-26 consultation series, we invited repre-

sentatives from all business organizations, industrial bodies, and people from the business community across Delhi. Today, I received very valuable suggestions from them. From what I understood, years of past governments' rule have left them with pain and suffering. They are afflicted—both by bureaucracy and imprac-

tical policies. In the name of development, there has been zero performance," said CM Gupta.

She further said the government aims to include all sections of society and wishes to provide a Budget that brings Delhi closer to PM Narendra Modi's vision of Viksit Delhi.

Atishi writes to CM, asks to start women aid immediately

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Senior AAP leader Atishi on Friday wrote a letter to Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, urging her to ensure immediate transfer of Rs 2,500 to women's accounts, as promised by the BJP during the assembly polls.

"The prime minister had assured the mothers and sisters of Delhi that once the BJP's government is formed, the scheme to provide Rs 2,500 per month would be approved in the first cabinet meeting and funds would start reaching women's accounts by Women's Day," the leader of opposition in the Delhi Assembly wrote.

With only a day to go for Women's Day, women across Delhi are eagerly awaiting the fulfilment of this promise, Atishi said.

'Govt likely to announce Mahila Samridhhi Yojana today'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi cabinet is likely to meet on March 8 regarding the proposed Mahila Samridhhi Yojana, which would provide financial assistance worth Rs 2,500 to women residing in the national capital, sources said on Friday.

According to sources, the government is expected to announce the scheme at an event tomorrow.

This comes after Aam Aadmi Party leader and Delhi MLA Gopal Rai criticised the Bharatiya Janata Party on Thursday for not fulfilling the promises made prior to Assembly elections and urging the Delhi government to implement the financial aid scheme of giving Rs 2,500 per month to the women of Delhi, also called the Mahila Samridhhi Yojana.

"Before elections, BJP had

promised, so the people of Delhi want the budget to be prepared based on that. The first guarantee was to give women of Delhi Rs 2,500, and they had said that by 8th March, women would get the financial aid in their accounts," Gopal Rai told ANI.

Addressing Women Power for Viksit Bharat 2047 on the occasion of International Women's Day celebrations, CM Rekha Gupta says, "Our nation has progressed in 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao'... We are

and professionals from different sectors. "We will fulfil all the promises we have mentioned in our manifesto, whether it is the scheme for all women or a cylinder. Nobody has to remind us that our agenda will carry on, not theirs (AAP)" CM Gupta said.

Meanwhile, Gupta on Friday said that the government will expand the network of Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) Kendras across the city as per the applicable regulations. She made the statement while interacting with people at her residence.

Speaking to the reporters, Gupta said, "The government before us did not implement the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana. Maybe because the word 'Pradhan Mantri' was attached to the name of this public welfare scheme."

Earlier, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said that the budget of Delhi will fulfil the expectations of people and for this purpose, she will meet women, families, youth



on the third phase - 'Beti Bachao' and we all need to work on this... Today, symbolism does not work, but women actually are representatives, present the budget, handle foreign departments, protect the nation, and have made a major space in every field for themselves..."

and environment-friendly," he added.

Delhi assembly to go paperless with NeVA app in 100 days

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta on Friday convened a meeting with officers from the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs to discuss implementing the National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA) in the Delhi Assembly.

The NeVA team was led by Dr. Satya Prakash, Additional Secretary and Mission Leader (NeVA).

During the meeting, the NeVA team provided a comprehensive presentation highlighting the application's key

IF's officer jumps from 4th floor flat

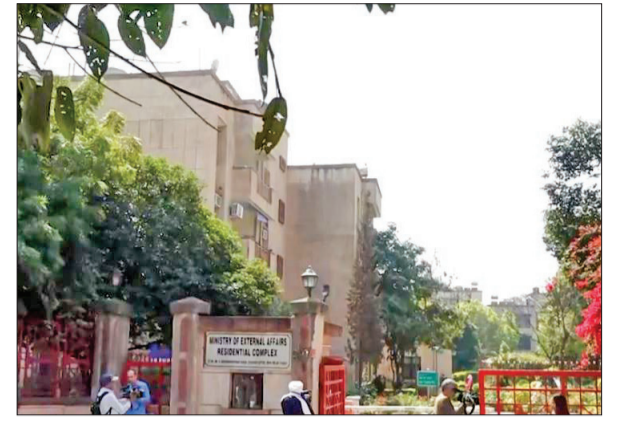
TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A 2011 batch Indian Foreign Services officer ended his life by jumping from the fourth floor of a building in the Chanakyapuri area here on Friday and no foul play is suspected, a police officer said. According to the police, the officer was a director at the Overseas Employments and Protectorate General of Emigrants in the Ministry of External Affairs.

Sources said the officer was undergoing treatment for depression, and his 70-year-old mother was staying with him on the first floor of the MEA Residential Complex in the Chanakyapuri area.

"The deceased has been identified as Jitendra Rawat (42). He was staying on the first floor but went to the fourth floor of the building and jumped. We have not recovered any suicide note from the spot," the officer said.

The Ministry of External Affairs said one of its officers, who was working at its headquarters in Delhi, "passed away" on Friday morning but did not reveal his name. The ministry said it was providing all possible



assistance to the deceased's family and is in touch with the Delhi Police.

Police received a PCR call about the incident at 6.20 am from the security guard of the residential complex. The officer was taken to a hospital, where he was declared dead.

"His wife and children are staying in Dehradun. They have been informed about the incident and the family members are on their way to Delhi," said the source, adding that the family were living in Dehradun because his children were studying there.

"The officer had no family dispute and had been battling depression since he came back from his posting in Belgium 10 months ago.

Rawat has been residing in Delhi for 10 months," a police source said.

Besides Belgium, the officer also had a posting in Myanmar.

A witness said that he was outside the complex when he heard a noise. "We rushed inside the building and saw the officer's body lying on the ground," he said.

The MEA said, "An officer of the Ministry of External Affairs passed away on the morning of March 7 in New Delhi."

"The ministry stands with the family in this hour of grief and difficulty. Further details are not being released bearing in mind the need to respect the family's privacy in this time of bereavement," the MEA added.

Gang making fake passports for gangsters busted, 7 held

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Crime Branch of the Delhi Police has busted a fake passport syndicate allegedly involved in assisting gangsters and criminals flee abroad using forged identities, an official said on Friday. The operation led to the arrest of the syndicate's mastermind, Nishant Kumar Saxena, along with six other associates, including a member of the Neeraj Bawana gang, he said.

"The Crime Branch had been tracking a syndicate engaged in creating fake passports for gangsters, wanted criminals, and parole jumpers. Over four months of surveillance, the investigative team gathered intelligence on the gang's operations," Additional Commissioner of Police (Crime) Sanjay Kumar Sain said.

CM: Felt like protagonist of 'Nayak' after selection

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Friday said she felt like the protagonist of the Hindi movie "Nayak" after being selected for the post and asserted that it was not a "lottery" but an honour for all daughters of the country.

Addressing India Today Conclave, Gupta, the only woman chief minister across BJP-ruled states, said the BJP government in Delhi will ensure the cleaning of the Yamuna in three years, starting a



ferry service on it and diminishing three landfill sites up to 80-90 per cent in next two years.

The other priorities of her

government were to ensure that Delhi people do not face water shortage in the summers and waterlogging during monsoon, she said.

On being asked about her getting preference for the chief minister's post over several senior leaders and MLAs, Gupta said, "Let no one have any misunderstanding. This victory is due to the people of Delhi and the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi."

"This is not a post, it is a job and a responsibility. Our aim is a developed Delhi for a devel-

oped India," Gupta said.

Underlining that the women in Indian society do not get opportunities to go on the "front foot", she said her appointment as chief minister of Delhi was an honour for all daughters of the country and there was a lot of enthusiasm over it. The appointment of a woman as chief minister was a very significant vision of the party and PM Modi and it was not just a "symbolic facelift" but a genuine effort to promote women to higher posts of decision-making, Gupta said.

CCTV cameras to send SOS by women in Delhi soon

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Waving in front of a surveillance camera may soon help save a woman's life, as the Delhi Police prepares to launch a one-of-a-kind project in the coming months, an officer said on Friday.

The 'Safe City' project, currently in pipeline, aims to install high-resolution cameras across Delhi, with live feeds beamed at local police stations, the offices of



Deputy Commissioners of Police (DCPs), and the Police Headquarters.

"This will be the first such initiative in the country," the officer said.

The project will involve the use of facial recognition technology, alerting police immediately if a woman in distress waves her hand in front of these cameras.

Initially, there were discussions about integrating panic buttons into the camera poles, but the idea was dropped amid concerns of misuse and unnecessary resource deployment, said the officer involved in the project.

"If any incident of crime against women occurs on the streets of Delhi, police will be immediately alerted and can intervene before the situation escalates. This will be a significant step in crime

prevention," he added.

The project is still under development, with weekly review meetings every Tuesday, attended by the heads of various departments.

The multi-crore initiative is expected to be launched this year by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Lower-level officers have been instructed to identify high-crime areas or "black spots" where there is a greater need for surveillance.

BJP MPs add 'Vivekananda Marg' to nameplates on Tughlaq Lane

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Minister of State for Cooperation Krishan Pal Gurjar and Rajya Sabha MP Dinesh Sharma have modified the nameplates outside their official residences on Tughlaq Lane in Delhi, incorporating "Swami Vivekananda Marg" along with the existing name.

The move comes amid

recent proposals by some BJP leaders to rename several areas christened after Mughal leaders in the national capital. The modified nameplates prominently display "Swami Vivekananda Marg" with "Tughlaq Lane" inscribed in brackets beneath it.

Defending the change, Gurjar, an BJP MP from Haryana's Faridabad, said, "We have faith in Swami

Vivekananda, which is why we have added his name. But we have not removed Tughlaq Lane. We have not done anything against the rules. Vivekananda is an inspiration for our youth, not Tughlaq."

When asked if he considered Sultan Tughlaq an aggressor, he responded, "Definitely. Whether it is Aurangzeb... they were attackers.

VAISHNAW CHALLENGES TOP TECH GIANTS TO DEVELOP INDIGENOUS MOBILE OS

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Information and Technology Minister, Ashwini Vaishnav on Friday challenged the technology giants such as TCS, Infosys, and Wipro to develop an operating system for mobile phones.

Participating at 32nd ICT Business Awards & DQ Digital Leadership Conclave, an event organised by Dataquest India, "Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said, "From this stage, I would like to give this challenge to our big tech companies like Infosys, TCS and Wipro take up this challenge and develop the operating system for mobile, develop an operating system for our country."

Urging the tech giants to develop an operating system for mobile phones, he

SUMMARY

- IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnav challenged TCS, Infosys, and Wipro to develop a homegrown mobile operating system, urging India to shift from services to product innovation.
- India's first indigenous chip will roll out this year, with five semiconductor units under construction. A new AI Compute Portal with 14,000 GPUs will support startups and researchers.
- The government aims to position India among the top five global tech nations (T5), focusing on innovation beyond just service delivery.
- Key priorities include autonomous AI models, small problem-solving AI models, domestic GPU development, and talent/startup support.



further added, "Yes, you have been doing very well in providing the services, time has come when we must become a product nation. And we will support from the government and"

Addressing the event, the Union Minister outlined the government's priority to become a prudent nation in the area of technology.

He said, "Our Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given

us that vision, has given us that inspiration, and has given us that confidence and resources to really think big. Come up with new solutions. Look at not only solving today's problems but also lay the foundation for solving future problems. Develop technologies, not just be a service provider to the world, but develop technologies, develop products, and be in that top 5 nations

which are maybe someday like G7 and G20 people will start talking of T5. So technology 5, top 5 technology nations, be a part of that. That's the inspiration we keep on getting from him."

The Union Minister spoke about the government's efforts to lead and democratise the landscape of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

He added that five units are being constructed, and this

year the country "should see the first made-in-India chip rollout."

Going further, he highlighted the launch of the AI Compute Portal which will be available to researchers, startups, and government agencies, to access highly valued GPUs and high-powered computing resources specifically designed for artificial intelligence (AI) tasks.

Domestic solar industry will face supply shortage: Report

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The solar industry will continue to face a demand-supply mismatch, despite a significant surge in cell manufacturing capacity over the next two years, according to a report by Share India.

The production of solar modules is expected to rise from 8 gigawatts (GW) to 50 GW by the financial year 2027. The report adds that the demand-supply mismatch in the sector is likely to widen. Despite the sharp rise in cell production, the report highlights that the demand-supply gap is likely to remain wide as incremental cell capacity additions are expected to be concentrated toward the latter part of the two years.

According to the report, a major factor contributing to this imbalance is the introduction of ALMM-II



regulations in June 2026 (FY27), which will restrict the use of imported cells in government projects.

The anticipated changes in import regulations due to ALMM-II further complicate the situation, as domestic manufacturers will struggle to meet government project needs without the flexibility to rely on imported cells.

This regulation will impact the solar value chain by limiting the availability of cells for use in government-backed initiatives, leading to a potential supply crunch in the domestic market.

While manufacturers are rapidly expanding capacity,

the restrictions on cell imports will significantly affect the ability to meet demand for solar modules, especially in government projects.

The report outlines four key concerns of the industry over a potential oversupply of solar modules and cells.

It says aggressive planned production expansions could exert downward pressure on prices and lead to margin compression across the value chain but the demand-supply gap will persist.

The report noted that the market is also grappling with several additional issues, like the surge in cell capacity, the potential oversupply of modules, the impact of import duty cuts on cells and PV modules, and the threat of tariffs on exports to the USA, which could create domestic overcapacity in the short term.

Banking liquidity will come into strong surplus by March end: UBI

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The liquidity situation in India's banking sector is expected to improve significantly by the end of March 2025, with a shift towards a strong surplus, according to a research report by Union Bank of India.

The report also indicated that the overall system liquidity is likely to end the financial year in neutral to surplus territory.

It said "we may potentially see a shift in core liquidity (ex-government balance) towards a strong surplus by end-Mar'25 while system liquidity is also estimated to end the year at neutral to surplus levels". The report highlighted the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) recent liquidity measures, announced on March 5, 2025, amounting to Rs 1.9 lakh crore. These measures exceeded market expectations by a significant margin, suggesting that the central bank is taking proactive steps to ensure adequate liquidity in the financial system.

The report also added that despite the expected improvement in liquidity by March-end, the banking system may face some short-

term challenges.

Seasonal tax outflows, such as Goods and Services Tax (GST) payments and advance tax payments, along with currency leakage, could temporarily tighten liquidity conditions.

It said "While in the near term, overall banking system liquidity may face pressures from seasonal tax outflows (GST, advance tax etc) along with currency leakage, assuming FX related outflows do not play spoilsport".

However, assuming that foreign exchange-related outflows remain under control, the overall liquidity situation should improve as the financial year concludes.

Interestingly, the market reaction to the RBI's liquidity measures has been relatively subdued. The report attributes this muted response to several factors, including year-end liquidity pressures, an increase in the supply of State Development Loans (SDLs), and a sharp rise in global bond yields.

The global financial landscape has also influenced market sentiment. The report notes that concerns over a slowdown in the U.S. economy have been growing, particularly due to the potential impact of trade tariffs.

Retail inflation may ease to 4.1% in Feb: Report

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India's consumer price inflation (CPI) is expected to decline to 4.1 per cent for February 2025, according to a report by the Bank of Baroda (BoB).

However, the report cautioned that certain factors could keep food prices elevated, such as rising global edible oil prices, inflationary tariff policies, and an anticipated hotter summer.

It said "We expect CPI to settle at 4.1 per cent in Feb'25. However, we completely do not rule out any upside pressure on food prices arising from stickier edible oil prices globally".

The BoB Essential Commodity Index (BoB ECI), which tracks key household goods, also showed a slowdown in February, moderating to 2.4 per cent year-on-year. This decline was driven mainly by falling prices of vegetables like tomatoes and potatoes.

Additionally, inflation in pulses remained under control due to improved supply conditions. A recent



reduction in milk prices further contributed to the downward trend in overall inflation.

Despite the easing of inflation in some categories, certain risks persist. Global asset price volatility, particularly in gold and base metals, has not yet significantly impacted inflation, as energy prices have remained relatively low.

However, tariffs on metals could drive up prices in the coming months. In February, increased demand led to higher prices for metals such as copper and zinc.

A major concern highlighted in the report is the persistence of high edible oil prices, which could continue to push food inflation upward.



Government of Haryana

Heartiest Greetings

on the occasion of

International Women's Day

March 8, 2025

नारी शक्ति से विकसित भारत



महिलाओं का सम्मान प्रदेश की शान

#SheBuildsBharat

Information, Public Relations & Languages Department, Haryana | www.prharyana.gov.in | Follow us on [social media icons] | @dipharyana

Scan the QR code to join the Whatsapp Channel of Information and Public Relations Department, Haryana



THAROOR'S QUESTION IS GENUINELY VALID

'Where ignorance is bliss, 'Tis folly to be wise'

OPINION

DR VIJAY DARDA



Is 68-year-old Shashi Tharoor, who reigns in the hearts of the youths, rebelling against the Congress these days? I don't think so at all. He is a good friend of mine, and I know his nature very closely. Shashi Tharoor is a highly outspoken person who never hesitates in speaking the truth. His personality is so impressive that any political party would want to have him on its side — he is popular across party lines. Despite this, if he remains with Congress, it is because of his deep understanding of the party's core principles. Speaking the truth can never be considered a rebellion!

When Shashi Tharoor contested for the post of Congress president, his aim was to attract the youths and infuse new energy and vigour into the party. Many people still believe that if Tharoor had become

the president of the party, Congress' position would have been entirely different. We are all well aware of Tharoor's multifaceted personality — he stands out in a crowd. Yet, if he feels that the party is not making proper use of his abilities and that he has been sidelined after contesting the party president's post, this is a great loss for the Congress itself. I have no hesitation in saying that Congress currently lacks a leader of Tharoor's stature. He understands not only the pulse of the country but is also not aloof to that of the world.

Another remarkable quality of his is that despite being so knowledgeable, he never imposes his intellect on others. His behaviour is simple and humble. The idea of bringing Shashi Tharoor into politics first came to Dr Manmohan Singh. Since 2009, he has been consecutively elected as a Member of Parliament from Thiruvananthapuram on Congress ticket. In Manmohan Singh's cabinet, he served as the Minister of State for External Affairs and later as the Minister of State for Human Resource Development. Considering his capabilities, he should have been given a cabinet rank, but he never made

such a demand. What deeply troubled him, however, was that a faction within Congress was constantly targeting Dr Manmohan Singh. This sycophantic faction could never tolerate Shashi Tharoor. He was also an active participant in Ghulam Nabi Azad's G-23 group, where he raised critical questions about the party leadership. Naturally, this faction remains displeased with him even today.

About two weeks ago, Shashi Tharoor called on Rahul Gandhi. He told Rahul that he was not being given the opportunity to speak during important debates in Parliament and that he was continuously being overlooked. What Rahul Gandhi replied is not known, but I have never understood how any party

Will the Congress leadership ever introspect on why the party is out of power in major states?

could ignore a leader like Tharoor. With a speaker of his calibre, the party could make a strong impact. From 2014 to 2019, Mallikarjun Kharge was made the leader of the parliamentary party, and from 2019 to 2024, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury was given that role — when actually a powerful orator like Shashi Tharoor was present in the House! Just recall the moment when Tharoor



stood at Oxford and delivered a fact-based speech on Britain's exploitation of India — the entire nation applauded! That's because he speaks with solid facts.

In the past few years, Congress has made many internal changes. Recently, two new general secretaries were appointed, and several state in-charges were reshuffled. Yet, there was neither a place for Tharoor, nor was it contemplated. In fact, the All India Professionals' Congress (AIPC), which was entirely his creation, was taken away from him!

Shashi Tharoor praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US recently, calling it a success. He wrote, "Prime Minister Modi's meeting with US President Donald Trump has resulted in some important outcomes that are beneficial for the people of our country. I believe something positive has been achieved, and as an Indian,

I appreciate it. I have spoken entirely in the national interest in this matter."

Earlier, he had also praised Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. In one of his articles, he commended Kerala's leftist government, stating that the state was well-positioned to lead India's technological and industrial transformation.

These statements caused outrage within the Congress. Amid this controversy, Tharoor responded, saying, "I am with Congress, but if the party does not need me, I also have options." Tharoor speaks with such confidence because of his strong grassroot support. His victory from the Thiruvananthapuram parliamentary seat, even during the Modi wave, proves his strong connection with the electorate. He wants Congress to contest next year's Kerala Assembly elections under his leadership to ensure victory. But does the party care?

I keep wondering as to why the Congress, which was once the heartbeat of the nation, has not returned to power in Tamil Nadu for 58 years, in West Bengal for 48 years, in Kerala for 41 years, in Uttar Pradesh for 36 years, in Bihar for 35 years, in Gujarat for 30 years, and in Odisha for 25 years! In Delhi, the party has been wiped out. It is out of power in Punjab. In Maharashtra, the party is in shambles. What has happened to the Congress? Millions of party workers are asking the same question. But does the top leadership ever reflect on this? Answering this question is difficult! For now, pay heed to what Shashi Tharoor recently posted on X (formerly Twitter), "Where ignorance is bliss, 'Tis folly to be wise."

The author is the chairman, Editorial Board of Lokmat Media and former member of Rajya Sabha.

SCREENS: KILLING SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT AND TURNING US INTO ZOMBIES



CAPTAIN INDIRA VASHISHTA

In the age of technological revolution, the pervasive use of gadgets such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, and televisions has become ubiquitous. These devices surround us in our daily lives, offering a plethora of advantages, from instant communication to endless access to information. However, alongside these benefits, there are serious concerns that arise,

particularly regarding social interaction and human relationships. The transformation of our communication landscape has created a phenomenon that can be aptly described as a generation of "digital zombies."

Among the most pronounced impacts of excessive screen usage is the gradual erosion of communication abilities and a significant reduction in actual human interaction. The nuances of online communication—while convenient—cannot replicate the sophistication and subtleties inherent in face-to-face conversations, which include non-verbal signals like facial expressions, tone of voice, and demeanor. Without these essential cues, individuals often struggle to convey their thoughts and emotions effectively through mere text or images. This challenge is particularly pronounced in teenagers, who are at a crucial stage of development where learning interpersonal skills is vital. As higher screen dependence increases, so does social unease, with many finding themselves increasingly uncomfortable in face-to-face interactions.

Empirical observations of daily life provide ample evidence of this troubling trend. It is not uncommon to see children engrossed in their electronic devices, largely oblivious to the conversations happening around them. This behavior is not confined to younger generations; adults exhibit similar habits. Commuters on public transport are frequently seen absorbed in their phones, creating a bubble of isolation despite the physical proximity to others. Public spaces such as railway stations, bus stops, and waiting lounges reflect this same disconnection from the surrounding world. Even in domestic environments, family members often share meals in silence, each preoccupied with their own devices. This trend extends into the home, where members retreat into different rooms, each absorbed in their personal screens. Traditional pastimes such as board games and outdoor sports are fading into obscurity, replaced by the allure of digital entertainment, while genuine conversations have become increasingly rare.

Beyond the confines of the home, the excessive use of screens has significantly impacted social participation and community engagement. As individuals become more engrossed in their devices, their involvement in local events, volunteer activities, and social gatherings has diminished. This disengagement from societal interaction weakens social bonds and erodes the sense of belonging that is essential to community life. In the past, social participation was seamlessly integrated into daily routines. For instance, shopping trips served not only as opportunities for procuring goods but also as moments for exchanging greetings and sharing experiences with others. Religious gatherings, such as bhajan sessions in temples, provided a space for both spiritual connection and social interaction. In earlier decades, the limited range of television programming encouraged outdoor play, which was essential for children's development, allowing them to explore, make friends, and build relationships. The landscape of social interactions has been dramatically transformed by technology. Worship practices have shifted from communal gatherings to solitary viewing of services on television, stripping away the intimacy and personal connections that come from shared experiences. The rise of OTT platforms, social media reels, and video games has further contributed to the shift away from real-life interactions toward virtual engagements. This transition has left little room for the simple joys of togetherness, as individuals prioritize screen time over meaningful face-to-face connections.

Moreover, the correlation between excessive screen use and mental health issues is becoming increasingly evident. A growing body of empirical evidence indicates that prolonged exposure to screens—especially through social media—has been linked to higher rates of depression, anxiety, and diminished self-esteem. The constant barrage of notifications and the pressure to remain perpetually connected exacerbate these negative emotional states, creating a cycle that prevents individuals from engaging with others in the physical realm. Despite these challenges, the role of screens in fostering social connectivity cannot be entirely dismissed. Technology allows for instant communication, enabling relationships to flourish even when physical proximity is lacking.

To combat the adverse effects of screen overuse, it is crucial to cultivate awareness of its negative consequences and to actively pursue opportunities for interpersonal connection. Initiatives aimed at fostering face-to-face communication can help restore the essential human connections. Detaching from electronic screens and actively engaging with the immediate environment represents a significant step toward restoring authentic social interactions. Simple actions, such as initiating conversations with neighbors, participating in community service, or organizing social gatherings, can help bridge the gap created by technology. By prioritizing real-life connections, individuals can reclaim the joy of shared experiences and foster a sense of belonging.

In conclusion, the phenomenon of "digital zombies" underscores the importance of recognizing the impact of excessive screen usage on communication and social relationships. It is essential to remain vigilant about its potential drawbacks. By fostering awareness and actively seeking to strengthen interpersonal connections, we can enhance our social well-being and cultivate a more connected and engaged society. Embracing the richness of human interaction while navigating the digital landscape is key to ensuring that technology serves as a tool for connection rather than a barrier to it.

Captain Indira Vashishta is an Ex-Airline Pilot, Motivational Speaker, and Columnist.

Calls for action for all women and girls: Rights, equality, empowerment

OPINION

GAURIKA CHUGH, MOUMITA MANDAL & SUKANYA DAS

Women are the torchbearers for shaping sustainable economic models and driving financial inclusion. Their participation in financial systems not only enhances their decision-making powers but also strengthens national economies. This resonates with this year's International Women's Day which focuses on empowering women especially young women and adolescent girls under the broader theme of calls for action "For All Women and Girls: Rights, Equality and Empowerment". It's a significant year as it marks the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The declaration addresses how there can be greater access for women over economic structures as they are mostly underrepresented in economic decision-making including the formulations of economic policies. The declaration highlights that women's empowerment and sustainable development of a country would be possible when there is equal participation of women in the

economic decision-making process and they get recognition for their contribution to the economic development of a country.

Looking at the scenario in India, the Constitution of India promotes the economic empowerment of women. Articles 14 and 15 which are Fundamental Rights ensure the right to equality, equal opportunities, and non-discrimination and Articles 39(a), 39 (d), and 42 which are part of Directive Principles of State Policy direct the State to make law and policy to

adequate means of livelihood, ensure equal pay for equal work and, just and humane conditions of work, and maternity relief.

Thus, to strengthen women's capacities and drive the nation towards holistic economic development, the Government of India has taken significant central policy initiatives. There have been various initiatives ranging from Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), Direct Benefits Transfer (DBT), Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY), Lakhpati Didi scheme.

The recent statistics by the Government of India on the statistics of PMJDY reveal that a total of 54.58 crore Jan Dhan accounts have been opened till 15.01.2025 of which 30.37 crore (55.7%) belongs to women. This means that a significant section of wom-

en are still excluded from getting access to bank accounts which hinders their financial security and also access to social security and welfare schemes. In a report, SEBI reveals that women have 42 percent of inactive bank accounts as compared to 30 percent in the case of men. The PMMY is also a significant policy initiative to promote financial inclusion and entrepreneurship across India. It has sanctioned loans worth 32.36 lakh crore, benefiting over 51.41 crore loan accounts. Out of the total loans sanctioned, 68 percent belong to women entrepreneurs. However, the majority of women's accounts are in the Shishu category (loan amount is 50000/-) which is 79 percent out of which the percentage of sanctioned amount is 54 percent. In the Kishore category (loan

is between 50000 to 5 lakhs) number of accounts is 21 percent and the sanctioned amount is 42 percent. There are no women's accounts in the tarun category (loan amount is between 5-10 lakhs). The recent report by NITI Aayog in 2025 reveals that more women in India are using credit and actively monitoring their credit scores. There has been a growth of 27 million women in December 2024 monitoring their credit which means that there is a 42 per cent increase from the previous year. There is a significant rise in the share of women from the non-metro areas which is 48 percent as compared to 30 percent in the metro areas. Lakhpati Didi Yojana has empowered 1.15 crore women to achieve an annual household income of 1 lakh. A major catalyst for empowering women is their integration into the digital payments ecosystem. The report on Enabling Digital Payments for Women in India reveals that as of 2024 only 25 percent of digital payment users were women and only 23 percent of women have financial literacy.

As this 2025 women's day is flagging and the Beijing Declaration has already stated that affirmative action should be taken 'by Governments, intergovernmental organizations, academic and research institutions and the private

sector for developing conceptual and practical methodologies for incorporating gender perspectives into all aspects of economic policy-making, including structural adjustment planning and programmes.'

The process of women's financial inclusion in India is facing lots of challenges such as lack of gender-disaggregated data, persistent social and cultural barriers, lack of exclusive legal and institutional mechanisms, and so on.

Thus, women's financial inclusion in India needs targeted strategies such as women-centric financial platforms enhancing financial literacy programmes, and simplifying digital payment methods. Furthermore, utilizing alternative credit scoring systems can empower women to make independent financial decisions. Lastly, it needs to ensure the 'full, effective, and meaningful participation' of all women so that no one is left behind.

Gaurika Chugh, Assistant Professor, Department of Policy and Management Studies, TERI School of Advanced Studies, New Delhi.
Moumita Mandal, Assistant Professor, Department of Policy and Management Studies, TERI School of Advanced Studies, New Delhi.
Sukanya Das, Professor, Department of Policy and Management Studies, TERI School of Advanced Studies, New Delhi.



FROM SHADOWS TO SPOTLIGHT

For decades, female characters were confined to the background—portrayed as submissive wives, sacrificial mothers, or mere eye candy. These depictions reinforced regressive stereotypes, limiting the representation of women to supporting roles in male-driven narratives. However, in recent years, female characters have stepped into the spotlight, leading powerful, authentic, and complex stories.

Indian cinema has long been a mirror reflecting the nation's evolving societal norms, cultural values, and the intricate tapestry of its people's lives. Over the decades, the portrayal of women in Indian films has undergone a significant transformation—from traditional, often restrictive roles to more empowered and nuanced representations. This evolution not only mirrors the changing status of women in society but also catalyzes further discourse on gender equality and women's rights.

One of the most recent films that has sparked conversations about women's roles and societal expectations is *Mrs.*, starring Sanya Malhotra and directed by Arati Kadav. The film delves into the life of a young woman who begins to question the traditional customs imposed upon her, particularly the ritual of Karwa Chauth—a day when married Hindu women fast from sunrise to moonrise for the well-being and longevity of their husbands.

Director Arati Kadav has openly expressed her reservations about how Bollywood has historically glorified Karwa Chauth, often portraying it as the epitome of a wife's devotion. In *Mrs.*, this ritual becomes a focal point for examining the broader implications of such traditions on women's autonomy. The protagonist's journey reflects a growing awareness and resistance against societal norms that have long dictated women's behaviours and choices. Through the narrative, *Mrs.* challenges the audience to reflect on the relevance of age-old customs in contemporary society and encourages women to make choices that align with their personal beliefs rather than succumbing to societal pressures.

STEREOTYPICAL PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN COMMERCIAL CINEMA Historically, Indian cinema, especially mainstream Bollywood, has been guilty of perpetuating stereotypes



Darlings (2022). Director: Jasmeet K. Reen

when it comes to female characters. Women were often confined to roles that depicted them as submissive, sacrificial, and existing primarily to support the male protagonists.

The Dutiful Wife and Mother: Films like *Mother India* (1957) showcased women as the epitome of sacrifice and virtue, reinforcing the idea that a woman's primary role is within the domestic sphere.

The Glamorous Object: In many commercial films, women were reduced to mere eye candy, with item numbers and glamorous appearances that added little to the narrative but catered to the male gaze.

The Vamp: Conversely, women who defied societal norms were often portrayed as vamps—characters with questionable morals who ultimately faced downfall, reinforcing the idea that deviation from tradition leads to negative consequences.

These portrayals not only limited the scope of female characters but also reinforced regressive notions about women's roles in society.

FEMALE REBELLION IN CONTEMPORARY BOLLYWOOD MOVIES

In recent years, there has been a conscious shift in Bollywood to break away from these stereotypes, with filmmakers exploring themes of female rebellion, autonomy, and empowerment.

Queen (2014): Directed by Vikas Bahl, *Queen* tells the story of Rani, a young woman who embarks on a solo honeymoon trip to Europe after her fiancé calls off their wedding. The film beautifully captures her journey of self-discovery, independence, and empowerment.

Pink (2016): This courtroom drama addresses issues of consent and victim-blaming. The film's



Bawandar (2000). Director: Jag Mundhra

powerful narrative challenges societal prejudices against women who assert their autonomy.

Lipstick Under My Burkha (2016): Directed by Alankrita Shrivastava, this film explores the secret lives of four women in a small town as

they search for freedom and fulfillment, defying the conservative norms imposed upon them.

Breaking Barriers Several films have stood out for their authentic portrayal of women's voices, offering

empowering narratives that resonate with audiences:

Fire (1996): Directed by Deepa Mehta, *Fire* explores the relationship between two sisters-in-law who find solace and love in each other amidst their oppressive marriages. The film faced significant backlash upon its release but is now hailed for its bold portrayal of female desire and autonomy.

Dangal (2016): Based on a true story, the film showcases the journey of two sisters who become world-class wrestlers, challenging gender norms in a male-dominated sport. These films not only highlight women's struggles against patriarchal struc-

SHAPING NARRATIVES

The rise of female filmmakers has been instrumental in bringing authentic women's stories to the forefront:

Deepa Mehta: Known for her *Elements Trilogy* (*Fire* (1996), *Earth* (1998), *Water* (2005)), Mehta addresses themes of gender, sexuality, and societal norms, challenging traditional narratives and offering fresh perspectives.

Zoya Akhtar: With films like *Luck By Chance* (2009), *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara* (2011), and *Gully Boy* (2019), Akhtar presents complex female characters who navigate personal and professional challenges with resilience.

English Vinglish (2012): This film tells the story of a homemaker who enrolls in an English-speaking course to stop her husband from mocking her lack of English skills. It beautifully captures her journey toward self-respect and confidence.

Raazi (2018): Alia Bhatt portrays an Indian spy married into a Pakistani family during the 1971 Indo-Pak war. The film showcases her bravery, intelligence, and the personal sacrifices she makes for her country. These films have played a pivotal role in reshaping the narrative around women in Indian cinema, offering stories that are both empowering and empathetic.

Gauri Shinde: Her directorial ventures, *English Vinglish* (2012) and *Dear Zindagi* (2016), delve into women's journeys toward self-discovery and empowerment, exploring themes of identity, self-worth, and personal growth.

Deepa Dhanraj: A distinguished Indian documentary filmmaker, writer, and researcher whose work spans over four decades. Her films focus on women's rights, social justice, and grassroots political movements.

Vibha Bakshi: Known for her impactful documen-

taries addressing gender rights and social issues, including *Daughters of Mother India* (2015) and *Son Rise* (2019).

Nisha Pahuja: A Canadian filmmaker of Indian origin whose documentary *The World Before Her* (2012) contrasts beauty pageants with Hindu nationalist women's camps, offering a nuanced perspective on Indian women's choices.

Payal Kapadia: Known for blending fiction and documentary styles, her film *All We Imagine as Light* (2024) won the Grand Prix at Cannes, highlighting the struggles of working-class women in Mumbai.

Alia Bhatt: The actress has significantly impacted Indian cinema with films like *Gangubai Kathiawadi* and *Darlings*, which address critical social issues and portray resilient female protagonists.

THE JOURNEY TOWARDS EMPOWERMENT

The evolution of women's portrayal in Indian cinema reflects broader societal changes and the ongoing struggle for gender equality. While significant progress has been made, challenges remain, including addressing the gender pay gap, combating ageism, and ensuring equal opportunities behind the camera. The rise of female filmmakers and actors who challenge traditional narratives and bring diverse stories to the forefront is a promising development.

As Indian cinema continues to evolve, it holds the potential to be a powerful medium for challenging stereotypes, promoting gender equality, and celebrating the multifaceted experiences of women. By embracing diverse narratives and empowering voices both on and off the screen, Indian films can continue to inspire and drive meaningful change in society.

Compiled by Ruchira Talapatra



English Vinglish (2012). Director: Gauri Shinde



Mrs (2023) Zee 5. Director: Arati Kadav



The World Before Her (2012). Director Nisha Pahuja



Lajja (2001). Director Rajkumar Santoshi

SUPREME COURT ASKS HIGH COURTS: DIRECT COURTS TO DISPOSE OF EXECUTION PETITIONS WITHIN 6 MONTHS, HOLD PRESIDING OFFICER LIABLE ON FAILURE

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Periyammal (Dead Thr. Lrs.) Anr Ors Versus Rajamani And Anr. observed and has directed all High Courts to call for information on all pending execution petitions in the district judiciary.

The Supreme Court passed the directions wherein the court observed that the executing Courts are taking three to four years to pass appropriate orders, thereby, frustrating

the entire decree which is in the favour of the decree-holder.

The court also directed the High Courts to issue an administrative circular asking the trial courts in order to ensure that pending execution petitions are decided within six months.

On failure to do so, the Presiding Officer will be answerable to the High Court on the administrative side.

The bench comprising of Justice JB Pardiwala and Justice R. Mahadevan was hearing the present matter. The court in its order



stated that, 'This court direct all the High Courts across the country to call for the necessary information from their respective district judiciary as regards pendency of the execution petitions and once the data

is collected by each of the High Courts, the High Courts shall thereafter proceed to issue an administrative order or circular, directing their respective district judiciary to ensure that the execution peti-

The court also referred to the case of Bhoj Raj Garg v. Goyal Education and Welfare Society & Ors, wherein the court stated that the execution petitions are facing inordinate delays.

tions pending in various courts shall be decided and disposed of within a period of six months without fail otherwise the concerned presiding officer would be answerable to the High Court on its administrative side. Once the entire data along with the figures

of pendency and disposal thereafter, is collected by all the High Courts, the same shall be forwarded to the Registry of this Court with individual reports.'

The bench referred to the case of Rahul S Shah vs. Jinendra Kumar Gandhi, wherein the court directed

that the execution proceedings be completed within six months from the date of filing. The court also referred to the case of Bhoj Raj Garg v. Goyal Education and Welfare Society & Ors, wherein the court stated that the execution petitions are facing inordinate delays.

THE COURT IN ITS JUDGEMENT STATED

'Before this matter is close, This court firmly believe that we should say something as regards the long and inordinate delay at the end of the Executing Courts across the country

in deciding execution petitions.' In the present matter, Ayyavoo Udayar had filed a civil suit for specific performance against the defendants in 1986 with respect to an agreement to sell. The petitioner died during the pendency, his legal representatives continued the proceedings. In between, many legal proceedings took place and the Court ultimately decreed the suit.

In 2004, the decree-holder filed a petition to direct the defendants to execute the sale deed and deliver the possession of the property.

'Burger King' trademark dispute: Supreme Court gives interim relief to Pune Burger King, stays High Court's restraint order

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Anahita Irani v. Burger King observed and has stayed the Bombay High Court order, wherein the court restrained Pune's iconic Burger King from using the trademark 'Burger King'.

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

The bench in the case observed and has passed the interim order and has issued notice wherein a special leave petition is filed by the

The present matter relates to the trademark dispute between the United States food giant 'Burger King' and the Pune-based eatery.

proprietors of the Pune eatery against the High Court's order.

The present matter relates to the trademark dispute between the United States food giant 'Burger King' and the Pune-based eatery.

In August 2024, the District Court Pune had dismissed the trademark infringement suit filed by the US 'Burger King Corporation' against Pune's Burger King.

It has been stated before the court by the US Company that it started selling burgers under 'Burger King' name in 1954 and is presently the second largest fast food hamburger company in the world employing 30,300 people across 100 countries, filed the suit in 2011, wherein seeking a permanent prohibitory injunction against the use of the trademark 'Burger King' by the proprietors of the Pune eatery and also

damages of Rupees 20 lakhs.

On the other hand, the defendant i.e., Anahita Irani and Shapoor Irani, proprietors of the Pune eatery, argued that they had been using the trade name since 1992. The defendants also contended before the court that the plaintiff has not used the trade mark in India for nearly 30 years since registration. The District Court in the case observed and finds no merit that the Defendants i.e., the Pune Burger King are prior users of the trademark in question in India.

The US Burger King, while challenging the order of Dis-

trict Court, appealed to the Bombay High Court.

In December 2024, the Bombay High Court stayed the order of Trial Court and has passed a restraint order against the Pune-eatery from using the tradename "Burger King". The Supreme Court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case observed and has clarified that the High Court can continue to hear the appeal. The counsel, Sr. Counsel Abhishek Manu Singhvi and Sr. Counsel K. Parameswar appeared in the Supreme Court for Pune Burger King.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Collegium has approved the appointment of three Additional Judges as Permanent Judges of the High Court.

The Supreme Court Collegium in its meeting held on March 05, 2025 passed a resolution confirming the elevation of three Additional Judges as Permanent Judges of the High Court.

1. Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal,
2. Justice Rajesh Sekhri &
3. Justice Mohammad Yousuf Wani.

JUSTICE WASIM SADIQ NARGAL

Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal being the first Muslim judge from the Jammu region to serve in the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

Justice Wasim Sadiq Nar-



gal appointment as an Additional Judge was notified on June 1, 2022, following recommendations by the High Court Collegium in August 2017 and the Supreme Court Collegium in April 2018. Prior to the elevation of Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal, Justice Nargal had a distinguished career as a senior advocate, known for his expertise and commitment to justice.

JUSTICE MOHAMMAD YOUSUF WANI

Justice Mohammad Yousuf Wani began his legal career in 1990 and he was appointed as Munsiff in December 1997.

Justice Mohammad Yousuf Wani was promoted to Sub Judge in 2000 and to District & Sessions Judge in 2008.

Throughout his tenure, Justice Wani has held various significant positions, including Member (Judicial) of the J&K Special Tribunal in Srinagar.

Justice Mohammad Yousuf Wani elevation to Additional Judge of the High Court was notified on March 21, 2024.

HC grants permanent injunction in favour of Rishikesh-based Chotiwal restaurant over trademark infringement, awards Rs 3 lakh damages

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court in the case Chotiwal Food And Hotels Private Limited vs. Chotiwal & Ors. observed and has granted a permanent injunction in favour of Rishikesh-based restaurant Chotiwal Food And Hotels Private Limited, wherein the court restrained three Delhi-based restaurants from using Chotiwal's name, trademark and artistic work.

The plaintiff No.1 i.e., Chotiwal Food And Hotels Pvt. Ltd was established in the year 1958 at Rishikesh, Uttarakhand and was previously named Chotiwal Shudh Ghee Bhojanalay and Chotiwal Bhojanalay.

In 1995, the restaurant was renamed as 'Chotiwal' and it obtained various trademark

registrations for the Chotiwal mark.

The said restaurant also created artworks for their restaurant and has registered the copyright for the same. The Chotiwal states that it deploys real-life mascots at the restaurant to attract customers and the mascot has become an iconic symbol of the restaurant.

It has also been stated before the court that Chotiwal has become distinctive to the restaurant and gained immense goodwill among customers.

Further, it has been stated before the court that an uninterrupted run of the business for more than 65 years, 'Chotiwal' has acquired a secondary meaning. It stated that in FY 2021-2022, the plaintiffs' annual sale was

over Rs. 2 crore. Before the court, Chotiwal submitted that it started receiving complaints from their customers visiting from New Delhi that they ordered from Chotiwal's Delhi branch but found the food to be substandard.

It has been discovered upon the enquiry that various restaurants were set using its name. It has also been stated that the defendant restaurants dishonestly incorporated its name to mislead the customers and misappropriate its goodwill.

The court in its earlier order had proceeded ex parte against the defendant-restaurants and had directed Zomato and Magicpin to take down the listing of defendant restaurants on their platforms.

The bench headed by Jus-

stice Amit Bansal in the case noted that the defendant-restaurants did not file any written statements.

The court in the case stated that the suit filed does not merit a trial and thus invoked Order VIII Rule 10 CPC, which empowers the court to pronounce judgment against a party if no written statement has been filed within the required time. The court also noted that Chotiwal has been using its trademark and artistic work for more than 65 years and stated that Chotiwal has proved its goodwill and reputation among its customers.

Before the court, it has been stated that the restaurant has gained popularity and the word Chotiwal has acquired a secondary meaning.

The court stated that, 'The

marks and artistic work have been used by the plaintiffs for promotion of their restaurants for more than sixty five (65) years and following the popularity it has acquired a secondary meaning, and the word 'CHOTIWALA' by default (in its ordinary sense), refers to the restaurant of the plaintiffs in Rishikesh, Uttarakhand. Therefore, the plaintiffs have also been able to demonstrate and prove their goodwill and reputation in respect of the same based on the clientele and the sales figures placed by them before this court.' Further, the court stated that the defendant-restaurants used Chotiwal's trade mark and artistic work/copyrights with a clear intent to deceive the public and falsely claim association with the plaintiff.

Supreme Court Collegium proposes elevation of Calcutta High Court Justice Joymala Bagchi as Supreme Court judge; in line to be CJI in 2031

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Collegium proposed the elevation of Calcutta High Court judge Mr. Justice Joymala Bagchi as a Judge of the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court Collegium considered the fact that after the retirement of Mr. Justice Altamas Kabir on July 18, 2013 as Chief Justice of India, there has

not been any Chief Justice of India from the High Court at Calcutta.

Mr. Justice K.V. Viswanathan will retire on May 25, 2031.

After the retirement of Mr. Justice K.V. Viswanathan, Mr. Justice Joymala Bagchi would be in line to assume office as the Chief Justice of India till his retirement on October 02, 2031.

Mr. Justice Joymala Bagchi would have a tenure of

more six years before he assumes the office of Chief Justice of India, CJI.

The Supreme Court Collegium has considered the fact that at present, the bench of the Supreme Court is represented by only one Judge from the High Court at Calcutta. Mr. Justice Joymala Bagchi stands at Sl. No. 11 in the combined all-India seniority of High Court Judges, including Chief Justices

Supreme Court grants interim bail to UP MLA Abbas Ansari in Gangsters Act case

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Abbas Ansari Versus State Of Uttar Pradesh observed and has granted interim bail to Uttar Pradesh MLA Abbas Ansari in a criminal case registered against him under the Uttar Pradesh Gangsters and Anti-Social Activities (Prevention) Act, 1986.

The bench comprising of Justice Surya Kant and Justice N Kotiswar Singh was hearing the present matter.

The bench in the case observed and has imposed stringent bail conditions wherein the court granted interim relief to Ansari, including that he cannot leave Uttar Pradesh without prior permission of the Special Judge, Trial Court.

The bench directed to Ansari to stay at his official



The bench directed to Ansari to stay at his official residence in Lucknow and if he intends to travel to his constituency in Mau, prior permission from the Trial Court and district police will be required.

residence in Lucknow and if he intends to travel to his constituency in Mau, prior permission from the Trial Court and district police will be required.

The Court has also directed Ansari to not make any public statement in respect

of the sub-judice cases. Further, the court asked for a status report on the progress of the trial.

The counsel, Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal appearing for Ansari submitted before the court that he has been granted bail in other cases.

The Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal stated that the FIR raising similar allegations against him was quashed by the Allahabad High Court but the Court granted liberty to file another FIR if required. Further, Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal stated that in the present case, the witnesses are all police officers. Thus, it cannot be a case where he will threaten the witnesses.

On the other hand, the counsel, Additional Solicitor General KM Nataraj, appearing for the State, opposed the bail petition which being on the ground that he is a very influential person and his influence can go to any extent.

In the present matter, the special leave petition is filed against the order of Allahabad High Court wherein the court dismissed his bail

on December 18, 2024.

The High Court in the case rejected his bail plea on grounds that there is evidence that he is part of a gang operating at the district level, he has criminal antecedents against him, and there are chances that he would tamper with the evidence and threaten the witnesses. Prior to the said order, Ansari had first approached the Supreme Court for bail.

The plea of Ansari was not entertained and Ansari was directed to approach the High Court first.

Accordingly, the court listed the matter for further consideration after six weeks. The counsel, Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal appeared for Ansari. The counsel, Additional Solicitor General KM Nataraj represented the State.

Supreme Court Collegium recommends repatriation of Justice Atul Sreedharan back to Madhya Pradesh High Court

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Collegium in its meeting held on March 06, 2025 recommended the repatriation of Justice Atul Sreedharan, who is currently serving as a Judge of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, to his parent High Court in Madhya Pradesh.

Justice Sreedharan was initially appointed as a Judge of the Madhya Pradesh

High Court on April 7, 2016.

Justice Sreedharan sought a transfer from the Madhya Pradesh High Court, citing that his elder daughter was set to commence her legal practice and would be appearing before the District Court and the Indore Bench of the High Court in 2023.

Justice Sreedharan requested a transfer in order to avoid any potential conflict of interest and to uphold the integrity of the judiciary.

The Supreme Court acknowledged his concerns and has recommended his transfer to the Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh High Court on March 28, 2023.

Justice Atul Sreedharan was born on May 24, 1996. He completed his law degree and began his legal practice in 1992. Justice Atul Sreedharan worked under Senior Advocate Gopal Subramaniam before practicing independently in Delhi and later in Indore.

SC refuses stay on Adani's Dharavi Slum Redevelopment Project as challenged by Dubai's Seclink

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court of India ruled against a stay on the Dharavi redevelopment

project awarded to the Adani Group, despite a challenge by Seclink Technologies Corp. The court also requested Seclink's confirmation that

its bid was higher, but emphasized adherence to all agreed obligations. The project aims to transform 296 acres of Dharavi, a densely populated area.

ISRAELI FORCES DISMANTLE WEAPONS DEPOT, EXPLOSIVES LABORATORIES IN TULKAREM

Troops found approximately 100 pipe bombs, eight larger bombs, and an explosives activation system; several buildings also demolished

AGENCIES
TEL AVIV

Israeli soldiers uncovered and destroyed a weapons depot and multiple improvised laboratories for explosives and drone production, the Israel Defense Forces said on Thursday.

Troops found approximately 100 pipe bombs, eight larger bombs, and an explosives activation system. Several buildings used for terror infrastructure were demolished.

The army launched an ongoing counterterror raid in the Jenin refugee camp on January 19. It has since expanded to the Palestinian city Tulkarem and an area of Samaria known as "the Five Villages." The raids come on the heels of

MILITARY OPERATION



- Israeli forces uncovered and demolished a weapons depot, explosive labs, and drone production facilities.
- Raids, initially launched in Jenin on January 19, have expanded to Tulkarem and the "Five Villages" area in Samaria.
- Israeli forces have arrested 6,000 wanted Palestinians in Judea and Samaria, with 40% linked to Hamas.

The army launched an ongoing counterterror raid in the Jenin refugee camp on January 19. It has since expanded to the Palestinian city Tulkarem and an area of Samaria known as "the Five Villages."

the Palestinian Authority's failed crackdown in the Jenin refugee camp in January. Since Hamas's October 7 attack, Israeli forces have arrested 6,000 wanted Palestinians in counterterror operations in Judea and Samaria. Around 40 percent were affiliated with Hamas.

Pakistan inks deal with banks to slash power sector debt

AGENCIES
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's government sealed a Rs1.25 trillion loan deal with commercial banks at under 11% interest, 3-5% below past rates, to wipe out the power sector's circular debt.

Sources confirmed that this cornerstone of a three-pronged strategy, finalized Thursday in the Finance Ministry with civil-military input, aims to bolster the sector's viability. The Pakistan Power Debt plan, briefed to the IMF a day prior, promises stock elimination, though flow issues linger.

The loan, pegged at 1% below the Karachi Interbank Offered Rate (KIBOR) around 10.8% outshines the 14% on prior bank loans and 16% penalties to Independent Power Producers (IPPs). Logged under the Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA), it sidesteps public debt tallies. Of the Rs2.4 trillion circular debt,



Restructure

Debt Allocation: Rs683 billion clears Power Holding Limited's pricier KIBOR+2% loans, Rs280 billion goes to nuclear plants, Rs220 billion to LNG plants, Rs5 billion to state plants, and coal dues get tackled too.

Repayment Plan: Over six years, a Rs2.83/unit consumer surcharge—yielding Rs350 billion yearly—covers it. Year one's Rs135 billion interest leaves Rs215 billion for principal, though rising KIBOR could squeeze that.

Collateral: Rs200 billion in unencumbered Disco land backs part of the loan, with Rs683 billion guaranteed anew.

Rs1.5 trillion gets settled via this Rs1.25 trillion plus Rs250 billion in budget space.

Another Rs463 billion shrinks through IPP deal revisions, and Rs225 billion needs no action.

The government is also pushing IPPs to waive

Rs272 billion in interest for full upfront payments, further slashing costs. Briefed to the IMF, the Pakistan Power Debt stock drops to zero, but annual flow capped at Rs11 billion in H1 FY25 may take 3-4 years to halt due to theft, losses, and inefficiencies.

Sri Lankan Navy arrests 14 Indian fishermen from Pamban

AGENCIES
COLOMBO

The Sri Lankan Navy arrested 14 fishermen from the Pamban area for fishing across the border and took them to the Mannar Naval Base for investigation, according to the Rameswaram Fishermen Association.

The Sri Lankan Navy patrolling the area arrested the fishermen belonging to Salalanga and the 14 fishermen on board for fishing across the border. They have been taken to the Mannar Naval Base for investigation.

Earlier on February 27, a group of 25 Indian fishermen who were sent back from Sri Lanka arrived at the Chennai International Airport.

Visuals showed the fishermen arriving at the Chennai Airport. The fishermen were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy on charges of crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line



(IMBL) and were released from prison.

A total of 32 fishermen were arrested on February 23, and their boats were seized. On February 23, fishermen in 440 boats went to sea from Rameswaram. While they were fishing in the Palk Bay sea area, Sri Lankan marines came to the area in a patrol boat. They caught 5 boats and apprehended 32 fishermen claiming that they were fishing across the border.

On February 23, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin expressed concern over the increase in the capture of Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy, urging the Centre to convene a Joint Working Group (JWG) to find a permanent solution to the issue.

Highlighting the recent arrest of 32 fishermen by Sri Lankan authorities, Stalin had written to the External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and said that the JWG

would ensure the secure release of all the arrested fishermen and their boats.

The Tamil Nadu CM pointed out that arrests of fishermen from the state are on the rise despite repeated requests to the Sri Lankan government to prevent these arrests. He apprised about the arrests of fishermen in eight separate incidents in 2025, saying that 119 fishermen and 16 boats have been apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy.

Taiwan fends off Chinese cyber attack as U.S. indicts Beijing-linked hackers

AGENCIES
TAIPEI

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) confirmed yesterday that it was targeted by hackers from China but assured that no data was compromised. This follows a Wednesday indictment in the US of a group of alleged Chinese hackers who supposedly aimed at US government agencies, MOFA, and several other foreign governments, according to a report by Taipei Times.

US federal authorities have charged 10 individuals with collaborating to illegally access data from their targets and have imposed sanctions on a Chinese tech firm due to what they described as a prolonged espionage campaign that resulted in the theft of information both in the US and globally, as reported by Taipei Times.

As per the Taipei Times, eight of the indicted individuals were employed by Anxun Information Technology, commonly referred

As per the Taipei Times, eight of the indicted individuals were employed by Anxun Information Technology, commonly referred to as i-Soon, while two were affiliated with the Chinese Ministry of Public Security.

to as i-Soon, while two were affiliated with the Chinese Ministry of Public Security.

The indictment, along with a separate announcement from the Manhattan District Attorney's office, indicated that i-Soon is recognized as "a significant player in the PRC's [People's Republic of China's] hacker-for-hire ecosystem," as cited by Taipei Times.

These cyberattacks targeted the US Defense Intelligence Agency, the US Department of Commerce, and the foreign ministries of Taiwan, South Korea, India, and Indonesia, as well as news outlets critical of China and the New York State Assembly, according to the report from Taipei Times.

The ministry stated that it has consistently been a target of Chinese cyberattacks due to the sensitive nature of its operations. It confirmed awareness of these hacking attempts and mentioned that a comprehensive investigation had been initiated, concluding that none of the attempts to breach its system were successful, as highlighted by Taipei Times.

According to the Taipei Times report, the international community holds a strong disdain for Chinese hacking attempts. The ministry added in a statement that it recognized the recent US indictment as a move to bring the accused hackers to justice.

India urges Bangladesh interim govt to protect Hindus

AGENCIES
DHAKA

India on Friday expressed concern over the deteriorating law and order situation in Bangladesh, particularly with regard to the safety of minorities.

In a weekly briefing, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal emphasised that it is the responsibility of the interim government of Bangladesh to protect Hindus and other minorities, as well as their properties and religious institutions. "We have repeatedly underlined that it is the responsibility of the interim government of Bangladesh to protect the Hindus and other minorities, as well as their properties and religious institutions," said Jaiswal. Jaiswal noted that over 2374 incidents were reported between August 5, 2024, and February 16, 2025, but the police verified only 1254 of them.

Political activist condemns harassment of young traders at Pakistan-China border

AGENCIES
HUNZA

Political activist and senior advocate Zahoor Karim has strongly condemned the ongoing harassment of young traders at the Pakistan-China border and warned to launch a protest movement in the Hunza region of Pakistan-occupied Gilgit Baltistan (PoGB), Pamir Times reported.

In a statement, Advocate Zahoor highlighted the severe limitations imposed on border pass issuance, particularly the controversial 5 million transaction requirement, which he called unconstitutional, as

reported by Pamir Times. Zahoor Karim described these conditions as a deliberate attempt to create unrest among the youth and undermine peace in the region. The imposition of unnecessary taxes and barriers for legitimate trade, he argued, is unfairly affecting the local youth who depend on cross-border commerce for their livelihoods, Pamir Times reported.

Karim demanded immediate intervention from the federal and provincial governments, as well as the other relevant authorities, to revoke the unconstitutional conditions and es-

tablish a sub-office in the district to streamline the issuance of border passes. He also called for the protection of the youth's rights under international laws.

According to Pamir Times, he criticized the authorities for focusing on harassing legitimate traders instead of addressing illegal activities. Advocate Zahoor warned that continued harassment would provoke a strong reaction from the local community.

The protest movement, according to the lawyer, will serve as a powerful reminder to authorities that the rights of the district's youth must be respected.

If not addressed, the movement will press the federal and provincial governments to make critical decisions regarding border trade and guarantee the youth's legitimate rights to participate in it, Pamir Times reported.

Advocate Zahoor Karim's call for action highlights the growing dissatisfaction among local youth in Hunza over unfair border trade restrictions. If their demands are not met, the impending protest movement aims to pressure authorities to grant rightful access to border trade and ensure the protection of their economic interests.

Sharjah showcases its tourist destinations at ITB Berlin 2025

AGENCIES
SHARJAH

The Emirate of Sharjah, represented by the Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority (SCTDA), along with a delegation of 19 entities from both the public and private sectors, is participating in ITB Berlin 2025, the world's largest travel trade event.

The event, held from March 4 to 6 at the Berlin Exhibition Centre, is under the theme "The World of Travel Lives Here." SCTDA participation aims to highlight Sharjah's unique tourist attractions, solidifying its position on the global tourism map.

At the exhibition, Sharjah's distinguished pavilion offers visitors an interactive

journey to explore the emirate's natural, cultural, and recreational destinations, including desert, mountainous, and coastal areas, heritage sites, and modern landmarks. This immersive experience showcases the exceptional tourism offerings of the emirate.

Khalid Jasim Al Midfa, Chairman of the Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority, emphasised the exhibition's importance in presenting Sharjah's diverse landmarks, rich culture, and advanced infrastructure. He highlighted the strong historical relations between Sharjah and Europe, particularly Germany, positioning the emirate as a prime destination for European and

German tourists seeking unique cultural experiences.

The Sharjah delegation includes representatives from key government entities such as the Environment and Protected Areas Authority, Sharjah International Airport Authority, and Sharjah Museums Authority, alongside private sector participants including Air Arabia and Sharjah National Hotels. The collaborative approach reflects Sharjah's commitment to developing its tourism and travel sectors.

During the event, the Sharjah delegation will also showcase the emirate's efforts in sustainable tourism, ecotourism, adventure tourism, and cultural tourism,

which have enhanced Sharjah's position as a regional tourism leader. The pavilion emphasises initiatives aimed at preserving cultural and environmental heritage while offering world-class tourism experiences.

Sharjah's participation in ITB Berlin 2025 is a significant opportunity to attract more visitors from Europe and beyond. The emirate has seen a notable increase in German hotel guests, with around 13,000 German visitors in 2023 and expectations for a rise to 14,000 in 2024. The number of European tourists is also growing, with a 16 per cent increase in 2024, reflecting Sharjah's growing appeal to international travellers.

South Korea halts Air Force training after accidental bombing of civilian area

AGENCIES
SEOUL

The incident complicates the upcoming Freedom Shield military exercise with the US, raising concerns about operational capabilities and North Korea's response.

South Korea suspended the training flights of air force aircraft and all live-fire drills following its fighter jets' accidental bombing of a civilian area, officials said

Friday, posing a potential setback to its upcoming annual military training with the United States.

South Korea has stopped their Air Force's joint live-fire drills with the Army. (AP)

On Thursday, two South Korean KF-16 fighter jets mistakenly released four MK-82 bombs each on a civilian area in Pocheon, a city near the tense border with North Korea. The bombing,

which injured nearly 30 people, two of them seriously, occurred when South Korean and U.S. forces were engaging in a live-fire drill in connection with their broader Freedom Shield command post exercise set to begin Monday.

This year's Freedom Shield exercise is the allies' first major joint training since President Donald Trump returned to office in January and comes amid

concerns about North Korea's booming military cooperation with Russia.

South Korea and the U.S. announced details of the exercises on Thursday, but it was overshadowed by the news of bombing which drew intense public criticism in South Korea.

Both the South Korean and U.S. militaries halted all live-fire exercises across South Korea. Military officials said that South Korea's

air force also stopped the flights of its entire aircrafts except surveillance planes and others needed for emergency situations.

Military officials said the Freedom Shield training will proceed as scheduled and they plan to restart live-fire and flight training after they find the exact cause of the bombing and formulate preventative steps.

But if they fail to resume the paused training by

Monday when they kick off the Freedom Shield exercise with the U.S. military, that will hurt the workings of the early parts of the exercise, observers say.

Lee Illwoo, an expert with the Korea Defense Network in South Korea, said the suspension of flight training would particularly cause "really a big problem in examining the two countries' operational plans." He said flying warplanes would

be essential to determining their actual capabilities, discussing the size of reinforcements of U.S. aircraft from abroad and modifying the allies' operational plans.

Initial investigations found the pilot of one of the KF-16s entered wrong coordinates for a bombing site. Officials said the pilots of two KF-16s had more than 200-400 hours of flying time. Lee said they likely piloted KF-16s only two to

three years.

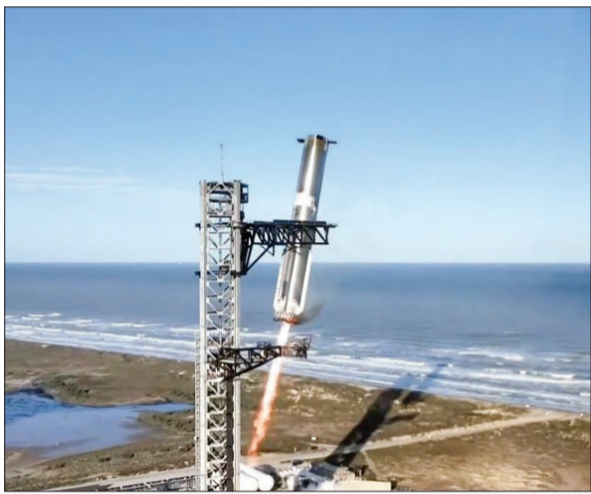
The South Korean and U.S. militaries have already begun field exercises in connection with the Freedom Shield, and Thursday's live-fire drill was one of them. Col. Ryan Donald, spokesperson for the U.S. military in South Korea, confirmed that American servicemembers were participating in Thursday's live-fire training but no U.S. air force aircraft was still involved.

FASHION



Models present creations by Leonard Paris for the womenswear fall/winter 2025-26 collection as part of Paris fashion week. AGENCIES

SpaceX loses Starship in test



AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

SpaceX launched the eighth test of its Starship rocket on Thursday, successfully conducting and completing the “catch” of the Super Heavy booster. However, the Starship broke apart less than ten minutes into the flight, New York Post reported.

Engineers from Space X said that the 400-foot-tall ship, launched from the company’s Starbase facility near Boca Chica Beach in Texas, lost altitude control after several engines stopped working 20 seconds before the end of the ascent burn.

In a post on X, SpaceX stated, “During Starship’s ascent burn, the vehicle experienced a rapid unscheduled disassembly and contact was lost. Our team immediately began coordination with safety officials to implement

According to the Federal Aviation Administration, flights at several Florida airports were temporarily grounded on Thursday due to “space launch debris.”

pre-planned contingency responses.” “We will review the data from today’s flight test to better understand root cause. As always, success comes from what we learn, and today’s flight will offer additional lessons to improve Starship’s reliability,” it added.

During the live stream of the flight, nearly 1 million viewers witnessed as the ship apparently went out of control before the cameras completely cut out.

Russia strikes Ukraine’s energy grid with missiles, drones

AGENCIES
KYIV

Russia attacked Ukrainian energy facilities with dozens of missiles and drones during the night, officials said Friday, hobbling the country’s ability to deliver heat and light to its citizens and to power weapons factories vital to its defenses.

The overnight barrage, which also pounded residences and wounded at least 10 people - came days after the U.S. suspended military aid and intelligence to Ukraine to pressure it into accepting a peace deal being pushed by the Trump administration.

Without U.S. intelligence, Ukraine’s ability to strike inside Russia and defend itself from bombardment is significantly diminished. Air-defense systems supplied by the West are crucial for Ukraine, but further U.S. help is uncertain under President Donald Trump,

who says he’s determined to end the war. European Union leaders, mindful they may need to shoulder more of the burden for arming Ukraine and strengthen their own defenses, agreed on a plan Thursday to significantly build up their military spending.

Ukraine is having a tough time on the battlefield. An onslaught by Russia’s bigger army is straining short-handed Ukrainian forces at places along the 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line.

Officials from the U.S. and Ukraine will meet in Saudi Arabia next week to discuss ending the war, which began more than three years ago when Russia launched a full-scale invasion. On Friday, President Trump said on social media he was “strongly considering” placing additional sanctions on Russia to force it into peace talks with Ukraine.



TRUMP DELAYS TARIFFS ON MEXICO AND CANADA

He agreed after having “fruitful conversations” with Mexico President Claudia Sheinbaum while he slammed Canada for being a “high tariff nation”.

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON DC

President Donald Trump delayed tariffs on Mexico and Canada for a short-term period for certain products before the “big one” from April 2. He said he agreed after having “fruitful conversations” with Mexico President Claudia Sheinbaum while he slammed Canada for being a “high tariff nation”.

As per an official, the modifications in tariffs against Canada and Mexico are being brought in to “protect American car manufacturers and American farmers”.

It was noted that this will thus exclude the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA)-eligible goods from existing tariffs. As per CNN, the USMCA was negotiated by Trump during his first term, which makes the three North American countries a free trade zone.

Explaining the modifications, Trump said, “During this interim period, between now and April 2nd,

TARIFF UNCERTAINTY

- The US will exclude USMCA-eligible goods from tariffs to support American car manufacturers and farmers, with changes effective until April 2nd.
- After discussions with Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, Trump agreed to waive tariffs on USMCA-covered Mexican goods and emphasized cooperation on border security and drug control.
- Trump criticized Canada’s high tariffs on US products and announced plans to boost domestic lumber production, reducing reliance on Canadian imports.



this makes it much more favourable for our American car manufacturers.”

Speaking about his conversation with the President of Mexico, Claudia Sheinbaum, he said, “I spoke to the president of Mexico, a wonderful woman, today, and we helped them out with a problem they were having to do with the short-term tariffs. We had a very good conversation. Also, we discussed drugs, and they’ve been working much harder lately. We’ve made tremendous progress on both.”

Trump also shared the

details of the conversation in a post on Truth Social.

He wrote, “After speaking with President Claudia Sheinbaum of Mexico, I have agreed that Mexico will not be required to pay Tariffs on anything that falls under the USMCA Agreement. This Agreement is until April 2nd. I did this as an accommodation, and out of respect for, President Sheinbaum. Our relationship has been a very good one, and we are working hard, together, on the Border, both in terms of stopping Illegal Aliens from entering the United

States and, likewise, stopping Fentanyl. Thank you to President Sheinbaum for your hard work and cooperation!” Speaking about tariffs and Canada, Trump added, “Those are happening next week, and the big one will be on April 2nd. Canada is a high-tariff nation.

Canada charges us 250 per cent for our milk products and other products and a tremendous tariff on lumber and things as such. We don’t need their lumber. We have more lumber than they do. We don’t need Canada’s lumber.

US Supreme Court rejects 26/11 accused Rana’s plea for stay on extradition

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON, DC

The US Supreme Court has rejected the plea of the 26/11 Mumbai attack accused, Tahawwur Rana, seeking a stay on his extradition to India.

Justice Elena Kagan on Thursday (local time) denied Rana’s application, requesting a stay on his extradition to India.

Tahawwur Rana had approached the United States Supreme Court seeking an emergency stay on his extradition to India. In his application, Rana argued that he would not survive long enough to be tried in India due to various reasons.

Rana, through an appeal, stated, “If a stay is not entered, there will be no review at all, and the US courts will lose jurisdiction, and the petitioner will soon be dead.”

The accused in the 26/11 terror attacks claimed that if extradited to India, the likeli-



hood is very high that he will be subjected to torture as he is a Muslim of Pakistani origin. He stated that because of his Muslim religion, his Pakistani origin, his status as a former member of the Pakistani Army, the relation of the putative charges to the 2008 Mumbai attacks, and his chronic health conditions, he is even more likely to be tortured than otherwise would be the case, and that torture is very likely to kill

him in short order.

He cited the Human Rights Watch 2023 World Report, which documents the BJP-led government’s systematic discrimination and stigmatization of religious minorities, particularly Muslims. Rana further argued that the Government in India is increasingly autocratic, and there are substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of torture if he surrendered to Indian authorities.

In addition to these concerns, Rana highlighted his deteriorating health. He suffers from a 3.5 cm abdominal aortic aneurysm at immediate risk of rupture, Parkinson’s disease with cognitive decline, and a mass suggestive of bladder cancer. He asserts that he cannot be sent into a “hornet’s nest” where he will be targeted due to national, religious, and cultural animosity.

TARIFF WAR IGNITED BY TRUMP

This week, Trump initiated his campaign of imposing higher tariffs on various countries (read: a terror of tariffs). The new 25 percent tariffs imposed by US President Donald Trump on imports from Mexico and Canada have come into effect this week, coinciding with additional duties on Chinese products. Though the tariffs imposed on Canada and Mexico have further been paused due to the market breakdown. However, this development has ignited trade conflicts and have the potential to disrupt approximately USD 2.2 trillion in annual trade. In a speech delivered to Congress, Trump indicated that further tariffs would be implemented on April 2, which would include “reciprocal tariffs”, and non-tariff measures designed to address

years of trade imbalances. His declarations have instigated a significant concern for the Indian government, particularly as India and the US engage in a cycle of reciprocal tariffs. Last month, Trump enacted three executive orders aimed at imposing tariffs on imports from Canada, Mexico, and China, utilizing the authority granted by the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA). The 10 percent tariffs on all goods imported from China became effective on February 4, 2025. Meanwhile, the tariffs on Canada and Mexico were initially suspended for 30 days and now have further been suspended due to market breakdown. In addition to these measures, Trump also issued a presidential memorandum directing the formulation of a strategy



to increase the US tariffs in response to the tariffs, tax policies, and other economic practices of foreign nations, including exchange rate manipulations. Also, India is anticipated to be affected by these developments, as Trump has announced engaging India with reciprocal tariffs. On the other hand, Trump has intentions to impose a 25 percent tariff on imports from the European Union, although the specific authority for these tariffs has yet to be clarified. How this terror of increased tariffs by the US would disrupt global supply chains, prices and economy? Well, a variety of

products are now expected to experience significant transformations as a result of recent announcements made by Trump. This week, he declared that tariffs on external agricultural goods will commence on April 2, 2025. Additionally, he has instructed the Commerce Department to initiate a Section 232 national security investigation concerning timber and related imports. Also, he has enacted two proclamations aimed at broadening the existing Section 232 tariffs on steel and aluminium, which will eliminate all current exemptions, expand the list of affected

derivative products, and increase the aluminium tariff rate from 10 percent to 25 percent, effective from the second week of March. In addition to these measures, Trump also intends to implement tariffs on automobile imports starting April 2, 2025, indicating that the rate for autos will be approximately 25 percent. He also mentioned that tariffs on semiconductors and pharmaceuticals would be set at 25 percent or higher, although the specific authority for these tariffs has not been disclosed. Notably, he is expected to announce additional tariffs on computer chips, semiconductors, and pharmaceuticals, reinforcing the anticipated impact of these trade policies on various sectors. These announcements have ignited a significant debate and elicited

varied reactions globally and have also triggered a global stock market decline. In response, China swiftly declared the imposition of additional tariffs ranging from 10 to 15 percent on select imports from the US, effective March 2025, alongside a set of new export restrictions targeting specific US entities. Subsequently, Chinese government has also lodged complaints regarding the US tariffs with the World Trade Organization (WTO). The Chinese foreign affairs ministry issued a bold statement, asserting, “If war is what the US wants, be it a tariff war, a trade war, or any other type of war, we’re prepared to fight until the end. Indeed, this will take the US-China rivalry to the next level. On the other hand, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has openly criticized the tariffs as "

very dumb thing to do.” He further stated that Canada would impose tariffs on the US goods if Trump’s tariffs remained in effect. Canada also plans to challenge the US tariffs under the regulations of the WTO and the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement. Meanwhile, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum guaranteed retaliation, although she did not provide specific details, indicating that Mexico response would be announced soon. In the light of elevated tariffs imposed by nations including Brazil, India, and China, Trump has also announced that his strategy for implementing reciprocal tariffs would take effect on April 2. As a result, India is experiencing apprehension regarding the matter. However, Indian officials remain optimistic about reaching a resolution, highlighting ongoing trade

discussions between India and the US. The Indian delegation is set to engage in deliberations concerning trade issues, guided by the joint statement that was established during the meeting between President Trump and Prime Minister Modi on February 13. Further discussions are also expected to address key trade concerns and foster a more balanced economic relationship between the two countries. While it is clear that Trump is primarily concerned with domestic issues within the US, it is essential for him to recognize that his decisions must not undermine the stability of other countries or the global economy. I hope he understands and strives towards the Indian principle of Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah.

The author is Professor, School of International Studies, JNU

PICTURE PERFECT



Rasha Thadani poses for her social media. (Instagram)

RADHIKA APTE TO MAKE DIRECTORIAL DEBUT WITH ACTION-FANTASY FILM 'KOYTA'

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Actor Radhika Apte is set to make her directorial debut with the action-fantasy film *Koyta* (Sickle), according to Variety.

The film is produced by Bollywood filmmaker Vikramaditya Motwane. Motwane has previously worked on projects like *Black Warrant*, which marked the debut of Ranbir Kapoor's cousin Zahan Kapoor.

The news was announced as part of the CineV-CHD Market lineup, which was revealed during the Cineventure International Film Festival (CIFF), reported Variety. This year's lineup includes 22 different projects



ects from both well-known and new filmmakers.

According to Variety, *Koyta* will be in Hindi and Marathi. The story follows a young migrant sugarcane cutter who undergoes a forced medical procedure that gives her superpowers. She then uses these powers to help free her family from debt.

Meanwhile, on the work front, the actress will next be seen in the period thriller *Akka*, which also stars Keerthy Suresh.

The first look for the series was unveiled in February at a grand Netflix event in Mumbai.

The series is set in the 1980s in the fictional South Indian city of Pernuru, where a matriarchal society dominates.

'Highway' back in theatres! Alia Bhatt's 2014 film re-releases

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Fans of Alia Bhatt have a reason to celebrate, as her 2014 film *'Highway'* has returned to theatres to celebrate Women's Day.

The film, directed by Imtiaz Ali and produced by Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment, will run in PVR and Inox cinemas from March 7 to March 13.



In a press note shared by the film's team, producer Sajid Nadiadwala said, "Highway remains one of our most cherished films and continues to receive immense love even today.

It's a timeless classic that deserves to be revisited, featuring outstanding performances by Alia Bhatt and Ranveer Hooda. I'm delighted that this Women's Day, audiences

will have the chance to experience this beautiful film on the big screen once again."

Just a couple of days ago, actor Ranveer Hooda, who played Mahabir

Bhati (one of the abductors) in the film also took a stroll down memory lane and recalled collaborating with Imtiaz Ali on *Highway*, which also starred Alia Bhatt.

Expressing gratitude to Imtiaz, Ranveer, in a press note, shared, "Highway is such a classic because it's a journey, and that too of love. A pure love that is doomed by the class divide in our country. It's just not acceptable in our society. Though Veera, being innocent about it, wants it, Mahabir, knowing the reality, resists, only to finally give in and pay the price with his life.

Kirron Kher pens birthday note for husband

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

As veteran actor Anupam Kher, who is often hailed as 'Marathon Man,' turned 70 on March 7, social media was filled with wishes from fans and Bollywood celebs, however it was a special post from his wife, actress Kirron Kher, that truly captured hearts.

On Friday, the actress took to her Instagram account to share an adorable post while expressing her love for her "Dearest Darling." The picture showed the two of them sharing a warm and beautiful hug.

"Dearest Darling Anupam Kher, wishing you a very happy and blessed birthday. God bless you with a healthy and happy life and many more years to follow. Years filled with creativity and joy. Lots of love," read the note in her post.

Anupam Kher has had a remarkable journey in the film industry. From his unforgettable debut in 'Saaransh' (1984) to his upcoming directorial venture, 'Tanvi The Great.

Alia Bhatt talks ADHD, Anxiety Diagnosis

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Alia Bhatt recently spoke about her mental health issues, which revealed that she was diagnosed with ADHD and anxiety. Alia, in an interview with Jay Shetty on his podcast, mentioned that she had been feeling physical responses during social events, such as her body becoming hot, and was having issues with concentration and memory. "I was also struggling to concentrate on some things. My concentration was going in and out," she explained. This prompted her to see a professional, and following a three-day test, she was diagnosed with the two conditions.

Alia said that she had been considering herself as an 'amazing multi-tasker' previously, but the incessant switching of things had become overwhelming. "I was having a very tough time. My body was heating up at parties and I was responding physically to it," she said. She conceded that her multitasking skill had led to forgetting simple things,



which made her get tested. The diagnosis relieved her, as she now had a definitive reason for her challenges. "It gave me information so whenever there's a lack of information is when I get most thrown off."

Since becoming a mother to her daughter, Raha, Alia needed clarity even more. "The necessity of getting things in order after being a mum because I was like I don't want to forget anything about my daughter," she explained. Alia did not take medication despite her diagnosis and has been actively doing things to control her condition. "I am not taking any medication or anything although I can but I didn't and I am just actively working on it to try and get through it.

BRAIN PICKING



I have done a lot of crazy things in my life, and I do not regret anything.

— NORA FATEHI
(Indian Actress)

'Awarapan' sequel or a re-release?: Hashmi's latest post

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Bollywood actor Emraan Hashmi's latest social media post left fans guessing.

The Jannat actor took to his Instagram account on Friday to share a video that appears to be from the world of his 2007 cult film *Awarapan*. The clip features the song "Toh Phir Aao" playing in the background.

The post has led fans to speculate whether *Awarapan* is getting a sequel or if the movie is set for a re-release.

Soon after the actor dropped the video fans chimed in the comments section to express their excitement—some hoping for a sequel while others look-



ing forward to watching the film again on the big screen.

Emraan Hashmi shared the video with the caption "Jumma Mubarak" and used the hashtag #Awarapan, further fueling speculation.

In the video, Hashmi's character is seen traveling in a boat in an exotic location. He also frees pigeons from a cage, just like

Shriya Saran's character did in the film. A dialogue from *Awarapan* can also be heard, where Hashmi's character talks about his desire to sacrifice his life for a good cause.

Awarapan, directed by Mohit Suri, was released in 2007. The film starred Shriya Saran, Mrinalini Sharma, and Ashish Vidyarthi.

Shanaya Kapoor shares BTS pictures from 'Aankhon Ki Gustaakhiyan' set

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Actor Shanaya Kapoor has given netizens a glimpse of the behind-the-scenes of her upcoming film, 'Aankhon Ki Gustaakhiyan'.

On Friday, Shanaya took to Instagram and posted a series of pictures from the film's set.

In one photo, she wore a



black jacket and had a big smile on her face and can be seen posing with the film's clapperboard.

She is currently in Azerbaijan for the shoot.

Along with the post, Shanaya captioned, "grateful."

Earlier, Shanaya shared behind-the-scenes pictures from the set, giving fans a glimpse of her exciting

journey as she completed the first schedule of her debut film.

In one of the photos, she posed looking away from the camera, while another showed her getting her makeup done. She also shared a picture of a clapperboard and a cake with the film's name and "schedule wrap" written on it.

REVIEW: THE EYE *****

THE EYE

PRAVEEN NAGDA

Occult and paranormal themes often make good cinema and there is a large audience available for this across the world. However, the problem with most horror films is that they often turn gory and thereby lose the aesthetics of a thriller. But then there are many exceptions that keep you hooked and spellbound throughout.

Daphne Schmon directed film, *The Eye*, which is one such British psychological thriller had its India Premier a few days back at WENCH Film Festival, in Mumbai.

Shruti Hassan and Mark Rowley in the lead roles in the film, which plays with the idea of 'Evil Eye' and popular beliefs around it. Diana (Shruti Hassan) travels to a remote island to immerse the ashes of her husband Felix



(Mark Rowley). She learns about an ancient ritual of 'Evil Eye' that is believed to cure serious illnesses and can bring back her husband in

lieu of a human sacrifice.

Her grief and pain intensify with supernatural things coming into her life and she takes you on a roller coaster ride of her emotional upheavals all through the film. Her emotional expressions and impeccable acting skills while dealing with the supernatural are well supported by the breathtaking natural visuals of the landscapes, sea, and mountains. With the vase of ashes of her husband Diana lands back into the same homestay where she'd once stayed earlier with her husband Felix. She still cherishes

the fond memories of love and closeness with Felix, when she arrives at this family, where the Koraki (Linda Marlowe), Spiros (Christos Stergioglou), and Vivi (Peru Kavalieri) live with a little boy. But soon these memories start haunting her with various experiences that she relates to the discovery of the 'Evil Eye' ritual.

She relives her days with Felix often that are shown in related flashbacks with her current experiences, creating intrigue and suspense that makes you really hooked through the movie and wanting to expect the

next moment. And that's the beauty of superb storytelling that keeps you anxiously engaged in a smooth and awesome fashion without giving any fearful shock.

When she was offered by an occult practitioner to bring back Felix if she can kill any one person within 3 days of the initiation of a ritual, she puts the life at risk of three from the same family, with whom she was staying. She discovers that the little boy who used to have seizures and epileptic problems had mysteriously recovered after her mother Vivi got the 'Evil Eye' ritual

performed for him. In Diana's mind, the boy has gained good health at the expense of her husband's life.

Diana's anger and anxiety for what life had dumped her upon, her love and longing for the never returning Felix, the hope and expectations of finding back Felix, and dealing with the supernatural have been meticulously expressed by Shruti Hassan.

The Eye has been shot on the island of Corfu, where the family of the Director Daphne Schmon comes from. The shooting locations are beautiful and take you through

the immersive journey of this little island in Greece, capturing its flora and beautiful landscapes. James Chegwyn's cinematography is simply outstanding in many ways including the aerial shots, interesting camera angles, and exemplary wide-angle shots. *The Eye* is a beautiful film that explores human emotions like no other, using the narrative of the mysterious supernatural in a very classy manner.

Review by: Praveen Nagda, Festival Director of KidzCINEMA and CultureCINEMA Film Festivals

'CELEBRATE WOMEN'S DAY WITH SELF-LOVE AND CARE: ESSENTIAL SKIN CARE TIPS TO SHINE'

DR. TANUSHREE BISWAS

Skincare is a powerful form of self-love. This Women's Day, prioritize your skin health as an essential part of your well-being. With advancements in dermatology, achieving a glowing complexion is easier than ever.

A strong skin barrier protects against pollution and bacteria. Dr. Biswas recommends microbiome-friendly skincare with prebiotics and postbiotics to maintain balance. Instead of harsh cleansers, opt for sulfate-free formulas and double cleansing to preserve natural oils. Trending ingredients like fermented rice water and kombucha enhance barrier function and provide antioxidants.

Hydration is key to youthful skin. Choose moisturizers with ceramides, peptides, and niacinamide to strengthen the skin. Dry skin benefits from thick creams with squalane, while oily skin thrives on gel-based formulas. "Slugging," applying an occlusive moisturizer overnight, locks in hydration for intense nourishment.

Sunscreen is essential for anti-aging. Hybrid formulas now combine mineral



“Women empowerment is not just about policies—it's about action. While numerous initiatives support women's entrepreneurship, financial independence, and menstrual hygiene, the harsh reality is that crimes against women remain alarmingly high. This stark contrast highlights the urgent need to accelerate our efforts. Self-help groups (SHGs) and Anganwadis have shown the power of collective strength in transforming women's lives. Yet, progress remains slow. Why are we still lagging in women-centered development? If we truly believe in empowerment, we must act now—ensuring safety, dignity, and equal opportunities for every woman. This Women's Day, let's move beyond discussions and take real action. Strengthening grassroots movements, ensuring access to education, and building safe spaces are not just goals—they are necessities. Women are ready to lead, innovate, and thrive. The question is—are we ready to support them?”

— Ms Prachi Kaushik, Founder & Director, Vyomini Social Enterprise

and chemical filters for broad-spectrum protection. Tinted sunscreens with iron oxides shield

against blue light, while DNA-repair enzymes help reverse sun damage. Reapplying sunscreen every two hours ensures lasting protection.

Hydration from within is equally important. Electrolytes like magnesium and potassium maintain skin moisture, while IV therapy with Glutathione and Vitamin C promotes radiance. However, medical supervision is crucial for IV treatments.

A skin-friendly diet enhances long-term health. Vitamin C-rich foods boost collagen, while vitamin E and omega-3 fatty acids protect and hydrate. Probiotic-rich foods improve gut health, reducing acne and inflammation.

Mindful self-care enhances skin health. Facial massages improve circulation, and prioritizing 7-9 hours of sleep supports skin regeneration.

This Women's Day, embrace skincare as an act of self-love. By making informed choices and nourishing yourself inside out, you can achieve radiant, healthy skin—because true beauty starts with self-care.

By- Dr. Tanushree Biswas, Dermatologist and Medical Advisor at Kaya Limited

The economic power of women in business

Empowering women in business is not just about equality; it is a necessity for a thriving global economy!

GOVIND BHADU

In today's rapidly evolving business world, women are emerging as key players in driving innovation, economic growth, and workplace transformation. From leading multinational corporations to launching successful startups, women are proving that their contribution is not just valuable but essential. Despite challenges, their participation in business is reshaping industries and breaking traditional barriers.

THE ECONOMIC POWER OF WOMEN IN BUSINESS

Women's involvement in business is directly linked to economic growth and social progress. According to a McKinsey report, if women participated in the workforce at the same rate as men, the global GDP could increase by \$28 trillion by 2025. This highlights the immense economic potential that comes with empowering women in business.

Moreover, research shows that companies with gender-diverse leadership perform better. A study by Harvard Business Review found that businesses with more women in executive roles have higher profitability and better innova-

tion. This is because women bring diverse perspectives, problem-solving abilities, and emotional intelligence to leadership positions, leading to improved decision-making.

WOMEN AS ENTREPRENEURS: DRIVING INNOVATION

Women entrepreneurs are playing a crucial role in shaping the startup ecosystem. In India alone, the number of women-led startups has grown significantly in the past decade. Initiatives like 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao', 'Mudra Yojana', and startup incubation programs specifically for women have encouraged female entrepreneurship.

A great example is Falguni Nayar, the founder of Nykaa, who built a billion-dollar beauty empire. Similarly, Vandana Luthra's VLCC and Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw's Biocon have revolutionized their respective industries. These success stories prove that when given the right opportunities, women can create successful enterprises that contribute to the economy.

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP: CREATING INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES

Women in leadership positions foster inclusive and

empathetic workplace cultures. Studies suggest that organizations led by women prioritize employee well-being, work-life balance, and ethical business practices. This not only improves job satisfaction but also enhances overall productivity.

Additionally, women leaders advocate for gender equality, mentorship programs, and diversity in hiring, creating opportunities for other aspiring women professionals. They play a crucial role in breaking stereotypes and inspiring future generations.

CHALLENGES WOMEN FACE IN BUSINESS

Despite their potential, women in business face numerous obstacles:

Gender Bias & Stereotypes – Many industries still see leadership as a male-dominated space.

Limited Access to Funding – Women-led startups receive significantly less venture capital funding than their male counterparts.

Work-Life Balance Struggles – Societal expectations often place the burden of family responsibilities on women, making career progression difficult.

However, with supportive policies, mentorship, and corporate inclusivity, these

challenges can be overcome.

THE WAY FORWARD: ENCOURAGING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

To increase women's participation in business, organizations and governments must take proactive steps:

Promoting Equal Pay & Opportunities – Ensuring fair wages and leadership roles for women.

Encouraging Female Entrepreneurship – Providing financial support, mentorship, and training.

Flexible Work Policies – Implementing remote work and parental leave policies to support work-life balance.

Education & Skill Development – Investing in women's education and leadership programs.

Women's participation in business is not just about equality; it is about economic growth, innovation, and a better future. The more women are included in business and leadership, the more dynamic and prosperous industries will become. By breaking barriers and creating opportunities, we can ensure that women continue to be game changers in the corporate world.

Govind Bhadu, Business Coach

Raising Strong Girls: Nurturing confidence, courage, and resilience

BY DAMINI GROVER

Raising a strong girl in today's world goes beyond teaching confidence; it's about nurturing her belief in herself, resilience in adversity, and the courage to be authentic. Strength isn't just about being bold—it's about self-respect, perseverance, and emotional intelligence. Every girl has the potential to be strong, but how she perceives herself and the world plays a crucial role in shaping that strength.

One of the most valuable lessons for a girl is self-love. Society often places unrealistic expectations on girls, equating their worth with their appearance. This can lead to self-doubt and an endless quest for perfection. Encouraging self-love means reminding her that her value lies in her kindness, intelligence, and abilities rather than looks. She learns by example, so the way role models speak about themselves influences how she views herself.

A strong girl also knows that her voice matters. From an early age, she should be encouraged to express her opinions, set boundaries, and stand up for herself. Many girls are taught to prioritize politeness over personal needs, but knowing when to say "no" and advocate for herself fosters lifelong confidence. If she feels heard at home, she will take that assurance into friendships, school, and future workplaces.

Perfectionism can hinder a girl's growth. Many girls feel pressured to avoid mistakes, but true strength comes from bravery, not perfection. Encouraging her to take risks, embrace challenges, and learn from failures builds resilience. Instead of praising intelligence alone, focusing on effort and perseverance helps her develop a growth mindset.

Resilience is a crucial trait for navigating life's challenges. She should know that struggles and setbacks

do not define her but instead strengthen her. Emotional strength isn't about suppressing feelings but managing and understanding them. Learning to cope with disappointment, rejection, and obstacles prepares her to handle future challenges with grace and confidence.

Surrounding her with strong female role models—whether in science, sports, business, or the arts—helps her see that there are no limits to what she can achieve. Strength comes in many forms: a teacher shaping minds, a mother nurturing her family, or a friend standing up for others. She should understand that being strong doesn't mean being the loudest but rather being true to herself and her values.

Independence is another key component of strength. Giving her the freedom to make choices, solve problems, and take responsibility for her actions builds confidence. Small steps toward independence—managing schoolwork, handling

money, or making personal decisions—reinforce her belief in herself. Trusting her instincts and owning her successes and failures teach her to handle life's complexities.

Raising strong girls isn't about eliminating fear; it's about teaching them that fear doesn't define them. Strength comes from knowing they are enough just as they are. When a girl grows up believing in herself, she will face challenges with confidence, inspire others, and shape the future with resilience and courage.

"Teach her to dream without limits, love without fear, and walk through the world knowing she belongs."

Damini Grover is an Award-Winning Counselling Psychologist, Life Coach, Master Practitioner of Cognitive Hypnotic Psychotherapy, Internationally Certified Heal Your Life Teacher & Coach and the Founder of I'M POWERED-CENTER FOR COUNSELLING & WELL-BEING, Delhi, India.

Boss Ladies: Breaking barriers – Women entrepreneurs redefining the game

On International Women's Day, let us celebrate women changing the landscapes across the sectors.



They believed leadership was not for women, but Rati Misra proved a little differently. With over two decades of experience advocating for disability rights and gender equity, she turns words into actions. As an Executive Director at Milaan, she empowers young girls to rewrite their destinies while also promoting gender equity and community development. A strategic brand management and corporate communication expert who creates effective campaigns that help organizations accomplish their goals. Rati isn't simply knocking down boundaries; she's creating a society in which every female belongs.



When they asserted that fighting for justice isn't a woman's job, Noopur Singhal disagreed. As Chairperson of POSH New Delhi District, she is a strong champion for women and children, breaking down barriers of silence and fear. Through her outspoken activism, she demonstrates that protection is a right, not an asset. She challenges old standards to make workplaces and communities safer. With each case she wins, she reshapes the way things work. Noopur is more than simply an advocate; she's a force for change.



When they said that technology isn't for women, Tanvi Jain smiled. She is the Co-founder & Chief Experience Officer of Zeko AI, providing enterprise-grade AI agents to automate mid- to high-value hiring. She is a strong advocate for equal opportunities for women in the workplace, ensuring they have access to the same career growth and leadership paths. As a leader in AI and tech, she actively inspires and empowers more women to embrace AI-driven innovation and entrepreneurship, shaping the future of work.



Finance was traditionally a male-dominated field when Charu Pahuja entered the scene. She has 23 years of experience in banking and finance. In Wise Finserv, where she drives innovation and expertise. She combines AI and financial planning to make smart investment accessible. Her leadership is altering the sector, creating opportunities for women in finance. She isn't merely handling money; she's transforming the industry.



Astrology was once considered a myth and not a full-time profession, but Dr. Rashi Gupta Virmani transformed it into a renowned science at the mere age of 20 when she started. She is changing people's lives and challenging biases via her passion and expertise. Dr. Virmani has inspired others by proving that with self-confidence and drive, one can achieve great things. She has taught countless young women, showing that instinct and brilliance go hand in hand. Her work encourages trust in one's goal regardless of hurdles and demonstrates that intuition, knowledge, and perseverance may exist together. Dr. Rashi isn't just reading the stars; she's glowing the path forward.

Accelerating action: Moving forward together

BY SUBUHI SAFVI

Every year on International Women's Day, brands offer discounts on clothing, spas, and makeup, commercialising a day meant to honour women's achievements. This year's theme, Accelerate Action, reminds us that true change requires urgency, accountability, and collective effort.

WHY WE NEED TO AMPLIFY DIFFERENT VOICES

Equality is not experienced the same way by all women. A woman without sight navigates different barriers than one fighting for equal pay. A trans woman facing violence will likely have a different experience with the legal system than an upper-caste, cisgender woman.

Even where laws exist, cultural biases and inadequate infrastructure keep many women and girls trapped in unsafe environments. If we want true progress, we must address how gender inequality intersects with caste, class, disability, and sexuality.

WHAT CAN WE CHANGE?

Change happens through legislation and collective action. Consider the 1992 reservation of one-third of Panchayat seats for women. Initially, many women were proxies for male family members. Over time, however, they took charge, creating meaningful change. The abolition of sati and child marriage followed similar patterns—resisted at first, but ultimately unstoppable.

Demanding our rights—whether for bodily autonomy, protection from gender-based violence, healthcare access, or workplace equity—must be intersectional. Recognising our different struggles makes our collective fight stronger.

THE RIGHT TO WORK: BREAKING THE MYTH OF 'LUCKY' WOMEN

Some men claim women are "lucky" because they don't have to work. Yet many women wish they were allowed to. Those who do often face discrimination—denied jobs due to potential maternity leave, unsafe working hours, or the need for separate workplace infrastructure. These barriers are even higher for disabled women, whose workplaces are rarely designed with accessibility



in mind.

WHO NEEDS TO BE ACCOUNTABLE?

We all do. India has laws protecting women's rights, but they are meaningless without enforcement. Institutions, governments, workplaces, and communities must be held accountable. We must also protect those who challenge inequality. Workplace equity, legal accountability, and gender and caste sensitisation in education are essential.

FROM EQUALITY TO EMPOWERMENT

Equality offers the same opportunities to everyone, but equity ensures those opportunities are accessible to all. Two women with the same salary may experience vastly different realities—one may have private transport and paid childcare, while another struggles with overcrowded buses and unpaid domestic labour. True empowerment requires acknowledging and addressing these disparities.

WHAT ABOUT ME? ADDRESSING INTERNALISED MISOGYNY

We've all absorbed patriarchal conditioning. Women are judged at every life stage—whether for not marrying, prioritising their careers, or seeking independence. We also dismiss the struggles of trans women, Dalit women, and those from different economic and religious backgrounds, assuming they "don't know any better."

Change starts with us. While we can't force others to shift their views, we can challenge perceptions—our own and those around us.

HOW WE CAN ACCELERATE ACTION

- Question our biases and listen when they're pointed

out.

- Support marginalised women—Dalit, Bahujan, Adivasi, disabled, trans, and economically disadvantaged.
- Share feminist values—equality, respect, and consent.

- Cooperate instead of competing—there's space for all women to succeed.
- Educate ourselves on the struggles of women outside our own communities.

- Challenge casual sexism—even in that family WhatsApp group.
- Demand better from workplaces, institutions, and legal systems.

- Support grassroots organisations that empower women.

ACCELERATING ACTION

For too long, institutions

have promised change without delivering it. The time for waiting is over. We must actively shape our future—demanding justice, representation, and systemic reform.

Empowerment must be rooted in intersectionality and justice—not as an afterthought, but as the foundation of an equitable society.

We progress together, or not at all.

(And yes, International Men's Day is on 19th November.)

Note: Author Subuhi Safvi is a Trauma and Resilience Coach specialising in Inner Child Healing. She works with survivors of childhood and relationship stress and trauma to help them move from survive to thrive and live their full potential.

THE ILLUSION OF TIME



MIKE GEORGE

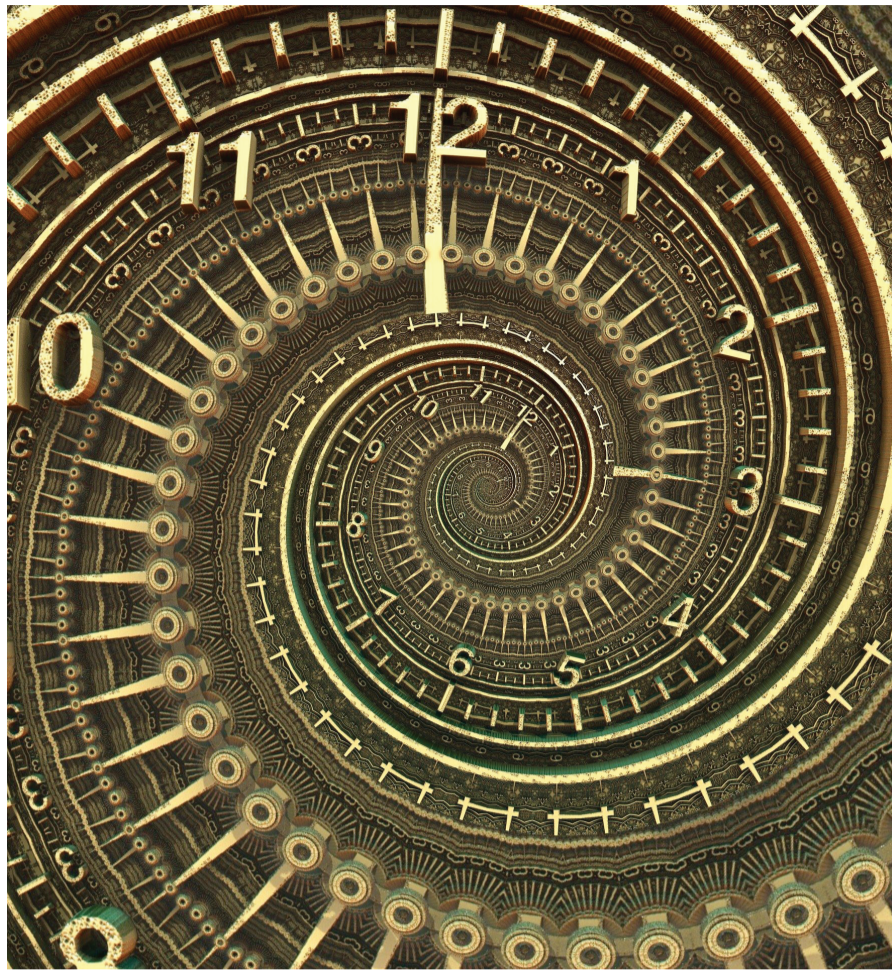
"Time has no independent existence apart from the order of events by which we measure it."
- Leibniz

The idea of time has occupied the minds of philosophers for centuries. We believe time is an entity in itself, because we look at our wristwatch or our clock and it apparently tells us 'what time it is'. But wait, the train does not arrive at the station at 7 pm - it arrives at the same moment the little hand reaches 7. So, time is simply an attempt to measure the space between two events, in this case leaving and arriving. That is the

only time we use our watches and clocks, to measure these spaces, but only in the physical world. It does not work when in the realm of consciousness.

The reason for this is that no one knows what you, or anyone else, is thinking - thinking takes place in the consciousness. The space between one thought and another cannot be measured. Only one person is creating that event, that thought, and the next, and so there is no point in measuring them. So, there is no time in consciousness. There is time in the world, time is the measurement we agree upon, using our clocks and watches, but not in consciousness.

So, in the world, time management is really event management. Event management is response management, because we have to create a response to an event. Response management is self-management, because what we are doing is managing the self. That means that self-management is intention and attention management.



When we raise the quality of our consciousness, we can be fully in the present and live a life unfettered by time machines.

Intention sits behind everything we think, decide, and even our feelings. This requires some kind of attention in order to manage it. Time management is, therefore, attention management. People who attend time management seminars are people who are pretty miserable. They want someone to tell them what to do next or first, what to prioritise. In fact, it is up to them to decide what to give their attention to next. They would do that quite happily if they 'enjoyed' what they were doing. We naturally give attention to what brings us joy, what we enjoy. That is the principle of creativity. All that is required is clarity of mind. Clarity only comes when there is joy in what we do. If, however, we become time conscious, e.g. deadline conscious, and therefore believe we might run out of time, then fear and panic - in other words, stress - are always just around the corner.

There are three Illusions about time.

1. Hurry, time is running

out!
2. If you do it faster, we can save time!
3. If we do it later, there will be more time!

In reality, there is only now, the present. We spend 'time' thinking about the past or the future which are total illusions. The past is past - it is over, it happened. Yet, we spend time in remembering, in nostalgia. Some of us are deeply attached to the past. What we do not realise is that we are making the past the present. This is a waste of energy. When we think about the future, it is simply speculation. It is also a waste of energy and an illusion because the future can never be real. I can only live in 'the now' when I am free from the regrets of the past and the worries of the future. This is a challenge for most, because our habits are conditioned by past and future. When things get too challenging in the present, we try to escape into the past or the future. Time is our master through the day. When some do not have the

consciousness of time - they seem more relaxed, together and joyful. They do not obsess about 'time' factors - their lives are not ruled by the devices that measure time.

Having our spiritual lives run by physical time machines is a common illusion that can lead us to generate much stress. Perhaps the best way to dissolve the illusion is the cultivation of an awareness of our inner reality. And that is only possible by the raising of one's consciousness through meditation and contemplation, as many have shown us. Only then is it possible to put the watch, the clock, and all those 'digital' measures in their place. Only then can we know how to live a truly timeless life. Perhaps this is why being fully present is also rare.

Mike George is an author of 16 books on self-awareness, spiritual intelligence, and personal 'undevelopment'. To subscribe to Clear Thinking, go to www.relax7.com.

The secret of a full life



CHIRYA RISELY

Medical science has shown that our emotional state plays a huge role in determining our physical well-being. How we think can either heal us or harm us. This explains why worry, anxiety, pain, or fear about an existing illness only aggravates the condition and can, in some cases, worsen the illness. When physical health is compromised, it causes great distress, sending the mind into overdrive and loss of equilibrium.

However, the power of the mind can bring about

quite dramatic changes by creating positive thoughts of healing the body, instead of those of anxiety and fear. Affirmations can radiate healing energy and speed up recovery with thoughts such as - "Every day I am feeling better and better." "Everything is perfect, my life is beautiful, my body and mind are at ease". Practising affirmations like these, full of positive wisdom and strength, sends positive energy to the body. Worrying is a negative energy that attracts equally negative repercussions for our health, relationships, roles, and wealth. Worrying about negative future scenarios triggers fears that can affect our physical health, even before anything happens - more often than not, it never does.

Every illness and negative situation seems huge at first, but as we move forward and begin to deal with the situation, the



Daily practice of meditation provides a strong foundation for peace, contentment, and good health.

more positive we can be, the quicker is the possibility of healing and finding solutions. No situation

is permanent. Practical experience says that after some time, situations seem smaller. Knowing

this, determination and patience help us to think more clearly to bring about a resolution.

Although illness is often debilitating, sometimes there is a hidden benefit. Maybe we have a chance

to rest from stressful life matters, maybe time alone and resting show us ways forward we had never thought of, maybe we discover virtues and strength we never knew we possessed. Negative situations often make us more powerful and wiser. They make us think differently and take us on new paths to success, which we would have never found if the situation had not arisen.

Health does not come from nutritious foods, vitamins, and medicines alone. It comes from peace of mind; peace in the heart and peace in the soul. It is magnified by laughter, love, and faith in God. Practising meditation daily provides a strong foundation for deep peace and contentment.

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Technology draws me into a world of unending, detail complexity and speed. When I know who I am, I am able to interact with technology without losing myself. Reflective moments alone in nature, or in a quiet corner at home, give me the chance to separate from technology and remember who I am. I am the one who USES the technology. I am the one who observes the impact of speed on my thinking process. I am also the one who can slow down at will and be still. Today let me remember who I am.

Chirya Risely is a Rajyoga meditation teacher based at the Brahma Kumaris Peace Village Retreat Center, USA

The power of non-violence



B.K. DR. SAVITA

In the epic Mahabharata, non-violence has been declared the highest duty of an individual. However, in real life, most people think that it is not feasible to be completely non-violent. Is it so?

When we decide to be non-violent in every situation, it influences our behaviour. Someone who wishes to be non-violent will not do anything that may get him into a situation that involves violence, be it emotional, verbal or, in an extreme case, physical violence. Such a person is likely to be affable, humble, and tolerant. When someone's behaviour is informed by the above qualities, they are unlikely to offend or hurt

anyone, or trigger feelings in others that may cause them to be aggressive. The result would be harmonious relations in which there is no probability of violence of any kind.

On the other hand, if someone believes that they might need to use force in certain situations, and therefore carries a weapon, they may feel emboldened to act aggressively at times. Such behaviour is obviously not going to win them friends, and will only feed their insecurity and aggression.

It can be argued that even if we are nice to everyone, someone may try to harm us due to a vested interest or evil intentions. Being good, they say, is no guarantee of having good done to the self.

It is here that subtle forces come into play. A person who has removed violence from his feelings, thoughts, words, and deeds would be naturally peaceful. Subtle vibrations of peace emanate from such persons and influence those around them. The proof of this phenomenon can be found



Friendship and non-violence, coupled with strength, are the best sources of security.

in places of worship. The inside of a temple, mosque, or church is an oasis of calm even in a bustling city area. The vibrations there soothe the mind, providing respite from the hustle outside. The atmosphere in these places is such because the people who visit them create positive or peaceful thoughts while they are there. Our thoughts create

the atmosphere around us. That is why we can sense tension in the air in places where people tend to be stressed, irritated, or frustrated - as in workplaces.

When we interact with others, it is the subtle energy we radiate that has the biggest influence on how they respond to us. Ever wondered why our sweet words and smiles fail to

convince those for whom we have not very good feelings? They are catching our negative vibrations.

A calm person carries an aura of peace around him. This influences even those who may have negative feelings for them. The subtle energy of vibrations influences all creatures, and even the elements of nature. This fact is illus-

trated by the life stories of holy men and women, which describe how would-be assassins had a change of heart when they came near them; how wild animals showed no aggression towards them; and how the elements of nature came to their aid. The message from these stories is that one who has quietened his or her mind and intellect can calm

down those with violent intentions.

Here one needs to mention the inviolable law of karma. Sometimes, violence suffered by us may

be a result of our karmic accounts, whether of the present life or earlier ones. But even in such a case a violent reaction would only add to our karmic burden. If we understand this fact and respond calmly, our karmic burden would soon be finished and the violent situation will subside.

The inside of a temple, mosque, or church is an oasis of calm even in a bustling city area. The vibrations there soothe the mind, providing respite from the hustle outside. The atmosphere in these places is such because the people who visit them create positive or peaceful thoughts while they are there.

The subtle energy of peace works on a larger scale too, in societies and nations. Communities that are peaceable see less vio-

lence incidents than those where aggression is glorified. Ultimately, friendship and non-violence, coupled with strength, are the best sources of security. Ma-

hatma Gandhi said that non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man. If everyone understood as well as Gandhi how the power of non-violence works, the world would be a better place.

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

PRANAV VENKATESH WINS WORLD JUNIOR CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Indian Grandmaster Pranav Venkatesh won the prestigious World Junior Championship in classical chess in Petrovac, a coastal town in Montenegro, on Friday, March 7. The 18-year-old claimed the title in the open section, finishing unbeaten with an impressive score of 9/11 points in a field of 157 participants. Pranav secured the championship after drawing with the white pieces against Slovenia's Matic Lavrencic in the eleventh and final round.

Pranav Venkatesh's triumph comes just months after Dommaraju Gukesh made history by becoming only the second Indian after Viswanathan Anand to win the FIDE World Championship crown. Like Gukesh, Pranav hails from Chen-

nai and is a mentee at the WestBridge-Anand Chess Academy, founded by the legendary Anand.

Pranav is also a student of the renowned Velammal Vidyalaya, a school known for producing a steady stream of top chess players.

Viswanathan Anand was among the first to congratulate Pranav on his momentous achievement, lauding his meticulous approach to the game.

"Congratulations to the World Junior Champion Pranav Venkatesh. He has been in great form lately. Our @WacaChess mentee," Anand said.

"He is very meticulous in his work and constantly analyses his own games, comes back with suggestions and takes feedback. You join a very prestigious line of World Junior Champions!"

Pranav became the first

Indian since Abhijeet Gupta in 2008 to win the world junior championship. He joined an elite list of Indians, including Viswanathan Anand (1987) and Pentala Harikrishna (2004), to win the top junior prize in classical chess.

Pranav became India's 75th Grandmaster at just 15 years old in 2022, joining an elite list of Indian prodigies. Pranav has made a steady rise to the top. In 2024, he won a sensational double gold at IDE World Youth Under-18 Open Rapid and Blitz Championships in Slovenia.

It has nearly been a 17-year-old wait for the open title to come back to India.

More recently, Divya Deshmukh had won the girls' section when it was held in Ahmedabad in 2024. Before Divya, D Harika had won in 2008 and Koneru Humpy in 2001.



"Congratulations to the World Junior Champion Pranav Venkatesh. He has been in great form lately. Our @WacaChess mentee."
- Viswanathan Anand

India in top form ahead of Champions Trophy 2025 final

AGENCIES
DUBAI

India enters the Champions Trophy 2025 Final in Dubai on Sunday in excellent form, having secured four wins in the tournament, as per the official website of ICC.

India's tournament opener saw them prevail in a tight contest against Bangladesh in Dubai, registering a sizzling six-wicket victory to begin their campaign on a winning note.

Pacer Mohammed Shami's impressive 5/53, combined with three scalps from Harshit Rana and two from Axar Patel, restricted Bangladesh to 228.

Shubman Gill's unbeaten 101*, combined with stylish knocks from Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul, ensured smooth sailing for India as they reached the Tigers' total with 21 balls to spare.

In their high-voltage clash against arch-rivals Pakistan, India displayed their all-round prowess by chasing down 241 runs with six wickets in hand.

Kuldeep Yadav weaved his magic for the Indian side by taking three crucial wickets to bundle out Pakistan for 241 in 49.4 overs.

Shubman Gill (46) and Shreyas Iyer (56) came up



with some crucial knocks, but the age-old rivalry was marked primarily by a Virat Kohli masterclass that saw him score an unbeaten 100 to steer India to victory.

A different challenge for Rohit Sharma's side in the form of New Zealand, with the winner staying unbeaten at the tournament and earning the top spot in Group A. Though when these two sides met, they had both already qualified for the semi-final stage.

New Zealand's bowlers did well to restrict India's batting line-up, with Shreyas Iyer (79) and Hardik Pandya (45) leading the way as the Asian side posted a competitive total of 249/9 after they were sent in to bat first.

It was the Varun Chakravarthy show in reply, with the spinner claiming an impressive five-wicket haul to help bowl New Zealand out

for just 205, as India progressed through to the final four with their unbeaten record intact.

India qualified for the Champions Trophy final by taking down another of their top rivals, Australia.

The bowlers applied pressure throughout the Aussies' batting innings, restricting them to 264 all out in the 50th over, consistently finding key wickets throughout. Mohammed Shami chipped in with three big wickets, while spinners Axar Patel and Ravindra Jadeja grabbed a couple.

Once again, it was Kohli who anchored the bulk of India's successful chase, with a poised 84 off 98 balls. The crisp hitting of Axar Patel, KL Rahul and Hardik Pandya saw them home safely, reaching their target with 11 deliveries to spare.

Gill nominated for ICC 'Player of the Month' for Feb

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Riding on his superb performance in the ODI series against England last month, ace India top-order batter Shubman Gill has been nominated along with Australia's Steve Smith and New Zealand's Glenn Phillips for the ICC 'Player of the Month' for February. Gill, who is currently in Dubai with the Indian team for the ongoing Champions Trophy, scored 406 runs, averaging 101.50 at a strike-rate of 94.19 in the five ODIs that he had played in February. Gill hit a purple patch in the three-match



series against England, scoring 87 (in Nagpur), 60 (in Cuttack), and 112 (in Ahmedabad) as he was

adjudged the 'Player of the Series' in the hosts' 3-0 clean sweep.

Gill then went on to score an unbeaten 101 against Bangladesh in the Champions Trophy, followed by a valuable 46 against Pakistan as India secured a place in the semifinals of the ICC's showpiece event.

Australia skipper for the Champions Trophy, Smith shone during the Test series against Sri Lanka, scoring 141 and 131 in the two matches his side played there, with a strike-rate of 136.00. He was named 'Player of the Series' in recognition of those efforts.

In the one-day series, he scored 12 and 29. Black Caps' Phillips scored 236 in five ODIs at a strike-rate of 124.21. His three unbeaten knocks helped New Zealand win the tri-series in Pakistan, also involving South Africa. They comprised 106 against Pakistan in Lahore, 28 against South Africa at the same venue, and then 20 against Pakistan in Karachi in the final.

He carried that momentum into the Champions Trophy, beginning with 61 against Pakistan in Karachi, and then another unbeaten innings of 21 against Bangladesh in Rawalpindi.

Praveen, Navdeep, Dharambir to lead at Para Athletics Grand Prix

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

India's top para-athletes, including Praveen Kumar, Navdeep Singh and Dharambir will be at the forefront of the country's campaign at the World Para Athletics Grand Prix New Delhi 2025 will feature a total of 250 para-athletes, with approximately 145 Indian and 105 international competitors, making it one of the largest para-athletics events in the country.

Speaking on the excitement of competing in India's first-ever Grand Prix, Praveen said, "Competing in front of the home crowd at such a prestigious event is truly special. The Grand Prix in New Delhi is a huge step for

para-athletics in India, and I'm eager to put on a great performance for our supporters."

Dharambir, India's champion in the Club Throw F51 category, added, "This is a historic moment for para-athletics in India. Having a Grand Prix in our own country is a dream come true, and it gives us the perfect platform to prepare for future global events. The energy and enthusiasm here will be incredible, and I hope to make the nation proud once again."

India enter the competition with strong momentum, having secured 14 medals (5 Gold, 6 Silver, and 3 Bronze) at the recently concluded Dubai Grand Prix.

Shetty's dream run continues, enters semifinals of Orleans Masters badminton

AGENCIES
ORLEANS (FRANCE)

Unheralded Indian shuttler Ayush Shetty continued his dream run at the Orleans Masters as he advanced to the men's singles semifinals of the BWF Super 300 tournament with a hard-fought win over higher ranked Rasmus Gemke of Denmark here on Friday. Shetty, who has a world ranking of 48, stunned Gemke 21-16 21-23 21-17 in the quarterfinals.

Shetty had earlier shocked Hong Kong's world number 38 Jason Gunawan 21-17 21-17 victory in 50 minutes to secure his place in the quarterfinals.

The Indian had humbled world champion Loh Kean Yew of Singapore in straight games in his opening round.

Shetty, the lone surviving Indian in the tournament, will next face the winner of the other quarterfinal between Chinese Taipei's Chia Hao Lee and second seed Chun-Yi Lin.



AGENCIES
DUBAI

Ahead of the ICC Champions Trophy final against India at Dubai, New Zealand head coach Gary Stead said that the team will be putting their "thinking caps" on to tackle spinner Varun Chakravarthy, highlighting the difficulties of facing him under the lights.

India will be playing New Zealand in the final of the ICC Champions Trophy on March 9 at the Dubai International Stadium. With India being undefeated in the tournament so far and the Kiwis having looked rock solid with bat and ball under the captaincy of Mitchell Santner, the clash promises to be an epic sequel to their 2000 ICC Champions Trophy final, when New Zealand won. Men in Blue would like to avenge losses to the Black-caps in the 2019 ICC Cricket World Cup semifinal and 2021 ICC World Test Championship final.

One of the biggest troubles Kiwis will face will be Varun, who took a five-wicket haul (5/42) that derailed NZ's chase of 250 runs and dismantled their middle order, including scalps of Glenn Phillips, Michael Brace-



well, skipper Mitchell Santner, all of those batters who could have helped NZ from position of 151/3 to reach the target. His spell triggered a collapse, which bundled out Kiwis for 205 in 45.3 overs.

Speaking to the media ahead of the match, Stead said, "Varun Chakravarthy is a big threat in the game. He is a very good bowler. We will have a look at the pitch conditions and what effects he could have on the game. We certainly expect him to play after getting a fiver. We will be putting our thinking caps around on how we will nullify him and score runs against him. When you have such a wrist spinner bowling, you are looking for cues, and it is much easier in daylight to see those cues."

Stead also said that Kiwis expect India to field four spinners against them, but

they have a capable four-spinner lineup led by skipper Santner, with Bracewell and all-rounders Glenn Phillips and Rachin Ravindra capable of delivering powerful assists to their lead spinner.

"We have four spinners as well and think we are pretty balanced. But there is always a challenge (against Indian spin). I mean, they are all very good spinners in their own right. So for us, it is just being nice and clear on our plans and working it out, be it a match-up or other sort of things we will read through the match. They (Indian spinners) could also have an off-day as well, that could be in our advantage," he added.

Varun is the leading wicket-taker among spinners in this competition, with seven scalps in two matches at an average of 13.00. Also, Axar Patel and Kuldeep Yadav (five wickets each at an average of 33.40 and 36.60 respectively) and Ravindra Jadeja (four wickets at an average of 38.25) have delivered crucial wickets as well.

For Kiwis, their spinners, Santner (seven wickets in four matches at an average of 27.71) and Bracewell (six wickets in four matches at an average of 28.83) have been among the leading acts.

Indian sports women: Getting Padma awards, shattering glass ceiling

SURESH KUMAR LAU
NEW DELHI

Only one eve sports personality has so far been awarded the Padma Vibushan. The six World Championships, a bronze medal at the 2012 London Olympic, gold medal at the five Asian Championships (2003, 2005, 2010, 2012 and 2017) a gold medal at the 2009 Indoor Asian Games at the 2010 Asian Games. Many International medals. She was former MP Rajya Sabha, Upper house of the Indian Parliament. Now

P.T. Usha is member of Upper House and President of Indian Olympics Association. She is also winner of Padma Shri in 1985 and she is first sportswomen to receive an honorary doctorate degree by Kannur University, Kerala on 1st November, 2000 for her contribution to athletics. First Women Mary D' Souza and Neelima Ghose participated in the 1952 Helsinki Olympics. They both fail to qualify in the heat of 100 m and 200 m races.

The first women to win Olympics medal for India,



none other than Karnam Malleshwari, won the weightlifting bronze in the 2000 Sydney Olympics. World Championships gold medalist in 1994 and

1995. Conferred with prestigious Kheiratna 1994

World's first armless woman archer Sheetal Devi, Worldf 2025). World record holder in women

double event at the Para World won three medals at the Para World Championships. She won two Gold medals at the Asiad Para Games 2023. She also won

The first women to win Olympics medal for India, none other than Karnam Malleshwari, won the weightlifting bronze in the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

2 gold and one silver at the Asian Para archery championships.

Five woman players have been awarded the Padma Bhushan. Six-time World

Champion, five-time Asian championship and Olympic bronze medallist, Mary Com, first Indian eve to win an international medal in boxing and first Indian to win an Olympics medal; Sania Nehwal in badminton. Court queen Sania Mirza became the first Indian to win a women's double title at the US Open title in 2005. Bachendri Pal was the first to climb the Everest.

Forty three sports eve athlete's personalities have so far (till 2024) been awarded the Padma Shri. Most of

these awards have gone to Athletics, Badminton and Cricket. The first female to receive the coveted award was athlete Kamaljit Sandhu in 1971. She won the 400m in 57.3 sec. at the Asian Games in Bangkok in 1970. Sunil Dabas became India's first eve coach to get both Padma Shri in 2014 and Dronacharya Award (To honour eminent coaches who have successfully trained sportsperson or teams and enable them to achieve outstanding results in international competitions) in 2012.