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**18 BJP MLAS SUSPENDED
AMID RUCKUS IN
KARNATAKA ASSEMBLY**



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**FALLOUT FROM TRUMP'S
EFFORT TO ABOLISH
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**



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**DRIZZLE
THREATENS IPL
OPENER TODAY**

Coal output surpasses 1 bn tonnes

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India has achieved a historic milestone by surpassing 1 billion tonnes in coal production, marking a significant step towards meeting the country's growing energy demands, Union Minister for Coal and Mines G Kishan Reddy said on Friday.

The minister added in a post on X that leveraging advanced technologies and efficient mining practices, India has not only boosted production but also prioritised sustainable and responsible mining.

A MILESTONE

- The success is attributed to tireless efforts of Coal PSUs, private players and workforce.
- There are around 5 lakh mine workers across more than 350 coal mines.
- India relies on coal for approximately 55% of its energy mix
- Around 74% of country's electricity is generated by coal-based plants
- From April to December 2024, India's coal imports declined by 8.4%, resulting in forex savings of around \$5.43 billion (Rs 42,315.7 crore).

He said this remarkable achievement is set to fuel economic growth, support the nation's power needs, and pave the way for a brighter, energy-secure

future for all Indians.

In the post, the Union Minister added, "India has crossed a monumental 1 billion tonnes of coal production! With cutting-edge technologies and efficient methods, we've not only increased production but also ensured sustainable and responsible mining. This achievement will fuel our increasing power demands, drive economic growth, and ensure a brighter future for every Indian."

According to official data released by the Ministry of Coal last month, with the

■ P3

Will correspond with CMs, MPs in their language: Shah

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Hitting out at DMK over its opposition to the three-language formula, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said no attempt should be made to divide the nation on the basis of language and that the Tamil Nadu government "does not have the courage" to translate medical and engineering study material into Tamil.

Shah, who was replying to the debate in the Rajya Sabha on the working of his



ministry, said that from December, he will have written correspondence with citizens, Chief Ministers, and Members of Parliament in their respective languages. "I would like to say something so that those who

divide the country in the name of language do not get their agenda. Under the Department of Official Languages, Narendra Modi government has set up Indian Languages Section which will work to enhance the use of all Indian languages - Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Gujarati, Punjabi, Assamese, Bengali, all languages. After December, I will have written correspondence with citizens, CMs, Ministers and MPs in their own language," Amit

■ P3

Delimitation: 1st meet of JAC today

TDG NETWORK
CHENNAI

Ahead of Saturday's first Joint Action Committee meeting with various chief ministers and leaders, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Friday said that fair delimitation is crucial, not just for the number of MPs, but for the state's rights.

"Fair delimitation is the talk of the town right now.

■ P3

TWIST IN TALE: DFS SAYS NO CASH FOUND IN JUDGE'S HOUSE

■ Delhi High Court initiates an in-house inquiry against Justice Varma
■ Apex court says proposal to transfer Justice Varma was separate

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Fire fighters found no cash during their operation to douse flames at the residence of Delhi High Court Justice Yashwant Varma, Delhi Fire Services (DFS) chief Atul Garg said on Friday.

The control room received a call about a blaze at Varma's Lutyens Delhi residence at 11.35 pm on March 14 and two fire tenders were immediately rushed to the spot, Garg was quoted saying in news reports.

Fire tenders reached the spot at 11.43 pm. The fire was in a store room stocked with stationary and domestic articles, Garg said, adding that it took 15 minutes to control the flames. There were no casualties.

"Soon after dousing the flames, we informed police about the fire incident. Thereafter, a team of fire department personnel left the spot. Our fire fighters did not find any cash during their fire-fighting operation," the DFS chief said.

Following reports of alleged cash discovery from justice Varma's official home, the Supreme Court on Friday said the Delhi High Court chief justice



Justice Yashwant Varma

Enrolled as advocate in 1992, Justice Varma became High Court judge in 2014

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Delhi High Court's Justice Yashwant Varma, who courted controversy over the alleged discovery of cash from his official residence, was appointed a high court judge in 2014 and transferred to the national capital in October 2021.

The 56-year-old judge, enrolled as an advocate in 1992, was appointed as an additional judge of the Allahabad High Court on October 13, 2014 and took oath as a permanent judge of that court on February 1, 2016. Justice Varma was born on January 6, 1969 in Allahabad. He studied B.Com (Honours) course at Hansraj College at Delhi University and obtained his LLB degree from Madhya Pradesh's Rewa University.

has initiated an in-house inquiry against him. It further said that the proposal to transfer him to the Allahabad High Court was separate.

The incident created ripples in the legal circuit, with many voices calling for the judge's resignation while criticising the Supreme Court collegium decision to transfer him.

To put to rest the supposed conjectures, the top court issued a statement which read, "There is misinformation and rumours being spread with regard to the incident at the residence of Justice Yashwant Varma."

While confirming reports that the apex court collegium met to discuss the matter, the top court said Delhi High Court Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya would submit a report to Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna.

Upon receiving the information, the apex court said, Justice Upadhyaya "commenced the in-house enquiry procedure collecting evidence and information".

Justice Upadhyaya was stated to have commenced the inquiry prior to the collegium meeting on March 20.

"The report will be examined and processed for fur-

ther and necessary action," the statement added.

It said the proposal for transfer of Justice Varma, who is the second senior-most judge in the Delhi High Court, to the Allahabad High Court was "independent and separate from the in-house enquiry procedure".

"Moreover, the reported incident has happened in Delhi," it said.

The apex court said the proposal for transfer him was examined by the apex court collegium comprising the CJI and four senior-most judges on March 20, and thereafter letters were shot off to the consultee judges of the top court, the chief justices of the high courts concerned apart from Justice Varma.

"Responses received will be examined and, thereupon, the collegium will pass a resolution," the court said.

Justice Upadhyaya, while presiding his bench, expressed shock on the matter.

The chief justice's reaction came when a senior lawyer mentioned before him that he and many other advocates were pained and shaken by the incident and

■ P3

RSS prefers mother tongue for education, communication

TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) prefers the mother tongue to be a mode of education and day-to-day communication, Sangh's joint general secretary C R Mukunda said on Friday amid a raging row on the Hindi language and described the debate over delimitation "politically motivated".

The RSS leader also launched a veiled attack



RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat pays floral tribute to Bharat Mata during the inauguration of Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha, in Bengaluru on Friday. (ANI Photo)

against DMK, which has been opposing the three-language formula under

the National Education Policy, saying forces chal-

■ P3

Will Modi and Yunus meet on BIMSTEC sidelines? MEA says no update

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Thursday said it has no update on the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bangladesh Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus on the sidelines of the upcoming BIMSTEC summit.

MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a weekly media briefing, "I do not have any update to share at this point in time," while answering the potential meeting between PM Modi and Yunus on the sidelines of the upcoming BIMSTEC summit in Bangkok.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh has formally requested a bilateral meeting between



the two leaders. Foreign Affairs Adviser to the interim government of Bangladesh, Md Touhid Hossain, said, "We have made a diplomatic approach to India to hold a bilateral meeting between our two leaders at the sidelines of the BIMSTEC Summit."

The BIMSTEC Summit will take place in Bangkok from April 2 to 4. Under Thailand's chairmanship, BIMSTEC aims to achieve a "Prosperous, Resilient, and Open" region, known as "PRO BIMSTEC," by 2030.

The BIMSTEC summit will bring together leaders from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. While PM Modi and Yunus are expected to attend, the likelihood of a formal meeting between them remains uncertain.

Relations between India and Bangladesh have been strained lately, with issues like border disputes, water sharing, and trade agreements.

Bangladesh Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus is expected to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping on March 28.

Earlier in February, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met with Bangladesh Foreign Af-

■ P3

Businesses breathe easy as border blockade cleared

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

After Nearly 400 days of disruption and blockade, traffic has finally resumed at the Shambhu and Khanauri border points between Haryana and Punjab, bringing much-needed relief to thousands of residents who were counting the losses every day for the past 13 months.

Both the highways NH 44 and NH 52-which connect Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladhak to the New Delhi via Haryana were blocked by the Haryana police since February 13,

2024 to prevent hundreds of Punjab farmers to enter Haryana as they were planning to start a 2020-21 like protest in Delhi for their pending demands including guaranteed Minimum Support Price.

But the reopening of the highways following a sudden crackdown by Punjab government and removal of the makeshift shelters of farmers has not only eased travel for daily commuters but the development has also come as a big relief to the people who suffered huge losses due to blockade of the key highways.

One industry estimate put losses at Rs one-lakh crore due to blockade at Shambhu and Khanauri border points

The road closures, which lasted over 400 days, had forced people to take long detours of up to 10-15 km, leading to increased fuel expenses and travel time.

Businesses along the highway, including roadside vendors, dhaba owners, and shopkeepers, faced severe economic hardship due to the reduced customer flow. The diversion of heavy vehicles onto smaller link roads also led to extensive damage to village roads, further exacerbating the situation for local residents.

"We faced the monthly loss of around Rs 10,000 per month as there was no customer due to blockade of road for the past 13 months," said Manmeet Singh, who runs truck ac-

cessory shop near Khanauri border.

After waiting for several months several people had shut their business, especially the eateries along these highways were the worst affected.

Though, the exact figures of the losses could not be ascertained the economic impact of the blockade has been staggering. According to industry experts, businesses in Punjab and Haryana suffered losses exceeding to over Rs one lakh crore over the past 13 months.

■ P3



A man collects drinking water on a roadside government water supply tap on the eve of World Water Day, at Ganeshguri in Guwahati on Friday. ANI

OPPN RAISES 'CASH RECOVERY' FROM HC JUDGE'S HOME IN RS

RS Chairman says will have structured discussion after talking to LoPs

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

After Congress leader Jairam Ramesh raised the alleged recovery of cash from the residence of a sitting judge of the Delhi High Court, Vice-President and Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar on Friday said that he will get in touch with the Leader of the House and Leader of the Opposition and find a mechanism for a structured discussion on the issue. Congress MP Jairam Ramesh sought the Chair's response on judicial accountability and reminded him about a pending notice regarding the impeachment of a judge of the Allahabad High Court. "This morning, we have read about a shocking case

of huge amounts of cash unearthed at the residence of a judge of the Delhi High Court. Earlier, 50 members of Parliament had submitted a notice to the chairman regarding certain remarks that were made by a judge of the Allahabad High Court. You yourself has repeatedly spoken about the urgency for judicial accountability," Ramesh said in the Rajya Sabha. "I request that you please make some observations on this and give necessary directions to the government to come up with a proposal for increasing judicial accountability," he added. In response to Jairam Ramesh, Dhankhar said, "Hon'ble members, I am seized of a representation by 55 members of this house, and I have taken all neces-



sary steps to get their verification. First mail was sent to all of them and the good thing is most of the members have responded positively, helping me perform my duty. Some members are yet to do. A mail reiterating the same has been sent to them. I have taken all procedural steps but I must share with you one concern that is engaging my attention. Of the 55 members who signed the



representation, a member's signature appears on two occasions, and the member concerned has denied his signature." He further said that the process would not be delayed at his level, even for a moment. "Now, I do not wish to get into this act, which may graduate to culpability to a higher level. If the number is above 50, I will proceed ac-

cordingly. Therefore, most of the members have cooperated. Those members who have not done so far, may please do it in response to the second mail sent to them. Then the process will not be delayed at my level even for a moment," he added. The Rajya Sabha Chairman said that he would now get in touch with the leader of the opposition in Rajya Sabha and the leader of the house as well to evolve a structured discussion. "If it happens with a politician, he becomes a target, a bureaucrat, an industrialist immediately and therefore systemic response which is transparent, accountable, effective, I am sure will be on the way. I will get in touch with Leader of the House, Leader of the Opposition and find a mechanism."

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Friday that the BJP-led government, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has maintained a zero-tolerance policy against terrorism since coming to power in 2014. Replying to the discussion on the working of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Shah said that India's security, development, and sovereignty faced three major challenges over the past four decades -- terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir (J-K), insurgency in the Northeast, and Left-wing Naxalism. He also emphasized that the Modi government has taken decisive steps to eradicate these threats and ensure national security. "When the Narendra Modi government came to power, many legacy challenges ex-



isted. The country's security, development, and sovereignty faced challenges due to three major issues. These challenges hindered the country's development," he said, adding that 92,000 citizens lost their lives due to these security threats. Shah criticized previous governments for failing to take firm action on terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, saying that the Modi government was the first to implement a strategic approach to counter cross-border terrorism.

"First of all, I will speak about Kashmir. Terrorists used to enter Kashmir from the neighbouring country, they used to execute bomb blasts and murders here. There was not one festival which used to be celebrated without any worry. Central Governments had a flexible attitude. They used to be quiet and were scared of speaking. They were worried about their vote bank. But after PM Modi came to power, we displayed a zero-tolerance policy against terrorism," he said. Shah took a harp jibe at Congress leader and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi while speaking in the Rajya Sabha on counter-terrorism operations and development in Jammu and Kashmir. "If someone is sitting with kaala chashma (black glasses) on, how is it possible to show them the development?" Shah asked.

BRICS aimed at finding common ground: Centre to Parl amid US threat concerns

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Meetings and discussions in the BRICS grouping are aimed at finding common ground and working together to shape the global order while their common thread is the "commitment to multi-polarity", the Centre told Parliament on Friday. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said this in a written response to a query on the current status of BRICS and whether it is true that the grouping has now "started disintegrating" post the "tariff threat by America". In his response, Jaishankar outlined the history and



evolution of the influential grouping of which India is a member. "From time to time, regional political issues such as peaceful settlement in Afghanistan, the permanent ceasefire in Gaza, the situation in Lebanon, the humanitarian crisis in Sudan and Haiti, situation in and around Ukraine, territorial

integrity of Syria, have also been deliberated upon by BRICS members," he said. BRICS, a platform founded in 2006, has been "progressing steadily" since its inception, he said, adding that it reflects the "common concern" of its members and seeks to make global debates and leadership more representative and inclusive.

While originally founded with four members (Brazil, Russia, India and China), it added South Africa in 2010. Thereafter, BRICS has expanded to currently comprise 11 members and nine partner countries. "The expansion of membership and the interest displayed by many aspiring members is itself a statement of its status and importance. "The current members are: Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Indonesia. The partner countries are Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Nigeria, Thailand, Uganda, and Uzbekistan," he added.

Will Centre have gumption to give notice to X over Grok?, questions Congress MP

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Congress MP Manish Tewari criticised the union government on Friday for trying to gain favour with United States President Donald Trump's administration, after sources from the Ministry of Information and Technology said that they have not sent any notice to the company X (owned by Elon Musk) for their chatbot

Grok using Hindi slang. Claiming that the Trump administration is being run by Elon Musk "by proxy," the Congress leader asked if the union government will have the gumption to give a notice to X. "This government is bending over backwards to praise, to try and somehow curry favour with the Trump administration. So therefore, under those circumstances, the Trump ad-



ministration is proxy being run by Mr Elon Musk. Do you think that the government of India will have the gumption to give notice to X

over Grok?" Tewari said on the premises of Parliament. Earlier today, a post by Tewari on X claimed the same, "With Govt bending over backwards to kow tow to @realDonaldTrump through @elonmusk-doubt they have the gumption to issue @X a notice over the delightfully mischievous @grok. Aint upsetting @realDonaldTrump and @elonmusk over Mr. @grok having some fun."

Centre building consensus on river linking: Min

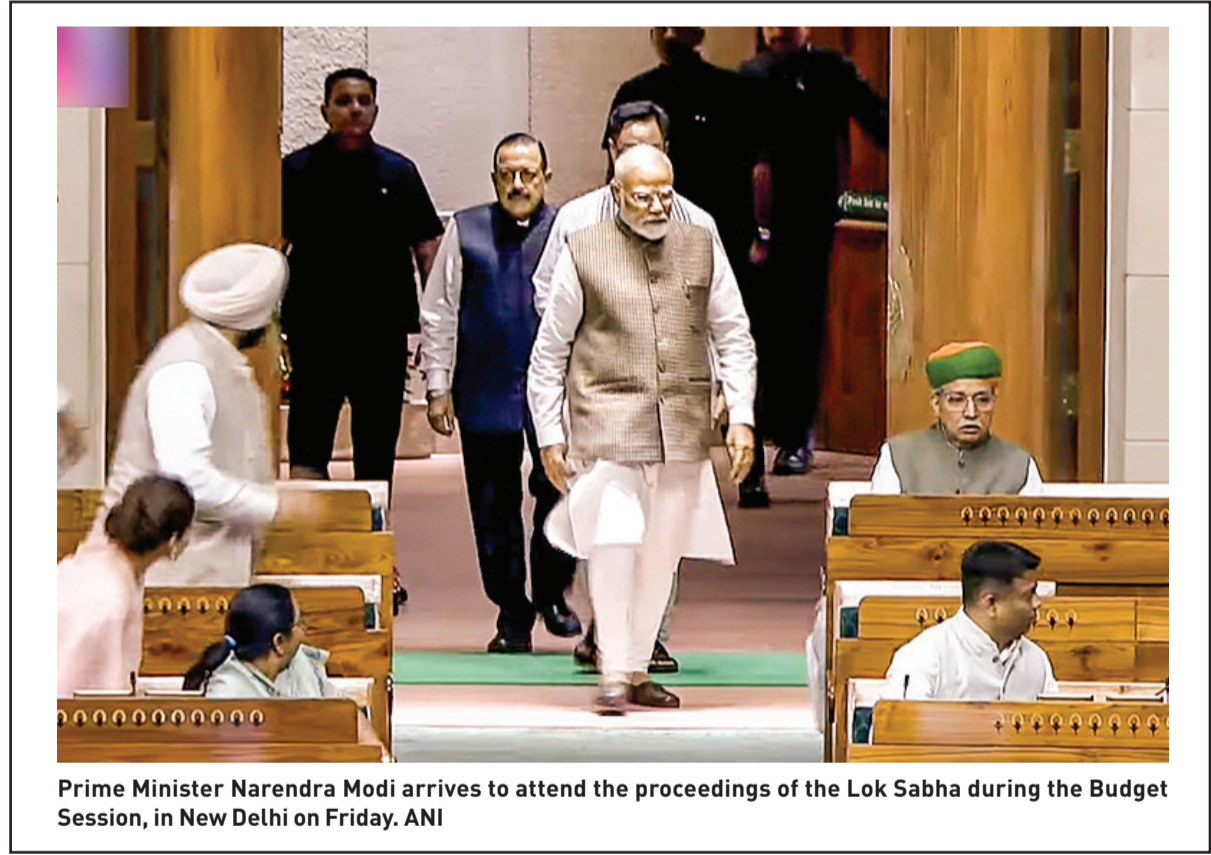
AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

All basin states are on board for river inter-linking projects and the Centre is working to build a consensus among them, Jal Shakti Minister C R Patil told the Lok Sabha on Friday. He also asserted that action has been taken against officials and others over discrepancies found in the implementation of the ambitious Jal Jeevan Mission and that no one will be spared in any state.

Speaking during a debate on the demands for grants of the Jal Shakti ministry, Patil said 30 rivers have been identified for inter-linking and detailed project reports (DPRs) have been prepared for 11. Since water is a state subject, the Centre cannot move ahead till there is a consensus among the state governments, the Union minister added. Citing a lack of consensus among the basin states, he said the Centre is working to bring them on the same page. The National Perspective

Plan (NPP) was prepared by the then Ministry of Irrigation (now Ministry of Jal Shakti) in August 1980 for water resources development through inter-basin transfer of water and transferring water from water-surplus basins to water-deficit basins. Under the NPP, the National Water Development Agency (NWDA) has identified 30 links (16 under Peninsular Component and 14 under Himalayan Component) for preparing feasibility reports. Responding to claims

made by opposition members regarding slow pace in the implementation of the "Nal se Jal" scheme and cases of alleged corruption, Patil said more than 15 crore households have been provided with tap-water connections, which is 80 per cent of the target. He said action has been taken in several cases against officials and others for discrepancies and alleged corruption, and asserted that no one will be spared, irrespective of the parties in power in the states concerned.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrives to attend the proceedings of the Lok Sabha during the Budget Session, in New Delhi on Friday. ANI

GLIMPSES FROM PARLIAMENT



RJD MP Manoj Kumar Jha interacts with Rajya Sabha MP Sudha Murty. ANI



Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Anupriya Patel speaks in Lok Sabha. ANI



MDM MP Vaiko speaks in the Rajya Sabha during the Budget Session. ANI



BJP MPs Manoj Tiwari and Hema Malini in a conversation with Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MP Sanjay Singh and others. ANI



Congress MP Shashi Tharoor speaks in LS during the Budget Session. ANI



Congress MP Jairam Ramesh in conversation with BJP MP Ravi Shankar Prasad. ANI

FTP contributing to India's goal of becoming \$5 trillion economy: MoS

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Minister of state for commerce and industry Jitin Prasada said India's Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2023 is structured to enhance export competitiveness, manufacturing, and value addition, contributing to India's goal of becoming a \$5 trillion economy. Replying to question raised by Rajya Sabha MP Kartikeya Sharma, the Minister said that by streamlining trade processes, expanding market access, and integrating domestic industries into global supply chains, the policy supports economic growth, employment generation, and the Make in India initiative. On the question of the progress achieved so far in its implementation, the minister replied that exports have played a crucial role in



economic expansion, growing to \$778 billion in 2023-24, with trade as a percentage of GDP increasing from 15.5% in 1990 to 45.8% in 2023-24. Expanding trade strengthens India's position as a key player in the global economy while enabling industries to scale up production and boost international competitiveness, he said. The Minister said in recent times several policy measures and digital initiatives have been introduced to support manufacturing, facilitate trade, and improve export infrastructure: The Minister said that the



Trade Connect e-Platform serves as a one-stop trade resource, linking Indian Missions, the Department of Commerce, Export Promotion Councils, and global buyers, offering tariff insights, trade agreements, market intelligence, and export training. Chapter 9 of FTP 2023 promotes Cross-Border Trade in the Digital Economy, facilitating E-Commerce Export Hubs (ECEH) that integrate logistics, certification, and fulfillment services, enabling small businesses and artisans to participate in global trade, he informed

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON BIMSTEC SUMMIT 2025

26% believe Modi should hold bilateral talks with Yunus

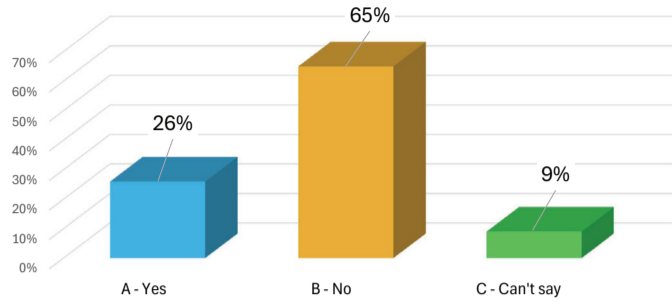
Bangladesh has requested India to arrange a meeting with its Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus and Prime Minister Narendra Modi

during the BIMSTEC Summit in Bangkok from April 2-4. Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain confirmed the diplomatic

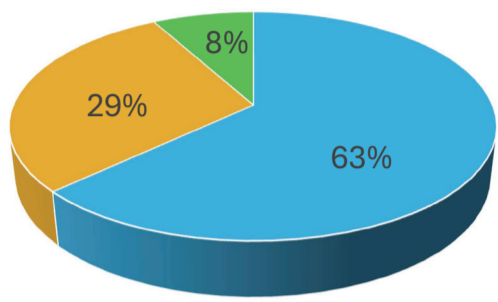
approach. In February, EAM S Jaishankar met Hossain in Oman to discuss bilateral ties and BIMSTEC cooperation.

Q1.

On Bangladesh's request, should Narendra Modi participate in bilateral talks Muhammad Yunus at the BIMSTEC Summit?



■ A - Should not talk
■ B - Should talk
■ C - Cannot say

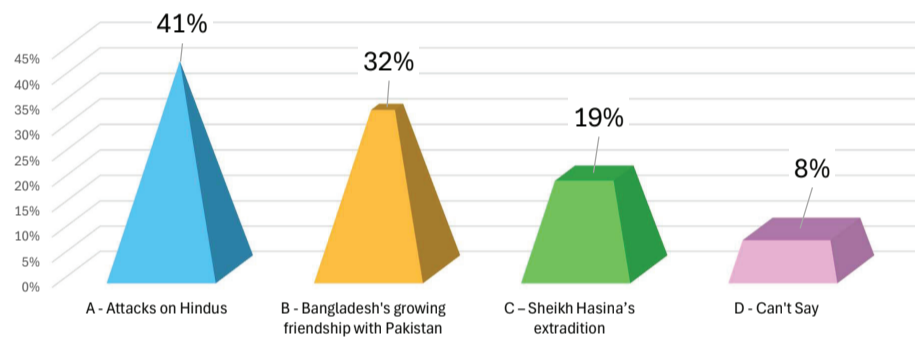
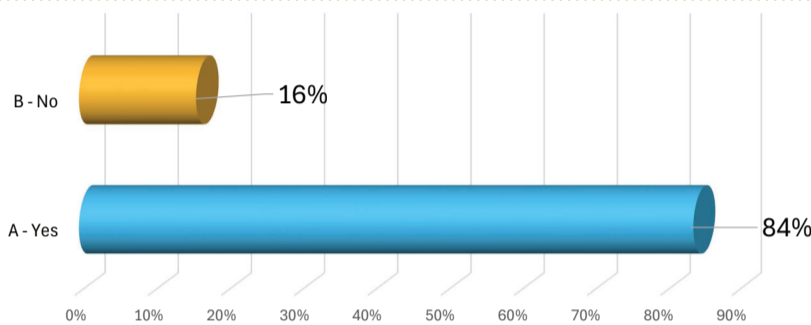


Q2.

Until violence against Hindus stops in Bangladesh, should Modi refuse to engage in dialogue with Yunus?

Q3.

Is the growing influence of China and Pakistan on Bangladesh a matter of concern for India?



Q4.

What do you consider the main reason for the deterioration in India-Bangladesh relations?

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON TERRORIST ATTACK ON PAKISTAN

83% believe war between BLA and TTP is weakening Pak's military

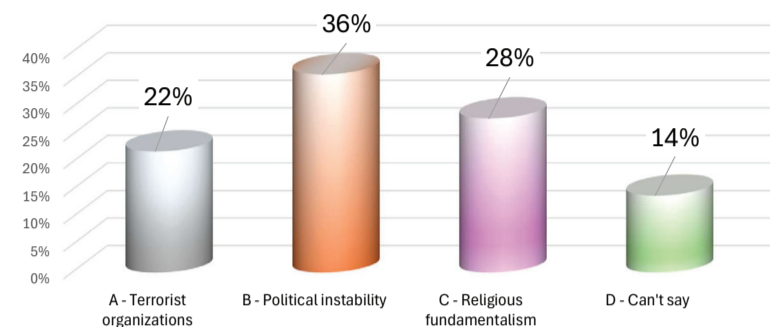
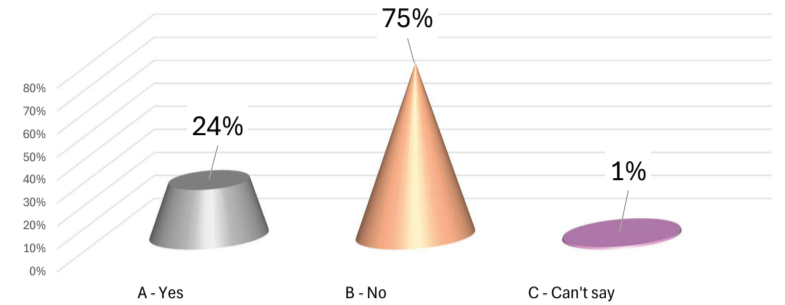
On March 11, BLA fighters hijacked a Jaffar Express train from Quetta to Peshawar. After a 36-hour standoff, Pakistani forces killed the opera-

tives and freed hundreds of hostages. Eight civilians died in the operation. Pakistan blamed Afghanistan

and India, framing the incident as terrorism, highlighting its growing tendency to deflect responsibility onto its neighbours.

Q1.

After yet another bombing in Peshawar, several people died, will Pakistan ever be able to eliminate terrorism?

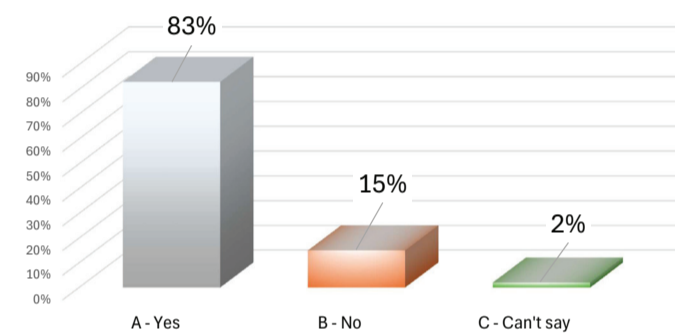
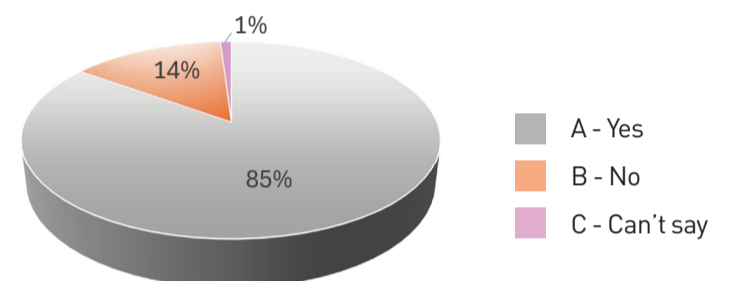


Q2.

Pakistan's minister Talal Chaudhry stated that five lives are lost daily in nine terrorist attacks. Who is responsible?

Q3.

Is the tussle between Pakistan's government and military strengthening terrorist groups?



Q4.

Is the war between BLA-TTP weakening Pakistan's military?

DFS says no cash found

CONTINUED FROM P1

urged the chief justice to take some steps on the administrative side. The incident also elicited

strong reactions from legal experts who questioned the collegium and demanded Justice Varma's resignation. On Friday, Justice Varma did not hold court, said his

court master. The top court has an in-house inquiry mechanism in place to deal with allegations against judges of the Constitutional courts.

Shah hits out at DMK

CONTINUED FROM P1

Shah said. Without naming DMK, he accused it of using language issue to hide scams.

"This is a strong reply to those who run their shops in the name of language to hide their corruption... What are they saying? That we oppose languages of the south? How can this be possible? I come from Gujarat, Nirmala Sitharanan from Tamil Nadu. How can we oppose this? What are you saying?" he said.

Amit Shah said when an NDA government comes to power in Tamil Nadu, it will provide medical and engineering course in Tamil. "We have worked for

languages...I would like to tell Tamil Nadu Government - we have been saying for two years that you do not have the courage to translate medical and engineering study material into Tamil...You cannot do this. When an NDA government comes to power (in Tamil Nadu), we will provide medical and engineering course in Tamil, in Tamil Nadu," he said. The Home Minister said that Hindi has no competition with any other Indian language and is a friend of all Indian languages.

"I would like to tell those who speak poison in the name of language that you like languages from thousands of kilometres away

but you do not language of India...I have said this again and again Hindi has no competition with any other Indian language. Hindi is a friend of all Indian languages, all Indian languages strengthen from Hindi and Hindi strengthens from all Indian languages," he said. He also said that the BJP will expose DMK's "wrongdoings" by visiting every village and engaging with the public.

There has been a stalemate between the Centre and the Tamil Nadu government over the implementation of the three-language formula as part of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Delimitation: 1st meet of JAC today

CONTINUED FROM P1

Why has the DMK brought this to focus? Because in 2026, delimitation will happen. And if the delimitation exercise is carried out based on population, our representation in Parliament will be severely affected. This is not just about the number of MPs but about our State's rights. This is why we have convened a meeting of all parties. Except the BJP, every other party stood together as one," Stalin said in a video posted on X. The MK Stalin-led Tamil Nadu government has locked horns with the Central government over the three-language formula proposed in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the delimitation exercise.

Stalin has called for a joint effort from various political parties to raise their voices against Delimitation, calling for a Joint Action Committee meeting on March 22 to be held in Chennai, inviting representatives from various political parties to join against

the "blatant assault on federalism."

Stalin had written to the Chief Ministers of seven states, both from National Democratic Alliance (NDA) ruling states and otherwise, to join him in the "fight against this unfair exercise."

Congress leader P Chidambaram also expressed his fear that if delimitation is conducted, Southern states will lose 26 seats in the Lok Sabha, and their voices will not be heard.

"Delimitation is a serious issue. It was frozen in 1971. A census taken after 2026 will lead to delimitation, followed by re-determination of the seats. According to our calculation, if it is redistributed according to the current population of states, and the state's numbers are changed, our southern states, which have 129 seats, will come down to 103. The five southern states will lose 26 seats, whereas the populous states where population is growing will gain seats, especially UP, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan," Chidambaram said.

Coal output surpasses 1 bn tonnes

CONTINUED FROM P1

fifth-largest geological coal reserves globally and as the second-largest consumer, coal continues to be an indispensable energy source, contributing to 55 per cent of the national energy mix.

The coal sector remains a cornerstone of India's energy security, playing a vital role in the country's industrial and economic growth.

Approximately 74 per cent of power generation in India relies on Thermal Power Plants (TPPs), reaffirming the need for a robust and sustainable coal sector, said the Minister. Among the eight core industries, coal has exhibited the highest growth rate, recording a 5.3 per cent increase in December 2024 compared to the previous year. Additionally, the coal sector accounts for

about 50 per cent of freight revenue for Indian Railways and provides direct employment to nearly 4.78 lakh individuals.

As per the ministry, the coal sector is embracing sustainability with large-scale afforestation efforts, with over 54.06 lakh saplings planted across 2,372 hectares in 2024. Under the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign, over 1 million saplings were planted at 332 locations in 11 states.

Additionally, 4,695 hectares of land have been identified for Accredited Compensatory Afforestation, and a total of 18,513 LKL of treated mine water has been provided to over 18.63 lakh people across 1,055 villages over the past five years.

Coal gasification is emerging as a key strategy for energy security, with a target of 100 MT by 2030.

Modi and Yunus meet unlikely

CONTINUED FROM P1

fairs Advisor Hossain on the sidelines of the Indian Ocean Conference in Oman.

Informing about his meeting, Jaishankar said that the talks were focused on the bilateral relationship between the two countries and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC).

"Met Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain of the Interim Government of Bangladesh. Conversation was focused on our

bilateral relationship, as also on (BIMSTEC)," Jaishankar wrote on X.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Foreign Ministry also issued a statement stating that the two sides discussed various bilateral issues of mutual concern and interests.

Recalling their last meeting on the sidelines of UNGA in September 2024, both noted that since then, the two countries have participated in various bilateral engagements - Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) between Bangladesh and India at the level of Foreign

Secretaries were conducted in Dhaka on 9th December 2024, Energy Adviser of Bangladesh participated at the India Energy Week events in New Delhi on 10-11 February 2025, among others, the statement said.

Both sides also noted that meetings at the level of Directors General of Border Guarding Forces of the two countries are scheduled to be held in New Delhi on February 18-20. They hoped that various border-related issues would be discussed and resolved during the meeting, the statement said.

RSS prefers mother tongue

CONTINUED FROM P1

lenging national unity were a "matter of worry".

Addressing a press conference on the RSS' top decision-making body -- Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha (ABPS) three-day meeting that began here on Friday, Mukunda said: "Intense discussions on some of the contemporary and burning issues", including Manipur situa-

tion and attempts to create the 'North-South divide' in the country, will be held.

The meeting was inaugurated by RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat.

When asked about the three-language row, Mukunda said the Sangh would not pass any resolution and maintained that the organisation prefers the mother tongue to be a mode of education and day-to-day communication.

On the delimitation debate, he said it was "politically motivated", and the RSS has no say on the number of seats but asserted that forces challenging national unity were a matter of worry.

"As an organisation, we are concerned about the forces which are challenging national unity, especially raising the North-South divide, whether it is about delimitation or languages," Mukunda said.

Businesses breathe easy as border opens

CONTINUED FROM P1

State Punjab state exchequer alone bore the brunt, with losses amounting to over Rs 10,000 lakh crore. Meanwhile, according to the local businessmen in Ambala's cloth market the financial losses were over hundreds of crores. The daily estimated financial loss due to the closure of NH-44, a crucial trade route connecting Delhi, Punjab, and Jammu & Kashmir, stood at around Rs 1,500 crore. Ludhiana-based Badish Jindal, President of the World MSME Forum, claimed that blockade of highways caused huge damages as the businesses in the region saw a decline of 15-20%, with the state suffering huge losses.

The blockade was a direct result of the farmers' protest, which had intensified at these border points. Over the past few days, both Haryana and Punjab authorities worked extensively to clear the roads.

Justice Varma became HC judge in 2014

CONTINUED FROM P1

As an advocate at the Allahabad High Court, he practised matters of constitutional, labour and industrial legislations aside from corporate laws, taxation and allied branches of law.

He was also the special counsel for the Allahabad High Court from 2006 till his elevation apart from being the chief standing counsel for the Uttar Pradesh government from 2012 till August 2013 when he was designated as a senior advocate.

Some of the significant

The reopening of the highways has provided a significant boost to local businesses, particularly in Ambala and Patiala, which are known for their textile and agricultural equipment industries. The blockade had crippled trade between the two cities, affecting thousands of small and medium enterprises.

Local shopkeepers expressed their relief over the reopening. Meanwhile, daily commuters who rely on this highway for travel between Punjab, Haryana, and Delhi are also breathing a sigh of relief. With traffic flow restored, they no longer need to take long and costly detours.

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has deployed a seven-member team to inspect the bridge over the Ghaggar River. Authorities have decided to allow only light vehicles on the route until necessary repairs are completed to ensure road safety.

judgments and orders passed by a bench headed by Justice Varma include setting aside an order which upheld an arbitral award asking low-cost airline SpiceJet and its promoter Ajay Singh to refund Rs 579 crore plus interest to media baron Kalanithi Maran.

He also stayed the proceedings initiated by the Lokpal against Jharkhand Mukti Morcha chief Shibu Soren on the basis of BJP leader Nishikant Dubey's complaint of "corruption" against the former Jharkhand chief minister.

18 BJP MLAS SUSPENDED AMID RUCKUS IN KARNATAKA ASSEMBLY

House marshals remove legislators as they enter Well of the House, tear and throw papers at Speaker; state bandh today on transport driver attack

TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

The Karnataka Speaker on Friday suspended 18 BJP MLAs for six months for disrupting proceedings of the Assembly.

Dramatic scenes unfolded in the House and visuals showing House marshals picking up BJP MLAs and carrying them outside the House.

A Bill was tabled by Karnataka Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil.

Ruckus erupted in the Assembly as BJP MLAs entered the Well of the House and also tore and threw papers at the Speaker UT Khader's chair.

The Bill granting four per cent reservation to minorities including Muslims in contract work was passed by Karnataka Assembly.

Meanwhile, a state-wide bandh has been called by Kannada Okkuta on March 22 to protest the recent attack on a Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) driver in Maharashtra is unlikely to

ASSEMBLY PASSES BILL ON 4% QUOTA

- Earlier today, an uproar followed in the State Assembly after Karnataka Cooperation Minister KN Rajanna's allegation of honey trap attempt was made on him.
- Speaking in the House, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah defended his government and said there was no question of protecting anyone in the Honey Trap.
- The Bill granting four per cent reservation to minorities including Muslims in contract work was passed by Karnataka Assembly.



Hand over honey trap probe to CBI: State BJP chief

BENGALURU: Bharatiya Janata Party Karnataka President BY Vijayendra on Friday demanded that the Karnataka government hand over the alleged honey trap attempt case either to the CBI or a sitting High Court judge.

The BJP leader said that it is the responsibility of the CM to take this matter seriously and order a thorough investigation.

"It was an issue of honey trapping raised by none other than the senior Congress MLAs and a cabinet minister who raised the issue on the floor of the house yesterday and demanded an enquiry into the honey trapping. The home minister declared yesterday that they will probe into this matter, but later in

the evening Home Minister G. Parameshwara said he didn't receive any official information regarding honey trapping. This means that Congress is trying to cover up the issue. It is the responsibility of the CM to take this matter seriously and order a thorough investigation," the BJP leader said addressing reporters.

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followed in the State Assembly after Karnataka Cooperation Minister KN Ra-

janna's allegation of honey trap attempt was made on him.

West Bengal Assembly passes Bill allowing women to work in bars

TDG NETWORK
KOLKATA

In a significant legislative move, the West Bengal Assembly has passed the West Bengal Finance Bill 2025, which includes key amendments to the Bengal Excise Act, 1909, most notably lifting the prohibition on women working in bars, a provision previously deemed discriminatory.

The bill, tabled by Minister of State Chandrima Bhattacharya, was passed in the Assembly on Wednesday. The amendments aim to modernise the Bengal Excise Act, aligning it with current legal frameworks and addressing regulatory concerns in the state's excise sector.

One of the major changes introduced is the removal of restrictions on the employment of women in ON-category liquor shops. The bill states that this amendment was necessary "to remove the prohibition on employment of women in ON category liquor shops as such provision is discriminatory."

Additionally, the bill incorporates updates necessitated by the replacement of major legal codes, namely the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Penal Code, with the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha



Sanhita and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, respectively. "The Bengal Excise Act which contained reference to the repealed laws has been amended accordingly," the bill states. Another key change involves the regulation of molasses to prevent its use in illicit liquor production. The bill highlights the need "to include molasses in the definition of material for prevention of using molasses for manufacturing of illicit liquor." It further states that the amendments "are essentially meant to make both the Bengal Excise Act, 1909 and the West Bengal Molasses Control Act, 1973 complementary to each other and to prevent overlapping." While regulatory aspects of molasses such as licensing and permits will continue to be

governed by the West Bengal Molasses Control Act, 1973, its misuse for illicit liquor production will now be treated as a penal offence under the Bengal Excise Act, 1909. The bill also introduces a charging provision in the Act for levying penalties on excess wastage of spirit in distilleries and warehouses, describing it as a necessary "regulatory measure." Another amendment extends the duration of temporary liquor licences, ensuring that "liquor establishments may continue operation till permanent settlement, in the interest of State Revenue." Additionally, the bill includes a provision to introduce statutory procedures for the confiscation of seized articles, stating that this will "remove difficulties in operation."

Crackdown on farmers: AAP in damage control, defends cops' action amid criticism

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

Facing intense criticism over the crackdown on farmers the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has gone into damage control with all party leaders are defending the police action against protesting farmers at Shambhu and Khanauri border points.

Targeting the Congress party accusing it of instigating protests, the AAP leaders citing economic losses due to the prolonged agitation but claimed that the AAP was the only well-wisher of farmers. AAP MP Malvinder Singh Kang stated that the year-long blockade of Punjab's borders had severely impacted the state's economy, leading to reduced investments, declining tourism, and industrial slowdown.

Kang said the closure of roads affected religious tourism, particularly reducing the number of devotees visiting Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple). He also emphasized that the biggest challenge was the



lack of investments, which directly impacted employment opportunities.

In a similar, tone Punjab Power Minister Harbhajan Singh reiterated that AAP has always stood with farmers and would continue to do so. He urged farmers to direct their protests toward the central government instead of harming Punjab's economy by blocking roads.

AAP leaders also criticized the Congress for its stance on the farmers' protests. Harbhajan Singh questioned why Congress never raised farmers' issues in Parliament despite having 100 MPs. He accused Congress of attempting to defame AAP while failing to support

farmers during their struggles. Punjab Health Minister Dr. Balbir Singh accused Congress MPs of playing politics by staging protests in Delhi. He said AAP had always supported farmers, providing medical aid during protests. He accused the opposition of spreading misinformation as the Mann government worked to revive Punjab's economy and fight drug abuse.

Punjab's NRI Affairs Minister Kuldeep Dhaliwal called Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann a "true son of the soil," always standing with farmers in difficult times. He criticized Congress for pretending to be pro-farmer while failing to act when

in power. Vidhan Sabha Speaker Kultar Singh Sandhwan and cabinet ministers Harpal Singh Cheema and Tarunpreet Sondh stressed that keeping highways open was crucial for Punjab's agro-based industries and economic growth.

Meanwhile, the opposition has strongly condemned the AAP government's handling of the protests. Leader of Opposition Partap Singh Bajwa called the police crackdown a betrayal of farmers and criticized the detention of farmer leaders Jagjit Singh Dallewal and Sarwan Singh Pandher. Punjab Congress chief Amarinder Singh Raja Warring accused AAP and the BJP of working together to suppress farmers. Akal Takht acting jathedar Giani Kuldeep Singh Gargaj warned that Punjab was turning into a police state. SGPC head Harjinder Singh Dhama called the arrests of farmers a "big insult" to those who feed the nation. As the political battle intensifies.

Uproar in Kerala Assembly for second day on row over ASHA workers' protest

TDG NETWORK
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) on Friday staged a walkout for the second consecutive day over the government's handling of ASHA workers' demands.

ASHA workers in Kerala are on an indefinite strike over several demands, including better pay and improved working conditions.

The opposition is demanding a fair resolution for the protesting ASHA workers, while the government maintained that the protest was



politically motivated and that the state was already providing more benefits than the central government.

Opposition Leader VD Satheesan raised the issue in the Assembly as a submission stating that ASHA workers were engaged in a struggle and that their de-

mands must be met.

"The Chief Minister had earlier given a positive response when we met him, and two rounds of discussions were held. Unfortunately, both failed to produce results. That is why we are bringing up this issue again with good intentions. However, we hear that the

state health minister went to Delhi without even securing an appointment with the Union Health Minister. If the central minister refused to grant an appointment after a request was made, that is unacceptable. The state government must take the initiative and increase the incentives for Asha workers," Satheesan said.

Since Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan was absent, Parliamentary Affairs Minister MB Rajesh responded on his behalf. "As the Leader of the Opposition mentioned, the Chief Minister had positively intervened.

Rs 25 crore heroin seized in Sirsa; 2 held

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

In a major crackdown on drug smuggling, the Haryana police have seized 4.256 kg of heroin worth Rs 25 crore and arrested two youths traveling in a car in Sirsa district of the state. As per the police the accused

were arrested in the Chatargarh Patti area when they tried to escape after spotting a police patrol team.

A police team led by Sub-Inspector Jagdish Chandra, a CIA Ellenabad police team stopped their Kia car and conducted a search in the presence of a gazetted officer. Upon checking, police

found heroin concealed in the vehicle. A case under the NDPS Act has been registered at the Civil Lines police station, and further investigations are underway.

Sirsa Superintendent of Police Vikrant Bhusan revealed that during interrogation, the accused admitted to buying the heroin

from Punjab for distribution in Sirsa and nearby areas. The police also recovered a Pakistani currency note from the accused establishes their links with international drug network. Authorities are now investigating their criminal background and possible links to larger trafficking operations.

Centre imposing NEET, CUET exams: TN Finance Minister

TDG NETWORK
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Finance Minister Thangam Thennarasu has lashed out at the Union Government in the State assembly on Friday for "imposition" of the NEET and CUET examinations and termed it a "modern Kula Kalvi scheme" (caste-based education scheme).

"Union Government is imposing NEET CUTE exams which is modern Kula Kalvi scheme. In such era, the Union Government is imposing modern Kula Kalvi education while Tamil Nadu is introducing new colleges and new education lessons for the welfare of students," Thennarasu said in the State assembly.



He also criticised the central government for allocating more funds for the growth of Hindi and Sanskrit in comparison to Tamil.

"Every year for the growth of Hindi and Sanskrit many crore funds were allotted by Union Government but only few money is been allotted for Tamil Language," he said.

Thennarasu also accused the central government of being 'partial' in the Union Budget, while stating that

the Tamil Nadu government focuses on all districts for growth.

"Union Governments finance budget, funds were allotted focusing only for states like Bihar, Andhra Pradesh. But our Tamil Nadu state budget is focused on all districts and is for equal growth of the state. That's why our budget is appreciated by all," he said.

The minister also targeted the Central government over the money allotted for Railway projects in the state, drawing a comparison between UP and Tamil Nadu. "For Railway projects - fund by Union Government allotted for Tamil Nadu for three years is Rs 19066 cr but it's Rs 19858 cr for Uttar Pradesh state for the year 2025-2026 alone.

HC slaps Rs 1.5 lakh penalty on HPSC for wrongly rejecting SC candidate

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

The Punjab & Haryana High Court has imposed a fine of Rs 1.5 lakh on the Haryana Public Service Commission (HPSC) for wrongly rejecting a Scheduled Caste (SC) candidate's application for the Haryana Civil Services (Judicial Branch) Examination 2023-24.

Hearing the plea of Divya Kalia, the court noted that while candidates must adhere strictly to submission guidelines, some latitude can be extended if an error occurs due to circumstances beyond their control. Kalia's candidature was rejected for failing to submit her SC certificate in the required format along with a domicile certificate,

despite clearing both preliminary and main exams.

The bench, comprising Chief Justice Sheel Nagu and Justice Sumeet Goel, observed that while examining agencies must proceed based on submitted documents, corrective steps should be allowed if the candidate proves the omission was beyond their control. The court also emphasized that remedial measures must be taken at the earliest opportunity.

Justice Goel highlighted that any candidate seeking relaxation for a defective certificate must provide tangible reasons and act promptly.

With this ruling, the court has reinforced the principle of fairness in selection processes while holding HPSC accountable for procedural lapses.

Nitish 'mentally unstable', should resign: Rabri after national anthem row in Bihar

TDG NETWORK
PATNA

Former Bihar Chief Minister and RJD leader Rabri Devi criticised Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for allegedly talking during the national anthem and demanded that Kumar apologise in both houses of the State for the insult.

Devi also said that "mentally unstable" Nitish Kumar should resign from the post of Chief Minister immediately, and should pass on the responsibility to his son, Nishant Kumar.

"The national anthem has been insulted. The world is watching, and he (Nitish Kumar) should apologise in both houses. He should tender his resignation and make his son the Chief Minister of Bihar. Legally,



this carries a punishment of three years. Action should be taken on this matter, but these people are hiding it," she told ANI.

RJD leader Misa Bharti raised questions on his mental and physical health and said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah should consider the plight of Bihar.

Similarly, RJD leader Mukesh Raushan staged a protest against the Chief

Minister in Patna and demanded an apology from him.

Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejashwi Yadav yesterday shared a video of Nitish Kumar at an event on social media platform X and posted, "At least please do not insult the national anthem, Hon'ble Chief Minister. You insult youth, students, women, and elderly people every day. Sometimes they clap on Mahatma Gandhi's martyrdom day and mock his martyrdom, and sometimes they clap on the national anthem!"

He alleged that the Bihar CM was "not mentally or physically stable" and called his condition a matter of great concern for the State. "PS: Let me remind you that you are the Chief Minister of a big state.

VERMA SUSPENDS ENGINEER, SAYS OFFICIALS BECAME 'THICK-SKINNED' IN 10 YEARS

A drainage line in a severely deteriorated condition, with no visible maintenance.

TIKAM SHARMA
NEW DELHI

In a decisive move against negligence, PWD Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh has ordered the suspension of an Executive Engineer stationed in East Delhi after discovering a drainage line in a severely deteriorated condition. During an inspection of roads in Patparganj, the minister found that the drains along NH 9 (Service Lane), also known as NH 24, were in an alarming state of neglect, with no visible maintenance efforts being undertaken.

"The PWD is responsible for maintaining these drains, yet the reality on the ground paints a completely different picture. I have directed the suspension of the engineer responsible for this dereliction of duty. Inefficiency will not be tolerated," Minister Singh stated firmly.

ORDERS REMEDIAL MEASURES

- Singh inspected roads and drains in Patparganj, finding poor conditions affecting residents.
- Remedial measures were ordered to fix drainage and waterlogging issues.
- Officials must conduct daily inspections and submit reports via the PWD app.
- Failure to comply with new rules will result in strict disciplinary action.



He further condemned the complacency of officials, remarking that over the past decade, they have grown "thick-skinned" and indifferent to their responsibilities. He stressed the need for strict oversight and accountability to rectify the situation.

Subsequently, the minister carried out an inspection of roads and drains beginning from New Ashok Nagar Metro Station, extending through Chilla Village in Trilokpuri, and covering various parts of the Patparganj Assembly area. The condition of the drains was found to be extremely poor, creating hardships for residents.

In response, Singh directed officials to take immediate remedial measures and ensure proper maintenance to prevent waterlogging and sanitation issues.

Expressing his strong dissatisfaction, the minister remarked, "It is the duty of officials to oversee basic upkeep, yet the current state of affairs is entirely unacceptable. Consistent monitoring and prompt action are essential to maintaining Delhi's infrastructure."

Issuing a stern warning to senior PWD officials, Minister Singh made it explicitly clear that anyone failing to fulfill their duties would face stringent disciplinary measures. "Delhi deserves world-class infrastructure and roads. Officials must take full responsibility for their roles."

Ministers demanding 10% cut, alleges AAP; BJP threatens legal action

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The AAP accused the BJP on Friday of targeting officers and pressuring them for a 10-per cent commission on government projects, after Delhi PWD Minister Parvesh Verma called officials "thick-skinned". The ruling BJP strongly denied the allegations, with the party's Delhi unit president Virendra Sachdeva condemning Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Atishi's claims and warning that the former chief minister must apologise or face legal action.

At a press conference here, Atishi questioned why the same officers, who worked efficiently under the previous AAP government in Delhi, were now being criticised.



"What has changed in just one month? These are the same officers who built the Signature Bridge and transformed Delhi's government schools. The BJP is abusing them because the AAP never asked for any commission. Officers have told us that BJP ministers are demanding a 10-per cent cut on all projects and those who refuse are being threatened with suspension, despite the fact that no Delhi minister has the power to do so, only the LG has the power to do that," she said.

Sachdeva strongly condemned the allegations made by Atishi, asserting that she must either apologise or be prepared to face legal action.

"For 10 years, the people of Delhi heard (AAP supremo and former chief minister) Arvind Kejriwal repeatedly claim that the Centre and officials were not allowing him to work. However, the same people are now astonished to hear Atishi say that their government built new schools, hospitals and flyovers in Delhi with the help of officials," he said.

Earlier in the day, Verma said during a field visit that "all officers have become thick-skinned in the last 10 years."

Sirsa alleges MCD of burning garbage, playing with lives

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa on Friday alleged that the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), which is run by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), is working toward increasing air pollution in the national capital.

Sirsa asserted that the newly formed Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government has been continuously making efforts to eradicate pollution from the city.

He alleged that the MCD burns garbage at various places, including parks, adding that the corporation is playing with the lives of Delhi's residents.

"Every day, we get complaints that the MCD, where AAP is in power, burns garbage at various places. They (AAP) are playing with the lives of people in Delhi... I strongly condemn this," he said.

"Ever since the BJP government was formed in Delhi, we have been continuously fighting against pollution in the city," the BJP leader added.

Notably, air pollution was



a major issue in the Delhi assembly elections held in February.

Meanwhile, Delhi Public Works Department Minister Parvesh Verma inspected roads and drains in the Trilokpuri and Patparganj assembly constituencies on Friday. During the inspection, he found shortcomings regarding the cleaning and maintenance of roads and drains, after which he suspended an Executive Engineer, Ramashish Singh.

He said, "It is the job of PWD to clean drains, but that is absolutely not being done. So, I have ordered the suspension of the XEN (Executive Engineer) here. All officers have been clearly told that if they do not work properly, action will be taken. We can't leave Delhi, our capital, like this."

Meerut murder: Many theories doing rounds

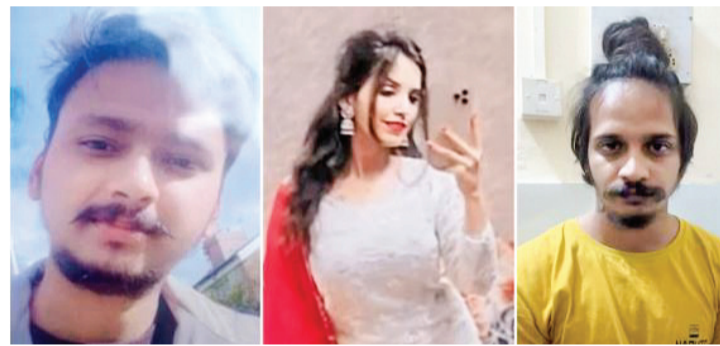
TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Family members of Saurabh Rajput, killed allegedly by his wife Muskan Rastogi and her lover Sahil Shukla, have claimed that occult practices were central to the chilling murder.

Though police have not yet commented on the claims, Rajput's mother Renu Devi said, "Both Muskaan and Sahil were into occult practices. They killed my son by performing tantric rituals."

Rajput's in-laws, Kavita and Pramod Rastogi, alleged it was Sahil who held their daughter Muskan "captive" by making her believe in tantric rituals. He also kept Muskan isolated from her six-year-old daughter, they claimed.

Saurabh Rajput was allegedly drugged and then stabbed to death by his wife and her lover on March 4, his body dismembered and sealed inside a drum with cement. The duo then went on a vacation to Himachal Pradesh, all the while misleading Rajput's family by sending them messages from his phone.



The matter was reported to police on March 18, following which Muskan and Sahil were arrested.

"Sahil's occult practices dominated Muskaan's mind in such a way that she started keeping her six-year-old daughter away. Sahil had made Muskaan an addict and completely superstitious," the deceased's mother said.

Neighbours claimed Sahil frequently dressed in yellow and black kurtas with "Mahakal" inscriptions on them while sporting numerous tattoos of religious and mystical symbols. His room was filled with unsettling imagery, including sketches of ominous figures.

"Many other scary images have also been found in Sahil's room. He used to go out only to feed cats and

the lights in his room remained switched off most of the time," a neighbour said. Meanwhile, Muskan's statements to police indicate that Sahil manipulated her into committing the murder, claiming it was necessary for their new life together.

A source in the police said, "Muskan has made it clear in her statements that Sahil had said that 'you will have to kill Saurabh, only then we can start a new life'."



Asked about the claims about the alleged involvement of occult practices in the case, Superintendent of Police (City) Ayush Vikaram Singh replied, "All aspects of the case are being looked into."

51-year-old man dies in fire at central Delhi building

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A 51-year-old man was charred to death when a fire broke out on the third floor of a building in central Delhi early Friday morning, officials said.

Parveen Sachdeva, a divorcee, died in the fire that broke out in Baljeet Nagar area, they said. Sachdeva owned a small motor parts manufacturing factory in the Wazirpur area, which was reportedly non-functional, a police officer said.

A call regarding the fire at a home was received at Patel Nagar police station around 5.16 am on Friday, the officer said. Three fire tenders were pressed into service upon receiving information around 5.16 am at Patel Nagar police station regarding a fire at a house, a Delhi Fire Services official said.

"After much effort by fire personnel and police, the blaze was brought under control," he said.

New rules for maintenance of national flag Promptly reply to MPs, MLAs: Govt tells officers

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Friday issued directives to all concerned officers and departments of the Delhi government regarding "respectful maintenance" of the national flag and statues of the national heroes in the national capital.

The directive emphasizes the importance of maintaining proper decorum and respect for our national flag and statues of the national heroes in accordance with established protocols and regulations, an official statement from the chief minister's office said.

The chief minister has mandated dignified handling and meticulous up-



keep of the national flag and its surrounding areas at all installation points across Delhi, the statement added.

The chief minister said "our national flag and statues of the national heroes represent our glorious history, struggles and cultural heritage."

"Their respectful maintenance is not only our duty but also a source of inspiration and patriotism for future generations. It is our responsibility to honour the national flag and statues and contribute to their preservation," she added.

Gupta said the previous governments installed the national flag at many points in the city, but they did not pay attention to their maintenance.

The condition is pathetic at many places and similarly they did not pay attention to maintain the statues of our national heroes, she added.

The chief minister instructed "the concerned authorities to undertake thorough inspection and proper maintenance of the national flag and statues of the heroes installed at various locations throughout Delhi".

"The directive specifically addresses statues that have suffered damage or deterioration, requiring that they be repaired appropriately with due respect or replaced if required. An order has been issued to launch a special campaign to address this issue and a compliance report to be submitted within 30 days," she said.

The Delhi government's objective is to foster a deep sense of respect for the national flag and statues of the heroes, and to undertake all necessary measures to ensure their maintenance and upkeep, the statement added.

The Delhi government on Friday directed officers to promptly respond to communications from MPs and MLAs, warning them of disciplinary action against those who fail to do so. This comes a day after Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta flagged non-responsive behaviour of a section of officers.

Gupta in a letter to Chief Secretary Dharmendra said he was informed that some officers did not even acknowledge communications from MLAs in the form of letters, phone calls and messages.

"The matter has been viewed seriously by the Speaker in a letter to Chief Secretary Dharmendra said he was informed that some officers did not even acknowledge communications from MLAs in the form of letters, phone calls and messages."

TIKAM SHARMA
NEW DELHI

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Gupta in a letter to Chief Secretary Dharmendra said he was informed that some officers did not even acknowledge communications from MLAs in the form of letters, phone calls and messages.

"The matter has been viewed seriously by the

Speaker in a letter to Chief Secretary Dharmendra said he was informed that some officers did not even acknowledge communications from MLAs in the form of letters, phone calls and messages.

chief secretary," said a circular issued by the General Administration Department (GAD) of the Delhi government.

The government has issued comprehensive instructions with regard to engagement and protocols to be observed while dealing with MLAs and MPs, it said.

The instructions need to be strictly adhered to in letter and spirit, said the circular issued by Additional

Chief Secretary (GAD) Navin Kumar Choudhary.

"There should be no occasion that MLAs or Members of Parliament are constrained to make such complaints. Non-compliance to these instructions will invite commensurate disciplinary action and will be an important input in evaluation of the officer concerned," it said.

The circular also shared a standard operating procedure (SOP) regarding offi-

cial dealings of administration and MPs and MLAs, prepared by the GAD in 2020.

It laid down that communications received from an MP or MLA need to be promptly attended.

A communication addressed to a minister or secretary, should be replied by themselves as far as possible. The information sought by an MP or MLA should be supplied, unless it is of such nature that it would be denied to him, said the SOP.

Further, it said that each communication received from an MP or MLA should be acknowledged within 15 days, followed by a reply within the next 15 days.

Now, an online portal to enforce pre-natal diagnostic test in the city

TIKAM SHARMA
NEW DELHI

Delhi's Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Dr. Pankaj Kumar Singh, launched the PC & PNDDT Online Portal on March 21, 2025, during a workshop at the Delhi Secretariat focused on the effective implementation of the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Tech-

niques (PC & PNDDT) Act. The event was attended by health department officials, doctors, PC & PNDDT nodal officers, and NGO representatives, who expressed their commitment to enforcing the Act and raising public awareness.

The newly launched portal aims to digitize the enforcement of the Act, replacing manual procedures with a

digital system to enhance transparency, accountability, and efficiency. Key services include automated Form F submission for ultrasound clinics, an online complaint registration system, and real-time compliance tracking for registered diagnostic centers. The portal will improve government oversight and regulatory enforcement.



Dr. Singh reaffirmed the government's commitment to gender equality and the protection of girl children. He emphasized that this initiative would help improve Delhi's sex ratio (currently at 922) and eliminate sex-selective practices. He also directed officials to take strict action on complaints received through the portal.

In 2024-25, the Directorate of Family Welfare conducted 627 inspections, resulting in 70 show-cause notices, 13 suspensions, 53 cancellations, and 22 ultrasound machines being sealed in Delhi. Legal proceedings and decoy operations have also been carried out to prevent unlawful sex determination activities.

To raise awareness, the Delhi government

has intensified campaigns under the 'Beti Utsav' initiative, including billboard advertisements, newspaper outreach, and community programs promoting the importance of the girl child. The government urges medical professionals, enforcement authorities, and the public to collaborate in ensuring the success of this initiative.

EXCISE POLICY: HC SAYS NOT POSSIBLE TO ADVANCE HEARING ON ED PLEA

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday said it was not possible to advance the hearing on a plea of the Enforcement Directorate in the alleged money laundering case related to the now scrapped Delhi excise policy.

Justice Ravinder Dubeja, who said there were several cases pending, said the accused persons, including AAP leaders Arvind Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia and Sanjay Singh, wished to respond to the plea and the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) petition.

The application for advancing the hearing was filed in a pending petition in which the ED challenged a trial court's last year order directing it to supply "unrelied documents" to the accused in the case.

Alternatively the ED sought for a direction to the trial court to hear and decide the applications filed by various parties in the case.

"Since the respondents want to file replies and taking into consideration the status of the court's board, it may not be possible to pre-poned the date of the matter," the court said.

The counsel for the ED and the accused said they would

WHAT COURT SAID

- The court noted that the accused, including Kejriwal, Sisodia, and Singh, wish to reply.
- The hearing can't be pre-poned as the accused need to file responses.
- The court cited several pending cases as the reason for not adjusting the date.
- ED and accused will request the trial court on April 3 to set a later date.
- The court allowed the ED to serve its plea electronically to save resources.



The application for advancing the hearing was filed in a pending petition in which the ED challenged a trial court's last year order directing it to supply "unrelied documents" to the accused in the case.

request the trial court on April 3 to fix the matter for a later date.

The high court had allowed the ED to electronically serve the accused its plea, challenging the trial court's order, to save public money.

It had sought the response of 40 accused persons, including the AAP leaders, on the ED's plea challenging the trial court's order, which in November 2024, directed the ED to supply the chargesheet and the digitised records of the remaining "unrelied

documents" (those which are not used by the prosecution to support their case) to the persons accused in the money laundering case.

Former Delhi chief minister Kejriwal, AAP leaders Sisodia and Singh and BRS leader K Kavitha are some of the accused in the case aside from several businesspersons.

The ED said the trial court directed it to supply unrelied upon documents to the accused at the stage of scrutiny of documents.

However, as per the Supreme Court's direction, only a list of unrelied upon documents were to be given at the stage and not the documents, the ED added.

According to the CBI and the ED, irregularities took place during the modification of the excise policy and the licence holders got undue favours.

The Delhi government implemented the policy on November 17, 2021, and scrapped it by the end of September 2022 amid allegations of corruption.

The money laundering case stems from a CBI case lodged after Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena recommended a probe into the alleged irregularities in the implementation of the excise policy.

Couple nabbed after series of snatchings in Shahdara

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A couple who took inspiration from film duo Bunty and Babli and took to snatching to fund their lavish lifestyle were nabbed after they were caught on camera fleeing with a stolen phone, police on Friday said. Aman, 24, and Sakshi, 23, operated mostly in east Delhi's Shahdara.

"Their dream of a lavish lifestyle came to an abrupt end when police cracked a case using CCTV footage and local sources," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara) Prashant Gautam said.

On Tuesday, Bharti Kapoor was standing on a roadside near East Azad Nagar waiting for some public transport, when a couple zipped past her on a motorcycle with the pillion rider snatching her phone.

Kapoor approached police, who analysed more than 60 CCTVs mounted along the possible escape route of the riders, and at length spotted them.

On Wednesday, acting on a tip-off, police apprehended Aman from Trilokpuri and Sakshi from Sangam Vihar.

"During interrogation, the two confessed that they were inspired by the Bollywood film Bunty Aur Babli and resorted to mobile snatching to fund their extravagant lifestyle," the DCP said.

Noida authority's waste disposal plan faces residents' opposition

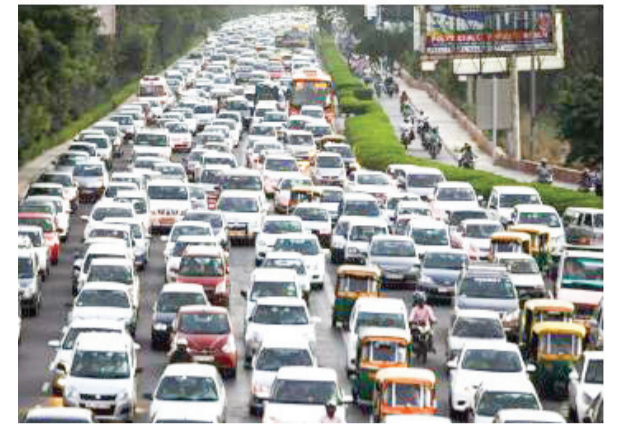
TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government is gearing up to enforce a ban on refuelling overage petrol and diesel vehicles in the city starting April 1. Over 80 per cent of filling stations across the city will be equipped with devices to identify deregistered vehicles. The automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras installed at petrol pumps will be capable of detecting both overaged vehicles and those lacking a valid Pollution Under Control (PUC) certificate, officials said.

Delhi has around 500 fuel pump stations, and the new systems are being implemented at these locations. When a vehicle that does not comply with the regulations comes in for refuelling, the system will flag it, prompting attendants to refuse refueling, officials added.

Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa explained that enforcement will be strengthened through the use of modern technology, including emission-monitoring devices at petrol pumps. Vehicles without a valid PUC certificate will be flagged, and appropriate action will be taken.

"The devices are being installed at fuel pump stations



Delhi has around 500 fuel pump stations, and the new systems are being implemented at these locations. When a vehicle that does not comply with the regulations comes in for refuelling, the system will flag it, prompting attendants to refuse refueling, officials added.

throughout the city to identify vehicles not fulfilling norms. These new gadgets are already installed at over 80 per cent of the petrol pumps," he told reporters.

The Transport Department of the Delhi government deregistered over 59 lakh vehicles until September last year.

Diesel vehicles that have been on the road for 10 years after registration and petrol vehicles that have been on the road for 15 years are automatically deregistered from the Transport Department database, as per the directions of the National Green Tribunal.

Overaged vehicles, if found parked in public places or on the road, are seized by the Transport Department. The Delhi government has also introduced a policy offering incentives to owners of such vehicles for scrapping them, officials said.

In 2024, the government issued guidelines for handling end-of-life vehicles in public places. The guidelines state that impounded vehicles can only be released if the owner agrees to park them in private premises or gets them registered in another state after obtaining the necessary approvals.

Noida authority's waste disposal plan faces resident opposition

TIKAM SHARMA
NEW DELHI

Residents of multiple high-rise societies in Noida Sectors 150 and 151 have decided to stage a protest against the government's decision to build a dumping yard in Sector 150. The residents, predominantly salaried professionals including journalists, will gather at Bhagat Singh Park in Sector 150 on Saturday to peacefully protest against the government's proposal.

The residents argue that the construction of the dumping yard in an area surrounded by multiple residential societies would have severe adverse effects on the quality of life in both sectors. They also highlight concerns about the proximity of schools and play schools to the proposed site, fearing the negative impact on children's health and well-being.

Concerned about this, they have chosen to protest against the move of Noida authority.

Residents of Jaypee Aman located in Sector 151 who are at the forefront of this protest, told the Daily Guardian that the proposed site for the dumping yard is located near several high-rise residential societies, housing nearly one lakh people and setting up a



dumpsite in this area will not only pose serious health risks but will also be an eyesore and a source of significant health hazards.

The decision to take out the silent protest was decided by them after getting no clear assurance from the officials at the Noida authority.

According to them they had met Noida Authority CEO Lokesh M and Additional CEO Vandana Tripathi, requesting them to abandon the plan and relocate the dumpsite to another area. However, the residents claimed that they did not receive a favorable response from the officials. The residents said that they will be exploring other avenues including requesting the Prime Minister for his intervention if the authority continues ahead with their proposal to construct the dumpyard.

Recently, a massive fire at

a dumpsite at sector 32A of Noida had occurred. Following the incident, the Noida Authority ordered its relocation — to a one-acre vacant plot in Sector 117 which was strongly resisted by the locals. Subsequently the authority decided to shift the same to Sector 150.

It is pertinent to mention that the Noida Authority had already issued a tender to select an agency for disposal of horticulture waste at sector 150.

District Magistrate (DM) of Gautam Buddha Nagar Manish Verma, told the Daily Guardian that he is actively monitoring the situation and has been in discussions with the Noida Authority to find a resolution to the issue raised by the residents including of Jaypee Aman and assured that efforts would be made to identify an alternative location.

"I will also inform officials at the Noida authority about the issue that has been brought to his attention", he said.

Gautam Buddha Nagar Member of Parliament Mahesh Sharma told the Daily Guardian that he is aware of the concerns raised by the residents of Sectors 150 and 151, who had approached him seeking his intervention. "I have conveyed their grievances to the Noida Authority CEO but have not yet received a response," he said while expressing optimism that the authority would soon arrive at a decision that will not negatively impact the residents.

Noida CEO Lokesh was not available for comment and the person who answered his call requested the newspaper to speak to another official in the authority.

Anand Mohan Singh, Director of Horticulture at the Noida Authority, while speaking to this newspaper, stated that the authority was not going to construct a dumping yard at the site but it was used for disposal of horticulture waste.

He emphasized that there has been a misunderstanding among the residents, who have mistaken the green waste disposal area for a full-fledged dumping yard.

PMLA case: HC grants bail to Unitech founder

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday granted bail to former Unitech Group promoter Ramesh Chandra in a money laundering case. He is 86 years old and suffering from multiple ailments.

Ramesh Chandra, arrested in the present case on 04.10.2021, was released on interim bail on 08.08.2022 on medical grounds.

Justice Jasmeet Singh granted bail to Ramesh Chandra on furnishing a personal bond of Rs One lakh and a surety bond of like amount. The High Court has imposed certain conditions on Chandra.

While granting bail, Justice



Jasmeet Singh said, "I am of the view that the petitioner falls within the ambit of 'infirm' under the proviso to section 45(1) of PMLA, and thus, he is not required to meet the twin test of section 45(1) of PMLA."

The court also considered the delay aspect of the case and

said that the present case was registered in 2018, the investigation related to the petitioner is complete, but the trial has yet to begin.

"There are 17 accused persons, 66 companies, 121 witnesses and 77,812 pages of documents plus enormous digital data which needs to be analysed in the present case. Thus, there is no likelihood of the trial to be concluded in the near future," Justice Singh observed.

The High Court also noted that the petitioner has been released on interim bail since 08.08.2022 on medical grounds, and there are no allegations of his misuse of liberty while on bail.

The court also said that as re-

gards the flight risk, adequate restrictions can be imposed upon the petitioner.

It was stated that the petitioner is 86 years old and is suffering from multiple ailments. His medical reports indicate a deteriorating condition, including a high risk of a lacunar stroke, repeated dizziness and a history of severe post-COVID-19 complications.

It is alleged that between 2006 to 2022, 62 FIRs were registered by Delhi Police and CBI, against promoters of Unitech Group Ramesh Chandra, Ajay Chandra and Sanjay Chandra and their associates under Sections 34, 201, 406, 409, 120B and 420 of IPC and under Sections 7, 7(A), 8, 9, 10, 12 and 13 of PCA.

Delhi Police arrests four in multi-crore cyber fraud scheme

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southwest) Surendra Choudhary said, "The accused would pose as customer care representatives and contact unsuspecting victims, convincing them to install a malware packaged as an Android Package Kit (APK) file under the guise of resolving issues. Once installed, the file granted remote access to the victim's device, allowing the fraudsters to steal sensitive financial details, including banking



credentials, PAN (permanent account number) card details, and CVV (card verification value) codes. Using this method, they siphoned off lakhs from the victims' bank accounts."

The investigation was launched after a scientist, who retired from the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), reported that Rs 40 lakh was siphoned off

by fraudsters from his savings and fixed deposits.

DCP Choudhary said, "The victim had searched online for customer support number and called a fraudulent contact. He was then sent a malware via social media, which he installed, unwittingly granting access to his bank account. Over seven days, the accused systematically transferred funds from his account. Following his complaint, an FIR was registered, and a team of cyber police officers initiated a thorough probe," he said.

PURPLE FEST



An illuminated view of Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi. ANI

Police busts racket aiding illegal entry, settlement of Bangladeshis

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has busted a syndicate involved in facilitating the illegal entry and settlement of Bangladeshi nationals in the national capital, an official said on Friday. Three Bangladeshi immigrants along with their Indian facilitator have

been arrested, exposing an organised network that exploited forged documents to evade detection, the Delhi Police said in a statement.

The arrested people include the kingpin, Md Iqbal Hossain, who operated as Farhan Khan in India. He was apprehended from the Nehru Place area, the statement said.

"Investigations revealed that he possessed both a Bangladeshi passport and an illegally acquired Indian passport. Despite already being married in Bangladesh, he fraudulently married an Indian woman from Madhya Pradesh by posing as an Indian citizen through a matrimonial website," Deputy Commissioner of

Police (DCP) (Crime) Aditya Gautam in the statement said.

Two other Bangladeshi nationals identified as Razeeb Miyan and Md Momin Badsha were also arrested. All three had obtained Indian identity documents, including Aadhaar, voter ID and PAN cards under false names, the statement said.

GOVT UNVEILS STRATEGIC REFORMS FOR SELF-RELIANCE IN HYDROCARBON PRODUCTION

One of the key initiatives driving this effort is the Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP).

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Union Government has announced a series of strategic policy reforms aimed at increasing domestic hydrocarbon production and reducing India's reliance on imports, according to the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

One of the key initiatives driving this effort is the Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP), which has played a crucial role in expanding the country's hydrocarbon exploration footprint.

Since its inception, the OALP has seen significant progress through multiple bidding rounds. Under bid rounds I to VIII, a total of 2,42,056 square kilometres of exploration acreage has been awarded across 144 blocks.

This initiative has led to the discovery of 13 hydrocarbon reserves, including seven oil fields and six gas

A QUICK VIEW

- The government announced strategic reforms to increase domestic hydrocarbon production and cut import reliance.
- Since inception, OALP awarded 2,42,056 sq km across 144 blocks, discovering 13 hydrocarbon reserves.
- \$3.36 billion committed; 31,918 LKM of 2D, 37,122 SKM of 3D seismic surveys done.
- Largest auction with 25 blocks across 13 basins; bid submission closes July 31, 2025.



fields, reinforcing India's energy security and boosting domestic production.

The financial commitment under these awarded blocks stands at \$3.36 billion, with an extensive work programme in place. The planned activities include 51,725 LKM of 2D seismic surveys, 66,843 SKM of 3D seismic surveys, and 499 exploratory wells.

Actual work undertaken so far includes 31,918 LKM

of 2D seismic surveys, 37,122 SKM of 3D seismic surveys, and 87 exploratory wells, with 11 wells currently under development. These efforts demonstrate the government's commitment to strengthening India's energy landscape.

To further accelerate domestic exploration and attract investment, the government has launched OALP Bid Round X, marking India's largest-ever oil

and gas block auction.

This round offers 25 blocks across 13 sedimentary basins, covering a total area of 1.92 lakh square kilometres, with 91 per cent of the acreage located in offshore regions.

Key highlights of OALP Round X include 19 offshore blocks, of which 13 are in deepwater (DW) and ultra-deepwater (Ultra-DW) areas.

Additionally, 11 blocks are

The financial commitment under these awarded blocks stands at \$3.36 billion, with an extensive work programme in place.

in Category II basins, while five blocks are in Category III basins. The government is encouraging both domestic and international investors to participate in this bidding process, aiming to unlock the full potential of India's hydrocarbon reserves.

The bid submission closing date for OALP Round X has been set for July 31, 2025 (1200 hrs IST). With this initiative, the government continues to push for energy self-sufficiency, reducing import dependency while fostering economic growth and investment in the hydrocarbon sector.

Renewable energy hiring to surge around 18% in 2025

TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

As India accelerates its transition towards achieving renewable energy targets of 500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030, the sector is undergoing a significant workforce transformation, according to Teamlease report.

The rapid expansion of renewable energy projects is expected to increase the direct and indirect jobs in the industry. It is also leading to transformation in workforce dynamics, skills demand, and retention trends.

Recognizing these shifts, TeamLease Services, a leading staffing conglomerate revolutionizing employment, employability, and ease of doing business, has an in-depth analysis of key employment trends in the sector from a contractual workforce perspective.

It highlights a strong 23.7 per cent year-on-year growth in employment in FY24, a significant leap from 8.5 per cent in FY23 and 10.4 per cent in FY22.

Although projections indicate a slight moderation to



18.9 per cent in FY25, the sector remains a vital source of job creation, supporting the country's clean energy ambitions.

The study showcases that contractual workforce demographics in the renewable energy industry are largely youth-driven, with 26.9 per cent of employees in the 26-30 age bracket and 27.9 per cent in the 31-35 segment. The sector also maintains a significant presence of experienced professionals, with 16 per cent in the 35-40 years group and 18.2 per cent in the 40+ category. This balance between young talent and seasoned professionals reflects the industry's dual focus on innovation and expertise.

These policies foster investment in clean energy infrastructure and significantly contribute to workforce expansion and skill development.

As the sector expands, regional growth trends have also emerged. Rajasthan, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu are leading solar energy production in India and houses the majority of the country's solar power plants. Moreover, government initiatives such as the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, National Green Hydrogen Mission, PM KUSUM, and the Solar PV Module PLI Scheme have been instrumental in driving the growth of the renewable energy sector.

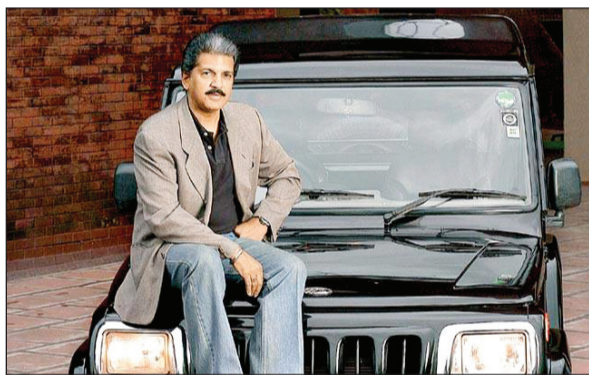
These policies foster investment in clean energy infrastructure and significantly contribute to workforce expansion and skill development.

Mahindra & Mahindra to hike commercial car prices by 3%

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M), India's leading SUV manufacturer, announced on Friday that it will raise prices of its SUVs and commercial vehicles by up to 3% starting in April 2025. This decision aligns M&M with other major automakers in India, such as Maruti Suzuki, Tata Motors, and Hyundai Motor India, who have also declared price hikes ranging between 2% and 4% effective next month.

The primary reasons cited for these increases include rising input costs due to inflation, elevated commodity prices, higher import duties on raw materials, and ongoing supply chain disruptions. M&M stated that while efforts have been made to absorb these addi-



tional expenses, a portion must be passed on to customers.

The extent of M&M's price adjustments will vary across different models in their SUV and commercial vehicle lineup. This move underscores a broader industry trend where manufacturers are compelled to revise pricing strategies to maintain profitability amid escalating operational costs.

Consumers planning to purchase vehicles from

these manufacturers may consider advancing their buying decisions to avoid the impending price hikes. Conversely, potential buyers might explore options from brands that have yet to announce similar increases.

The automotive industry continues to navigate challenges posed by fluctuating material costs and supply chain issues, leading to strategic pricing decisions that impact both manufacturers and consumers.

Stock markets end on strong note, investors' interest in large-cap stocks

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

The Indian stock markets on the last trading session of this week ended on a strong note, as investors found large-cap stocks appealing due to their attractive valuations.

At the end of the trading session, the Nifty 50 of the National Stock Exchange (NSE) stood at 23,350.40, up about 159 points or 0.69 per cent. The Sensex at BSE was up 557.45 points or 0.73 per cent at 76,905.51.

According to the Bajaj Broking Research team, Investors have found large-cap stocks appealing due to their attractive valuations.

Nifty despite global volatility witnessed a strong rebound in the last 2-3 weeks and is up by 1400 points or

6.5 per cent from the recent March low of 21964. Concerns over trade tensions and fluctuating US policies have kept the Global equity

attributed to the fact that there was short covering after last four months sharp decline.

Commenting on the market's strength, Rohan Shah, Technical Analyst, Asit C Mehra Investment Intermediates Ltd (ACMI-IL) said, "A decisive breakout above this

market highly volatile but the Indian Market has been resilient and has witnessed a strong rebound.

The Bajaj Broking Research team added that the sharp pullback can be



zone could fuel further upside towards 23,800-24,200. Conversely, failure to surpass this hurdle may trigger profit-taking, dragging the index lower towards 22,800-22,500."

Rupee logs best weekly gain in over two years

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Indian rupee closed at 86 against the US dollar on Friday, marking its highest weekly gain in over two years. This surge is primarily attributed to substantial foreign institutional investments and a robust rally in domestic equities. Notably, foreign institutional investors injected Rs 3,239 crore into Indian equities

on Thursday alone, significantly bolstering the rupee's strength. Over the past six sessions, the rupee has appreciated by 123 paise, reflecting strong market performance. However, analysts caution that rising crude oil prices could limit further gains, with projections suggesting the rupee will trade between 85.80 and 86.25 in the near term. Additionally, the Reserve Bank of India's upcoming \$10 billion forex

swap auction, coupled with falling hedging costs, is expected to enhance banking system liquidity and assist corporates in managing dollar exposure. On the equity front, the Sensex gained 557 points to settle at 76,905, while the Nifty rose 160 points to 23,350. Globally, the US dollar index increased by 0.19% to 104.04 points, whereas Brent crude oil prices dipped by 0.29% to \$71.79 per barrel.

Lamborghini, Mercedes-Maybach eye expansion in India

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Lamborghini and Mercedes-Maybach are planning to expand their presence in India as a growing number of young, wealthy Indians drive demand for super luxury cars, pushing sales to record highs.

Italian supercar manufacturer Lamborghini, following a record-breaking sales year, is considering opening a fourth showroom in India. Meanwhile, Mercedes-Maybach views India as a potential top-five market by sales, according to company executives.

"India, for us, is an asset ... there is a huge potential for

the future. There is the idea of having maybe a fourth dealership but this is still something in the early stages," Stephan Winkelmann, Lamborghini's CEO, said during a virtual roundtable with reporters.

The company's confidence stems from "a change in generation" in India, with "momentum from younger customers," Winkelmann said. He noted that the average age of a Lamborghini buyer in India is under 40 years, making it the youngest market after China.

"You have a lot of startups in India which are very successful. You have very young, high net worth individuals

which are stepping into this type of car. So this is positive for us," Winkelmann added.

India's rapid economic growth has led to a significant shift in the attitude of younger generations toward luxury spending. Unlike previous generations, who were more focused on saving, younger Indians are more open to luxury purchases.

Executives at successful startups benefiting from record-breaking public listings and younger heirs of family businesses spending more freely are fueling increased demand for luxury products — including cars, watches, designer bags, and even real estate. Despite this

growth, luxury car sales in India still represent just over 1% of the country's annual 4 million vehicle market, with super luxury cars accounting for an even smaller share.

Lamborghini recorded its best-ever year in India in 2024, selling 113 cars — a 10% increase from 2023. Winkelmann anticipates further growth this year, supported by a strong order book extending 18 months into the future.

The Urus SUV, with a starting price close to \$500,000 before taxes, accounted for half of Lamborghini's sales in India. The remaining sales came from the Huracan and Revuelto sports cars.

Mercedes-Maybach also saw a significant rise in demand, achieving 145% growth in India in 2024 with 500 cars sold. Its super luxury models, which are priced at more than \$325,000, are competing in a market where the average car costs around \$15,000.

Daniel Lescow, head of Mercedes-Maybach, said India is already one of the brand's top 10 markets and has the potential to climb into the top five, depending on the overall growth of the luxury market.

"I'm convinced there's so much more potential ... so many opportunities here," Lescow told Reuters.

Adani fights environmental allegations over key projects

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Indian billionaire Gautam Adani's conglomerate is currently facing legal challenges over two major projects: a proposed multibillion-dollar power plant and a luxury housing development. The group is accused of violating environmental laws, adding to its ongoing legal battles.

Adani projects have frequently faced environmental opposition both in India and abroad. In Australia, the company endured a seven-year activist campaign against its Carmichael coal

mine. In 2022, construction at its south Indian seaport faced delays following protests linked to coastal erosion.

Now, the Adani Group is contesting claims in India's National Green Tribunal, where it stands accused of initiating work on a \$2 billion power plant without securing prior environmental clearance. The case is scheduled for a hearing this Friday.

According to court documents, an activist's lawsuit claims the proposed plant site is located in a forested area in Uttar Pradesh's

Mirzapur district. The suit demands the project's suspension, arguing it poses severe environmental risks and threatens local wildlife.

In response, Adani denied in a March 6 filing that any of its actions had harmed the environment. "The project land is not a forest land," the company stated.

Reetesh Kumar Tewari, an official from the state pollution control board, informed Reuters that Adani ceased construction at the site after receiving a warning notice in November.

The Adani Group did not respond to email inquiries



seeking comment. Activist Debadiyot Sinha, who filed the lawsuit, declined to comment due to ongoing legal proceedings.

Environmental cases in India are known to extend for years, frequently becom-

ing significant obstacles for large corporations.

LEGAL PRESSURE AND INTERNATIONAL SCRUTINY

This latest dispute arises alongside another legal development involving Gautam Adani himself. The Indian government has recently requested a local court to serve a U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission summons to Adani regarding an alleged \$265 million bribery scheme. Adani has denied these allegations, calling them "baseless."

development is prohibited.

In court filings, India's environment ministry and the Adani Group have argued that the site is no longer classified as protected following a 2019 rule change.

The high court has characterized the Bandra case as a "vital issue relating to environmental protection," with the next hearing set for March 27.

In addition, Adani's ambitious Dharavi slum redevelopment project is facing opposition. The company, now operating as Navbharat Mega Developers, secured the project through a

\$619 million redevelopment bid two years ago. Dharavi, which spans three-quarters the size of New York's Central Park and houses around one million people, is known for its dense population and challenging living conditions.

In September, Adani's company was granted 256 acres (104 hectares) of salt-pan land to construct rental housing for Dharavi residents. However, activist lawyer Sagar Devre has filed a public interest litigation in the Mumbai high court against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government.

LANDMARK JOHANNESBURG RULING CALLS FOR EQUAL PARENTAL LEAVE: A LESSON FOR INDIA?

OPINION

PARTH GAUTAM &
PRAGATI SOLANKI



Johannesburg, March 17, 2025 — In a landmark decision, the Johannesburg High Court has ruled in favour of equal parental leave for all parents, regardless of gender or how they become parents. The case, *Van Wyk and Others v. Department of Labour*, was brought by a group of parents who challenged the disparity in parental leave policies, arguing that non-biological parents were unfairly granted fewer benefits than biological mothers.

A Case of Discrimination in Parental Leave

Under South African law, biological mothers were entitled to longer maternity leave compared to adoptive and surrogate parents. The petitioners, which included fathers,

adoptive mothers, and commissioning mothers (who have children via surrogacy), contended that this differentiation was unreasonable. They argued that an infant requires equal care, attention, and supervision in its early stages of life, regardless of whether the parents are biological or not. Furthermore, they highlighted that physiological recovery should not be the sole factor determining leave policies, as caregiving responsibilities remain the same.

Another crucial point in the case revolved around the role of fathers. The existing framework assumed that fathers played a secondary or "ancillary" role in parenting, thus excluding them from substantial parental leave

benefits. The court found this discriminatory, stating that such policies imposed an unfair burden on mothers while failing to recognize the equal responsibility of fathers in child-rearing.

Court's Progressive Judgment

In a ruling that could set a precedent for parental leave policies worldwide, the Johannesburg High Court held that leave entitlements should not be based purely on biology but rather on the best interests of the child and an equitable division of responsibilities between parents. The court suggested that parents should have the option to split their leave between them, allowing greater flexibility for families to decide how to care for their child.

This judgment was hailed as a progressive step toward gender equality, recognizing that fathers are not merely "supporting parents" but active and essential caregivers. The ruling underscores that parental leave policies must adapt to modern family structures and ensure that both parents have the opportunity to bond with and care for their children.

ARE WE REINFORCING GENDER STEREOTYPES?

The decision in Johannesburg brings into focus the parental leave policies in India, which remain deep-



The decision in Johannesburg brings into focus the parental leave policies in India, which remain deeply unequal. The Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017 grants biological mothers up to 26 weeks of paid leave. However, adoptive and commissioning mothers are only entitled to 12 weeks, highlighting a similar disparity to that which the South African court has now ruled against.

ly unequal. The Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017 grants biological mothers up to 26 weeks of paid leave. However, adoptive and commissioning mothers are only entitled to 12 weeks, highlighting a similar disparity to that which the South African court has now ruled against.

More concerning is the lack of substantial paternity leave provisions. Fathers employed in the private sector often receive no paid parental leave, while those in government service are granted only 15 days of paternity leave. This stark imbalance reinforces the outdated notion that childcare is primarily

a mother's responsibility, reducing the father's role to a secondary one.

The absence of comprehensive paternity leave options creates challenges for families, particularly in dual-income households. By not providing fathers with equal parental leave, Indian policies are inadvertently restrict-

ing their ability to actively participate in childcare. The burden falls disproportionately on mothers, affecting their careers and overall well-being.

NEED FOR REFORM: RETHINKING PARENTAL LEAVE

The Johannesburg ruling challenges societies worldwide to rethink their approach to parental leave. In India, a revision of existing laws is crucial to promote true gender equality in parenting. Equal parental leave would ensure that fathers have the opportunity to participate in the early stages of child-rearing, thereby challenging and dismantling rigid gender

roles.

Providing equitable leave also benefits children by allowing both parents to share the responsibilities of care and nurture. Studies have shown that increased father involvement in childcare leads to better emotional and cognitive development in children. Moreover, fair parental leave policies help in fostering a balanced work-life environment for both parents.

A STEP TOWARDS GENDER-NEUTRAL PARENTING

As India moves forward in its journey towards gender equality, addressing the gaps in parental leave policies must become a priority. By recognizing fathers as equal caregivers, we take an essential step towards dismantling the outdated structures that have historically placed childcare responsibilities solely on mothers.

The Johannesburg court's decision is a reminder that equality in parenting is not just a progressive ideal, it is a necessity. India must take cues from this ruling and implement policies that promote shared parental responsibilities, ensuring a fairer and more inclusive society for future generations.

Parth Gautam is an Advocate & Pragati Solanki is Assistant professor, HLM Group of Institutions.

The myth of freedom and the general will

Freedom which challenges the General Will and the Harmony of the Universe is not acceptable to gods.

OPINION

DR. JERNAIL S. ANAND



Freedom, the sweetest sounding word in the dictionary, stands for man's free will while undertaking an action. But, there is a great question mark on the idea of free will. Are we really free? Can we exercise our free will? We often say that for man sky is the limit. It means he is free under the sky to do what he wants. Is it really so? What I am discussing today goes beyond the idea of political freedom. I am talking of freedom in existential as well as extra-terrestrial terms.

ARE WE REALLY FREE?

In this world where constitutions grant freedom to their citizens, can we say we have freedom to act? A

woman who gets pocket money, has freedom to use it the way she likes. These are small little freedoms which give us a feeling of being free to choose. But there are larger questions also which are involved in the perception of freedom. Every person wants to be rich. He works hard for it. Sometimes he commits frauds also. Can he claim freedom to do what he likes? What restricts us from doing a hundred things although apparently there is nobody to challenge us if we do?

Again the question is: why are the poor, poor? The world gives them freedom to do what they want. But, still they remain poor. What stops them? And how much freedom they possess to undo their limiting conditions? Then, what restricts us from being happy? It does not need money. It only needs a special mind set. Still, happiness eludes us. Why? Are we not free to be happy? Can our money bring us the joys denied to us by gods? Can we coerce the cosmic phenomenon as we do with social structures? Who is controlling our free-

dom? Who is controlling our happiness?

AN ACTION IS A TRAP

What type of a freedom we have? We are free to act most of the times, yet we are not absolutely free. Our actions trap us. If we do a wrongful action, its fall-out traps us and we lose all possibilities of joy. So far as freedom is concerned, I feel it is only a chocolate for human beings. Do you have freedom to decide when you will be born in this world? Can you choose your parents? Can you decide the time of your birth? How much will you can use in the selection of your life partner? And then, what will you beget, a son or a daughter? What will be the color of her skin? Can you decide anything? Can you have freedom to bring up your children as you wish? And finally, do you have freedom to live beyond the moment of your death?

We are helpless. We have no free will. We have no freedom. The freedom we talk of is an illusion. We are strapped by invisible chains. Our area of freedom is determined by the creative process which also possesses coercive powers. Each person has to exist and work in a predetermined environment, and perform certain jobs. These are determined partly by his own past, and partly by his responses to the situations that encounter him.



It is surprising that the world is governed by a General Will. Our individual will is free only so long as it serves the ends of that General Will. If we contravene it, there is a crash. There is so much turmoil in the world simply because people think they are free to do anything they want. They are unaware of the fact that gods take note of it, and act instantly and men come to grief for their violations. Gods do not interfere when they find men are doing their jobs with their good intentions. But once they try to be over smart, or over confident, they lose their balance and prove detrimental to the harmony of the universe and invite divine intervention.

Man is not at all a free agent. At least in this world, he is closely controlled and his progress is watched till end. Only those people are happy who are maintaining harmony with nature. Those who try to break the balance in anyway, come to

grief. There is no freedom from this divine law. You are served the dishes you have prepared for yourself. And the surprise of surprises is you are required to act as a matter of duty, and then, what will happen is again controlled by gods. In other words, the fall out of your

actions is not in your hands.

INVISIBLE PATTERN

Whatever we do, has an invisible pattern which we most of the times fail to discover. Every object, and every action, that happens, has behind it a pattern, and

beyond it too. In this way, no action is undertaken with your free will. Moreover, gods start intervening in whatever we are doing. We can decide on doing certain things in the morning, but by the evening, we find things were not done as planned. This is the in-

tervention of gods. They deny us certain joys. Why? This is the subject of another long talk.

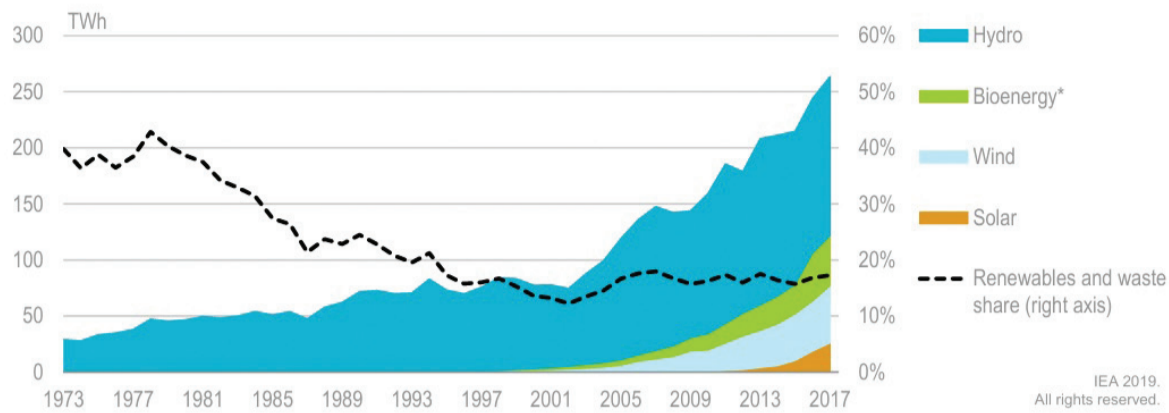
THE GENERAL WILL

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Dr Jernail Singh Anand, author of 180 books has won the Seneca Award, Charter of Morava, Franz Kafka and Maxim Gorky Awards. His name adorns the Poets' Rock in Serbia.

India's coal production hit 1 billion tonnes in FY 2023-24, while renewable capacity reached 217.62 GW by January 2025, including over 100 GW of solar, highlighting the challenge of balancing coal reliance with renewable growth.

Renewable energy and waste in electricity generation, 1990-2017



Hydropower is the largest source of renewable electricity, but the greatest growth in recent years has come from wind, solar PV and bioenergy.

*Includes primary solid biofuels, liquid biofuels, biogases and renewable municipal waste.
Notes: Bioenergy data are estimated by the IEA.
Source: IEA (2019a), World Energy Balances 2019, www.iea.org/statistics/.

INDIA'S ENERGY CROSSROADS: BETWEEN COAL AND THE SUN

India, one of the world's fastest-growing economies, stands at a critical juncture: balancing its historical reliance on coal with the imperative to transition to renewable energy sources. This article delves into the intricacies of India's energy landscape, examining the current state of coal dependency, the strides made in renewable energy, and the socio-economic implications of this transition.

PREDOMINANCE OF COAL IN INDIA'S ENERGY SECTOR

Coal has been the cornerstone of India's energy infrastructure for decades. In the fiscal year 2023-24, India achieved a record coal production of 997.83 million tonnes (MT), marking an 11.71% increase from the previous year. This surge underscores coal's critical role in meeting the nation's burgeoning energy demands.

Key Drivers of Coal Dependency:

- **Economic Growth:** India's rapid industrialization and urbanization have led to increased energy consumption, with coal-fired power plants supplying over 70% of the country's electricity.
- **Industrial Applications:** Beyond electricity generation, coal is vital for industries such as steel and cement, which are foundational to infrastructure development.
- **Employment:** The coal sector provides direct employment to approximately 478,000 individuals, highlighting its socio-economic significance.

Despite these factors, India's coal consumption, which stood at 1.09 billion metric tons in the fiscal year 2023, outpaced domestic production, leading to imports of about 240 million metric tons to bridge the gap.

ADVANCEMENTS IN RENEWABLE ENERGY

Recognizing the environmental and economic imperatives, India has embarked on an ambitious journey to augment its renewable energy capacity.

- **Capacity Expansion:** As of January 20, 2025, India's total non-fossil fuel-based energy capacity reached 217.62 GW.
- **Solar Energy:** The year 2024 saw a record-breaking 24.5 GW of solar capacity added, reflecting a more than twofold increase in solar installations compared to 2023.
- **Wind Energy:** Wind power development has been concentrated in specific regions, necessitating grid enhancements to manage variability and integration.

- **Government Initiatives:** Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme: Launched in 2020 with a



TDG EXPLAINER

\$23 billion allocation to boost domestic manufacturing in sectors including renewable energy. However, the scheme faced challenges in meeting targets, leading to its discontinuation.

- **Green Hydrogen Mission:** Aiming to produce 5 million tonnes of green hydrogen annually by 2030, this initiative seeks to decarbonize industries like steel and fertilizers.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF THE ENERGY TRANSITION

The shift from coal to renewable energy carries profound socio-economic ramifications, particularly for communities dependent on the coal economy.

- **Employment and Livelihoods:** Job Displacement: The coal sector's contraction

could affect millions, including those in ancillary industries such as transportation and equipment manufacturing.

- **Skill Transition:** Workers accustomed to coal mining may face challenges transitioning to jobs in the renewable sector, necessitating comprehensive retraining programs.

- **Regional Economic Impact:** Coal-Dependent States: Regions like Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Odisha, where coal mining is a significant economic activity, may experience economic downturns if alternative livelihoods are not developed.

Health and Environmental Considerations:

- **Health Benefits:** Reducing coal usage can lead to lower air pollution levels, decreasing respiratory and cardiovascular diseases

| Rank | Company | Net profit (INR crore) | Net profit (USD billion) | Share of all PSU profits (%) |
|------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | IOCL | 21,346 | 3.01 | 13.37 |
| 2 | ONGC | 19,945 | 2.81 | 12.49 |
| 3 | NTPC | 10,343 | 1.46 | 6.48 |
| 4 | CIL | 9,293 | 1.31 | 5.82 |
| 5 | Powergrid | 8,239 | 1.16 | 5.16 |
| 6 | Bharat Petroleum Corporation | 7,919 | 1.11 | 4.96 |
| 7 | Hindustan Petroleum Corporation | 6,357 | 0.89 | 3.98 |
| 8 | Power Finance Corporation | 5,855 | 0.82 | 3.67 |
| 9 | Maharati Coalfields | 4,761 | 0.67 | 2.98 |
| 10 | Rural Electrification Corporation | 4,647 | 0.65 | 2.91 |
| | Other PSUs | 60,934 | 8.58 | 38.17 |

Note: A crore is 10 million.
Source: DPE (2018), Public Enterprises Survey 2017-18. <https://dpe.gov.in/public-enterprises-survey-2017-18>.

| Names of the companies | Net profit margin (%) | Return on assets (%) | Long-term debt/equity ratio |
|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Public sector | | | |
| NTPC | 12.14 | 3.98 | 1.07 |
| NPCIL | 28.86 | 4.93 | 0.92 |
| NHPC | 5.16 | 32.74 | 0.59 |
| Private sector | | | |
| Adani Power | -0.28 | -0.12 | 0.24 |
| Tata Power | -37.21 | -8.63 | 0.56 |

Source: DPE (2018), Public Enterprises Survey 2017-18. <https://dpe.gov.in/public-enterprises-survey-2017-18>.

among the population.

- **Environmental Restoration:** Phasing out coal offers opportunities for land reclamation and ecosystem restoration in mining areas.

CHALLENGES IN ACCELERATING RENEWABLE ENERGY ADOPTION

While India's renewable energy ambitions are commendable, several challenges impede rapid adoption.

- **Financial Constraints:** DISCOMs' Financial Health: Distribution com-

panies (DISCOMs) in India have historically faced financial difficulties, affecting their ability to purchase power and invest in infrastructure.

- **Investment Requirements:** Achieving the net-zero target by 2070 necessitates substantial investments, estimated at US\$160 billion annually, underscoring the need for private sector participation.

- **Infrastructure and Grid Integration:** Transmission Infrastructure: The existing grid requires significant upgrades to handle the variability and decentralization associated with renewable energy sources.

- **Energy Storage:** The intermittent nature of solar and wind energy necessitates advancements in energy storage solutions to ensure a stable power supply.

- **Policy and Regulatory Framework:** Land Acquisition: Securing land for renewable projects has been contentious, with instances of local opposition delaying projects.

- **Regulatory Stability:** Consistent and transparent policies are crucial to attract long-term investments in the renewable sector.

- **Comprehensive Planning:** Germany's energy transition, known as Energiewende, emphasizes long-term planning, stake-

holder engagement, and robust policy frameworks. The phased approach with clearly defined targets has helped Germany manage the transition effectively.

- **Community Participation:** Encouraging community ownership of renewable energy projects has enhanced public acceptance and distributed economic benefits. Citizens have been able to invest in wind farms and solar parks, ensuring that economic returns are shared at the local level.

- **Grid Modernization:** Germany has focused heavily on modernizing its grid infrastructure to handle fluctuations in renewable energy production, ensuring stable and reliable supply.

- **China's Renewable Expansion:** Scale and Speed: China's rapid expansion of renewable energy showcases the benefits of large-scale investments and manufacturing capabilities. China is the largest producer of solar panels and wind turbines, contributing to lower global costs.

- **Supply Chain Development:** Building a domestic supply chain for renewable energy has created jobs and reduced dependency on foreign imports. China's dominance in battery manufacturing and rare earth minerals has strengthened its position in the global energy market.

- **Policy-Driven Growth:** Aggressive government policies, including feed-in tariffs, tax incentives, and low-cost financing, have driven renewable energy growth in China.

- **The United States' Clean Energy Push:** Innovation and Technology: The U.S. has focused on innovation and technological advancements to drive clean energy adoption. Breakthroughs in battery storage, smart grids, and carbon capture have enhanced efficiency and reliability.

- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaboration between government and private players has accelerated deployment of renewable projects and infrastructure development.

- **Tax Credits and Incentives:** Federal and state-level tax incentives for solar, wind, and electric vehicles have supported clean energy adoption.

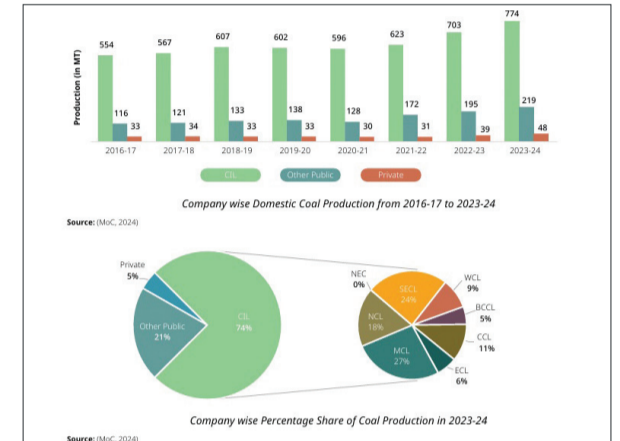


table requires a multifaceted approach.

- **Economic Diversification:** Promoting sectors such as manufacturing, services, and sustainable agriculture in coal-dependent regions can provide new employment opportunities.

- **Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs):** Supporting MSMEs can stimulate local economies and reduce dependence on a single industry.

- **Education and Skill Development:** Reskilling Programs: Implementing training programs to equip workers with skills relevant to the renewable energy sector and other emerging industries.

- **Educational Initiatives:** Enhancing educational infrastructure to prepare future generations for diverse employment opportunities.

- **Social Support Systems:** Social Security Nets: Establishing robust social security systems to support workers during the transition period.

- **Community Engagement:** Involving local communities in planning and decision-making processes to ensure that transition strategies align with their needs and aspirations.

- **Policy Implementation:** Effective execution of policies and addressing financial and regulatory challenges are crucial for the success of India's energy transition.

- **Global Perspectives on Energy Transitions:** India can draw valuable lessons from other countries that have embarked on similar energy transitions.

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able integration:

- **Hydropower and Grid Balancing:** Norway and Sweden have successfully integrated large amounts of renewable energy by using hydropower for grid balancing.
- **Cross-Border Cooperation:** The Nordic countries have established regional power markets, allowing surplus renewable energy to be shared across borders, increasing grid stability.
- **Carbon Pricing:** A strong carbon pricing mechanism has incentivized industries to reduce emissions and shift toward renewable sources.

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Compiled by Ruchira Talapatra

SUPREME COURT TO HIGH COURTS: PRIORITISE CRIMINAL APPEALS OF ELDERLY ACCUSED ON BAIL, ESPECIALLY WHEN CRIME IS OLD

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case State of Madhya Pradesh vs Shyamlal and others observed and has advised the High Courts to give adequate priority to criminal appeals, where the accused are on bail.

The court in the case observed that if the accused persons have remained on bail, especially in cases which relate to life sentences, and the appeal is ultimately dismissed after several years, then sending the accused back to prison might be difficult, particularly when they have attained old age.

The court noted that the High Court prioritise appeals where the accused are in prison and there needs to be balance struck so as to give adequate priority to the appeals where the accused are on bail, especially when the accused are aged and a long time has passed since the crime.

The court stated that the old age of the accused and the long lapse of time from the commission of the offence can always be a ground



which is being available to give some priority to the appeals against conviction of the accused on bail.

The bench comprising of Justice Abhay S Oka, Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah and Justice AG Masih was hearing the present matter.

In the present matter, the court was hearing an appeal filed by the State of Madhya Pradesh with regards to the

crime which occurred in 1989.

The court noted that the High Court, while converting the conviction under Section 302 into the second part of Section 304 of the Indian Penal Code, IPC, let off the accused with the sentence already underwent by them.

Therefore, the High Court took into consideration the fact that one of the accused

was aged above 80 years and the others were in their seventies.

The Supreme Court, while refusing to interfere with the judgement of High Court observed that the incident is almost 36 years old.

The Court observed that, 'In all the major High Courts in our country, there being a huge pendency of criminal appeals against conviction

and acquittal. Considering the pendency of very old criminal appeals, priority is usually given to the hearing of the appeals where the accused are in prison. The appeals against conviction where the accused are on bail take a backseat. However, a right balance has to be struck by taking up for hearing even some of the old criminal appeals against conviction where accused are on bail. The old age of the accused and the long lapse of time from the commission of the offence can always be a ground available to give some priority to the appeals against conviction of the accused on bail. If the appeals against conviction where the accused are on bail and especially where a life sentence has been imposed are heard after a decade or more from its filing, if the appeal is dismissed, the question arises of sending the accused back to jail after a long period of more than a decade.'

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case stated that it being desirable that certain categories of appeals against conviction where the accused are on bail should be given priority.

Justice Yashwant Verma issue: Delhi High Court CJ commences inquiry; Collegium yet to recommend transfer, Supreme Court clarifies

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The case was allegedly recovered from the Delhi High Court Judge Justice Yashwant Verma residence.

The Supreme Court has now come out with certain official clarifications.

The Supreme Court made the following clarifications:

1. The Delhi High Court Chief Justice commenced in-house enquiry procedure, which being prior to the meeting of the Supreme Court Collegium on March 20. The Delhi High Court Chief Justice, CJ will submit report to CJI and further action will be taken based on it.

2. Pending enquiry, Justice Verma is proposed to be transferred from Delhi High Court, as his presence at the Delhi HC might hamper the process. It was also clarified that the proposal to transfer is independent of the in-house enquiry procedure.

3. The Supreme Court Collegium has sought the responses of Justice Verma, CJs of Delhi High Court and Allahabad High Court on the proposal to transfer Justice Verma. After examining the responses, SC Collegium will take further steps to



pass a resolution.

The press release of the Supreme Court stated:

"There is misinformation and rumours being spread with regard to the incident at the residence of Mr. Justice Yashwant Verma.

The In-house enquiry procedure set up and prescribed by the Supreme Court in C. Ravichandran Iyer v. Justice A.M. Bhat-tacharjee (1995) 5 SCC 457 is available on the website of the Supreme Court of India. The In-house procedure was elucidated and explained in Additional District and Sessions Judge 'X' v. Registrar General, High Court of Madhya Pradesh (2015) 4 SCC 91.

On receiving the information, the Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court commenced the In-house enquiry procedure collect-

ing evidence and information. The Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court, who had commenced his enquiry prior to the Collegium meeting on March 20, 2025, will be submitting his report to the Chief Justice of India today i.e. on March 21, 2025. The report will be examined and processed for further and necessary action.

The proposal for transfer of Mr. Justice Yashwant Verma, who is the second senior most Judge in the Delhi High Court and a member of the Collegium, to his parent High Court i.e. the High Court of Judicature at Allahabad, where he will be ninth in seniority, is independent and separate from the In-house enquiry procedure. The proposal was examined by the Collegium comprising of the Chief Justice of India and four senior most Judges of the Supreme Court on 20th March 2025, and thereafter letters were written to the consultee Judges of the Supreme Court, the Chief Justices of the High Courts concerned and Mr. Justice Yashwant Verma. Responses received will be examined and, thereupon, the Collegium will pass a resolution.'

SUPREME COURT COLLEGIUM RECOMMENDS EXTENSION OF TERM FOR THREE ADDITIONAL JUDGES OF CHHATTISGARH HIGH COURT

The Supreme Court Collegium recommended to extend the term of three Additional Judges of the Chhattisgarh High Court for another year on March 19, 2025. The Judges whose terms have been proposed to be extended include -

1. Justice Sachin Singh Rajput
2. Justice Radhakishan Agrawal
3. Justice Sanjay Kumar Jaiswal

SC COLLEGIUM RECOMMENDS TRANSFER OF ORISSA HIGH COURT ACTING CHIEF JUSTICE ARINDAM SINHA TO ALLAHABAD HIGH COURT

The Supreme Court Collegium recommended to transfer Justice Arindam Sinha, the Acting Chief Justice of Orissa High Court as a Judge of the Allahabad High Court.

Justice Sinha originally belongs to the Calcutta High Court. Justice Sinha was appointed as an Additional Judge on October 30, 2013.

Justice Sinha was appointed as permanent Judge on March 14, 2016.

Later On October 08, 2021, Justice Sinha took oath and was transferred to Orissa High Court

Justice Sinha presently stands at serial no. 40 of the All-India High Court Judges seniority list (which also includes the Chief Justices).

If the Centre clears the transfer of Justice Sinha, he shall be the 4th senior-most Judge (excluding the Chief Justice) at the Allahabad High Court.

Justice Sinha is currently the 6th senior-most High Court Judge having Calcutta High Court as parent High Court.

On March 06, 2025, the Supreme Court Collegium had proposed the name of Justice Harish Tandon, the senior-most Judge of Calcutta High Court as the Chief Justice of the Orissa High Court.

Bombay High Court: Senior Citizen Act cannot be invoked by one senior citizen against another to recover possession of premises

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Bombay High Court in the case Vimal Dagadu Kate & Anr. vs. State of Maharashtra & Ors observed that a suit filed for recovery of possession of premises cannot be entertained by a Maintenance and Welfare of Senior Citizen Tribunal under the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007.

The court in the case noted that a senior citizen cannot file such a suit for recovery of possession against another senior citizen under the provisions of the Act, and such an adjudication can be undertaken only before a Civil Court.

The bench headed by Justice Sandeep V Marne in its order stated that, "This clearly appears to be proceedings for recovery of possession of first floor premises, which in my view cannot be filed by invoking the provisions of the Act. The proceedings appear to my mind in the

nature of suit for recovery of possession of first floor premises, which could not have been entertained and decided by the Tribunal. To make the case of Respondent No.2 worse, Petitioner No.1 is her sister and also a senior citizen. Jurisdiction of Maintenance Tribunal cannot be invoked by one senior citizen to recover possession of premises from another senior citizen.'

In the present case, the court was considering the petitioners' challenge to the Maintenance and Welfare of Senior Citizen Tribunal's order, which directed them to handover possession of a premises to respondent no. 2, a senior citizen.

On other hand, the respondent no.2 resides in the ground floor of the subject property and it has been claimed by her that her sister i.e., the petitioner no. 1, also being a senior citizen and another petitioner encroached upon the first floor of the premises.

The High Court in the case

noted that the proceedings initiated by respondent no.2 against petitioners was for recovery of possession of first floor premises.

The court observed that such kind of proceedings for recovery of possession cannot be initiated under the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act.

The court also noted that the petitioner no. 1, who being a sister of respondent no. 2, has no obligation to maintain her and thus the Tribunal's jurisdiction under the Act could not have been invoked.

The court in the case noted that a senior citizen cannot invoke the provisions of the Act against another senior citizen to recover possession of premises, it observed that the adjudication about the right of an occupier of premises could only be undertaken by a Civil Court.

Further, the court observed that the tribunal in a summary inquiry cannot adjudicate on complicated questions

about right of an occupier to possess first floor.

The court also remarked that the Tribunal in its order directed possession of premises was a "gross abuse of jurisdiction."

The present matter relates to gross abuse of jurisdiction of the Tribunal which is utilized for the purpose of securing possession of first floor premises from one senior citizen by another senior citizen.

The court in the case observed and has quashed the order of Tribunal, wherein it is clarified that the court had passed the order in the unique facts and circumstances of the case and shall not be treated as precedent in any other case.

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case observed and has granted liberty to Respondent No.2 to initiate such proceedings as would be maintainable for recovery of possession of first floor premises from the Petitioners.

JUSTICE BIREN ANIRUDDH VAISHNAV TO LEAD GUJARAT HIGH COURT ONCE AGAIN AS CHIEF JUSTICE SUNITA AGARWAL GOES ON LEAVE

The Central Government has notified the appointment of Justice Biren Aniruddh Vaishnav for performing the duties of the office of the Chief Justice of Gujarat High Court from March 20 to March 31, 2025.

The said appointment was made in view of the fact that Chief Justice Sunita Agarwal is going on leave during that time.

The Union Ministry Law and Justice in its notification issued dated March 19, 2025 states:

'In exercise of the power conferred by Article 223 of the Constitution of India, the President is pleased to appoint Shri Justice Biren Aniruddh Vaishnav, Judge of the Gujarat High Court, to perform the duties of office of the Chief Justice of that High Court during the period of absence of Chief Justice of Gujarat High Court, who is proceeding on leave from March 20, 2025 up to March 31, 2025.'

Justice Vaishnav has previously headed the high court when Chief Justice Agarwal went on leave between February 18 to March 2.

Last month the Gujarat High Court Advocates Association in its extra ordinary general meeting had resolved to seek the transfer of Chief Justice Agarwal.

ALLAHABAD HC: MAGISTRATE NOT BOUND TO NOTIFY INFORMANT WHEN NOT PROCEEDING AGAINST ACCUSED NAMED IN FIR BUT NOT CHARGESHEETED

The Allahabad High Court in the case clarified that a Magistrate is not required to issue a notice to informant in every case where he is taking cognizance only against the charge-sheeted persons, while leaving out the other accused, though named in the FIR, but not charge-sheeted.

Supreme Court: Magistrate cannot direct police to include accused in chargesheet; instead issue summons to person proposed to be added

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Gopal Pradhan vs. State of Chhattisgarh & Ors. observed that if the court intends to add a person as an accused, it cannot direct the police to include their name in the charge sheet. Instead of it, the court may sue a summons to the proposed accused if sufficient grounds exist, even if they are not named in the charge sheet.

The bench comprising of Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah and Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra was hearing the present matter.

In the present matter, the petitioner name was included in the police's charge sheet on the direction of the



Magistrate and was subsequently summoned as accused which was affirmed by the Chhattisgarh High Court.

The Petitioner argued before the Supreme Court that the High Court erred in affirming the Magistrate's direction to include the name of the petitioner in the charge sheet as there is no provision in the Code of Criminal Procedure, CrPC, wherein it permits the addition of the name of the

person as an accused in the charge sheet.

The court in the case agreed with the petitioner that the Judicial Magistrate should not have directed the police to include his name in the charge sheet. Instead, the magistrate should have taken cognizance of the offense and issued a summons directly.

The court observed that, "This court find some technical merit in the contention of the learned counsel appearing for the petitioner. Thus, the Court has the power to differ from the Final Form submitted by the Police and take cognizance of a crime and also against persons who may not have been sent up for trial by the Police after investigation. In such kind of circumstances, the Court is then required to issue

summons instead of directing for inclusion of the name of the person in the charge-sheet. Thus, ultimately, the result is the same, that is, the person concerned is arrayed as an accused upon taking cognizance after application of mind by the Court and accordingly, summons are issued. Thus, the order which in essence is of summons as an accused, cannot be faulted.'

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case observed and has found no reason to interfere with the order of High Court.

Accordingly, the court dismissed the petition. The counsel, Mr. Abhinav Shrivastava, AOR Mr. Bajrang Agrawal, Adv. Ms. Unnati Vaibhav, Adv. appeared for Petitioner(s).

Supreme Court criticises anticipatory bail condition that accused should be arrested after filing of chargesheet

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Ritesh Kumar Versus The State Of Bihar observed and has disapproved the anticipatory bail order of Patna High Court, wherein the court imposed a condition that upon filing of the charge sheet, the trial court shall take coercive steps against the applicant, which includes an arrest.

The bench comprising of Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah and Justice Prashant Kumar was hearing the present matter.

The bench in the case observed and has called for imposition of such a condition to be unwarranted and instead it has been stated that the High Court could have left it open for the trial court to take a call on taking coercive steps after



the submission of the charge-sheet.

The court in the case observed that, 'The learned counsel appearing for the petitioner is correct that there could not have been a specific direction that upon submission of charge-sheet, thus, the Court shall take all coercive steps to ensure that the petitioner is behind bar. The said Court could have just left

it open for the trial court to consider the matter upon the petitioner appearing and then taking a call without there being any mandamus issued to take him into custody.'

The bail condition being that:

'It is further made clear that if charge-sheet is being submitted against the petitioner connecting him with the offence in that event the present

anticipatory bail order shall lose its effect and the learned trial court shall take all coercive steps to ensure that petitioner is behind bar.'

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case directed the petitioner to appear before the trial court, within the period of three weeks which being from the date of the order, which shall decide the question of bail based on the materials before it, without being influenced by the High Court's order.

The counsel, Mr. Kumar Parimal, Adv. Mr. Smarhar Singh, AOR appeared for the Petitioner(s).

The counsel, Mr. Anshul Narayan, Addl. Standing Counsel, Adv. Mr. Prem Prakash, AOR Mr. Amit Pratap Shaunak, Adv. represented the Respondent(s).

FALLOUT FROM TRUMP'S EFFORT TO ABOLISH DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

This move of abolishment comes after years of criticism aimed at the federal agency and its role in overseeing education laws and funding.

Donald Trump, in an unexpected move, took decisive steps towards dismantling the U.S. Department of Education on March 20, 2025. This move comes after years of criticism aimed at the federal agency and its role in overseeing education laws and funding. With a bold executive order, Trump, surrounded by schoolchildren at the White House, declared his intent to abolish the department, emphasizing that education should be controlled at the state level rather than the federal government. He proclaimed, "We're going to shut it down as quickly as possible. It's doing us no good," and asserted, "We're going to return education back to the states where it belongs." This dramatic shift is set to have far-reaching

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION?

The Department of Education, established in 1979 by President Jimmy Carter, is a Cabinet-level federal agency that plays a critical role in shaping national education policy and distributing federal funds to schools across the nation. While it does not directly set the curriculum for schools (a responsibility left to state and local authorities), it is involved in enforcing federal education laws, overseeing anti-discrimination measures, and ensuring equitable access to education for all students.

Among its many functions, the Department of Education administers federal student loan programs, manages grants for higher education, and helps to provide financial aid to students in need. The de-



Trump issues executive order seeking to scrap Department of Education. Agency

comes for underprivileged groups.

In addition, the department has about 4,400 employees, representing a small fraction—just 0.2%—of the total federal workforce. Despite its relatively small size, the department plays a crucial role in ensuring that schools adhere to national standards and receive the resources necessary to provide quality education.

WHY TRUMP WANTS TO ABOLISH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Trump's desire to abolish the Department of Education is not a new one. Throughout his presidency, he has consistently criticized the agency as an example of an overly bureaucratic, ineffective part of the federal government. He argues that the agency's existence leads to unnecessary government intervention in local schools and education policy.

In a statement made in

The Department of Education, established in 1979 by President Jimmy Carter, is a Cabinet-level federal agency that plays a critical role in shaping national education policy and distributing federal funds to schools across the nation.

September 2023, Trump reaffirmed his commitment to closing the department, stating, "One other thing I'll be doing very early in the administration is closing up the Department of Education." This directive is part of a broader conservative agenda known as "Project 2025," a set of proposed reforms for a potential second term. Trump has expressed the belief that the U.S. spends excessive amounts on education without seeing corre-



A random class of a school in the United States of America. File Photo

sponding improvements in student outcomes. In his remarks, Trump pointed to the United States' high spending on education compared to other nations, despite poor performance on international rankings.

Trump's primary argument is that education should be returned to the states, allowing local authorities to have more control over how schools are run, and shifting the focus away from federal oversight.

THE ORDER

- Trump's Executive Order: On March 20, 2025, Trump issued an order to abolish the U.S. Department of Education.
- Department Overview: Established in 1979, oversees federal education policy, funding, and student protections.
- Trump's Stance: Claims the department is ineffective and calls for returning education control to states.
- Budget & Employees: The department manages a \$268 billion budget and employs 4,400 people.
- Main Functions: Manages financial aid, student loans, anti-discrimination measures, and enforces education laws.
- Trump's Argument: Criticizes high education spending with poor results and supports state-level control.
- Reduction in Staff: Department to cut 50% of its workforce, reducing from 4,400 to 2,200 employees.
- Impact on Disadvantaged Students: Programs supporting low-income, disabled, and minority students at risk of losing funding.

income students. These programs rely on federal funding to provide resources, scholarships, and services to those who need them most. Without the department's oversight, these programs could face severe cuts or be eliminated altogether. For students with disabilities, the loss of federal oversight could result in diminished protections and support, making it harder for them to access the education they are entitled to under federal law.

In addition, the department is heavily involved in early childhood education initiatives, particularly efforts to improve literacy and early learning programs. Blair Wriston, a senior manager at EdTrust, a nonprofit education equity organization, warned that dismantling the department would jeopardize vital research and evidence-based practices designed to improve educational outcomes for young learners. Without the department's guidance, the progress made in early childhood education could be undone.

Another area of concern is the future of federal student loans. The Department of Education oversees a massive loan program that helps millions of students finance their higher education. If the department is dismantled, it could slow down or even disrupt loan forgiveness programs, repayment assistance, and loan disbursements. These changes could create confusion and uncertainty for millions of students who rely on these programs to fund their education.

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consequences for students, educators, and the future of education policy in the United States.

WHAT IS THE DE-

partment's budget, which stands at around \$268 billion, supports thousands of programs designed to assist disadvantaged students and improve educational out-

Greenland's Independence: Impact on U.S. Arctic Interests

Greenland, the world's largest island, has long held significant geopolitical importance due to its strategic location in the Arctic and its wealth of natural resources. As the movement for Greenland's independence gains momentum, it presents a critical moment for the United States to reassess its interests and security concerns in the Arctic region. Greenland's independence could significantly reshape U.S. policies, particularly in the realms of military security, economic opportunities, and geopolitical dynamics in the Arctic. The shifting political landscape raises questions about how the U.S. will adapt to this evolving situation.



A man passes a Danish flag ahead of Greenland's general election in the island's capital, Nuuk. File Photo

GREENLAND'S STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

Greenland's geographical location has always made it a focal point in international geopolitics. Situated in the North Atlantic, Greenland holds a commanding position in the Arctic, an area of increasing global importance due to the effects of climate change, which are making previously inaccessible resources more reachable. The island is rich in rare earth minerals, oil, and gas, resources that are becoming increasingly vital to global industries, especially in technology, electronics, and renewable energy sectors.

In addition to its resource wealth, Greenland's location offers strategic advantages for military and shipping interests. With climate change leading to the melting of Arctic ice, new sea lanes are opening up that could facilitate trade and military move-

ment between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. This growing accessibility of the Arctic region has attracted significant attention from both traditional and emerging powers, such as Russia and China, all vying for influence in this newly accessible part of the world.

U.S. INTERESTS AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The United States has long recognized Greenland's strategic value. In 1946, the U.S. proposed purchasing Greenland from Denmark, although the offer was rejected. Over the years, Greenland's role in U.S. security strategy has grown more prominent, particularly with the establishment of the Thule Air Base (Pituffik), a critical site for missile warning systems and space surveillance. The Thule Air Base remains essential for the U.S. military's Arctic and global defense capabilities.

More recently, in 2019 and again in 2025, President Donald Trump expressed

interest in purchasing Greenland, citing its geopolitical importance and rich resources. These proposals were firmly rejected by both Greenlandic and Danish officials, underlining Greenland's strong desire for sovereignty and self-determination. The push for independence has only gained momentum in recent years, culminating in significant political changes in 2025.

RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN GREENLAND

In March 2025, Greenland held parliamentary elections that saw the pro-business Demokraatit party, led by Jens-Frederik Nielsen, emerge victorious. The party's platform included a strong push for gradual independence from Denmark, focusing on domestic

concerns like healthcare, education, and economic development. Nielsen's stance on U.S. involvement in Greenland has been clear: he has firmly opposed any U.S. attempts to gain control over the island and stressed the importance of Greenland's self-determination. This political shift marks a pivotal moment in Greenland's relationship with Denmark and its foreign policy direction. As Greenland moves toward greater autonomy, its relationship with

As Greenland moves toward independence, the U.S. has an opportunity to foster a strong, mutually beneficial relationship based on shared strategic, economic, and environmental interests. By engaging with Greenland as an independent partner, the U.S. can help maintain regional stability and security in the Arctic while respecting Greenland's sovereignty and the rights of its people.

the U.S. will likely evolve, requiring a careful balance of strategic interests, economic cooperation, and respect for Greenlandic sovereignty.

IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. INTERESTS

Military and Security Considerations

The U.S. maintains a significant military presence in Greenland, most notably the Thule Air Base, which plays a crucial role in missile warning systems, space surveillance, and Arctic defense. The base's location provides the U.S. with strategic advantages in monitoring potential threats from Russia and other adversaries in the Arctic region.

Should Greenland gain full independence, it is likely that the U.S. would need to renegotiate its defense

arrangements. The status of U.S. military installations, such as Thule, would be a key issue in future discussions. Greenland's sovereignty would mean that the U.S. could no longer assume automatic access to these strategic military sites, potentially requiring a new defense treaty or security agreement to ensure continued cooperation in the Arctic.

Maintaining access to Greenland's strategic locations would be critical for U.S. national security, particularly as the Arctic becomes an increasingly contested region. Any disruptions to U.S. military operations in Greenland could undermine the U.S.'s ability to respond to emerging threats in the region.

RESOURCE ACCESS AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Greenland's vast natural resources, including rare-

earth minerals, oil, and gas, are vital for global industries, particularly in the development of electronics, renewable energy technologies, and defense systems. With climate change opening up new access to these resources, Greenland's eco-

TDG EXPLAINER

economic potential has become more pronounced.

An independent Greenland could seek to diversify its economic alliances, possibly shifting away from Denmark and pursuing new partnerships with global powers, including the U.S., China, and Russia. For the U.S., this presents opportunities for investment, particularly in resource extraction and infrastructure development. However, any such cooperation would require navigating Greenland's domestic regulations, which could involve significant environmental protections given the island's fragile Arctic ecosystem.

Greenland's economic independence would likely bring new challenges and opportunities for the U.S. While cooperation could drive economic growth, it

would also require balancing economic ambitions with environmental concerns to ensure sustainable development in the Arctic.

GEOPOLITICAL DYNAMICS

The Arctic is increasingly becoming a focal point of international competition, particularly between Russia, China, and the United States. As the region becomes more accessible due to melting ice caps, countries are vying for influence over new trade routes and

access to natural resources. Greenland's independence could significantly alter the balance of power in the Arctic. Without Denmark's oversight, Greenland would have more control over its foreign policy, potentially opening the door for greater influence from China or Russia. For the U.S., this shift would require more diplomatic engagement to ensure that Greenland does not fall into the sphere of influence of strategic competitors.

An independent Greenland would also need to navigate complex issues related to Arctic governance, including territorial claims, resource rights, and environmental protections. The U.S. would need to work closely with Greenland to ensure that its interests in Arctic security, shipping routes, and resource access are not undermined by rival powers.

● TDG NETWORK



MUSK SLAMS NEW YORK TIMES, TRUMP CALLS IT 'DISCREDITED MEDIA'

The report about Musk's potential involvement in such a high-stakes meeting raised concerns about potential conflicts of interest.

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

Tech billionaire Elon Musk slammed the New York Times on Friday in a post on X, hours after US President Donald Trump too questioned them for spreading false information about Musk's visit to the Pentagon.

In a post on X, Musk also highlighted that the people who are leaking "maliciously false information" to the New York Times will be found.

"The New York Times is pure propaganda. Also, I look forward to the prosecutions of those at the Pentagon who are leaking maliciously false information to NYT. They will be found", he wrote.

New York Times reported that the US Department of Defence is set to brief Elon Musk on plans for a potential war with China.

"The Fake News is at it again, this time the Failing New York Times. They said, incorrectly, that Elon Musk is going to the Pentagon tomorrow to be briefed on any

Tunisian Prez appoints new PM

AGENCIES
TUNIS

Tunisian President Kais Saied has appointed Sarra Zaafrani as the country's new Prime Minister, effective March 21, 2025. Zaafrani replaces Kamel Madouri, who had served in the role previously. This appointment marks a significant shift in Tunisia's leadership.

Sarra Zaafrani has extensive experience in the government, having served as the Minister of Public Works and Housing for nearly two years. Her background in public works and housing has positioned her well to take on the responsibilities of the premiership. In addition to the appointment of the new Prime Minister, President Saied also named Salah Zouari as the Minister of Public Works and Housing.

FOURTH ESTATE UNDER CLOUD

- Musk accuses Pentagon leakers of providing "maliciously false information" to NYT.
- NYT reported Musk to be briefed on U.S. plans for war with China.
- Report claimed briefing involved 20-30 slides on military options against China.
- Trump denies NYT report, calling it "fake" and stating "China will not even be mentioned."
- Trump criticizes NYT as



President Donald Trump and Elon Musk (Right)

"discredited media" for spreading false information.

■ Musk highlights conflicts

of interest due to his companies' ties with Pentagon and China.

potential "war with China." How ridiculous?" China will not even be mentioned or discussed. How disgraceful it is that the discredited media can make up such lies. Anyway, the story is completely untrue!!!" Trump said on Truth Social.

The publication said that the access would be a major expansion of Elon Musk's government role and highlight his conflicts of interest. It said that the billion-

aire chief executive of both SpaceX and Tesla is a leading supplier to the Pentagon and has extensive financial interests in China.

U.S. President Donald Trump has firmly rejected a New York Times report claiming that his close ally, billionaire Elon Musk, was scheduled to receive a briefing from the Pentagon regarding a U.S. military strategy for a potential war with China.

Trump took to Truth Social on Thursday to address the matter, stating that the upcoming Pentagon meeting would not involve any discussions on China. "China will not even be mentioned or discussed," he said in a post, distancing himself from the claim. His response contradicted earlier reports that suggested Musk would be briefed on sensitive U.S. military strategies

regarding China.

Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth also weighed in on the matter, posting on X (formerly Twitter) that the meeting with Musk would focus on "innovation, efficiencies, and smarter production," rather than military plans related to China or any potential conflict. Hegseth's statement further clarified that the discussion would be centered on improving U.S. defense capabilities through technological advancements and production reforms.

However, a U.S. official, speaking anonymously, provided more details about the planned briefing. According to the official, senior U.S. military officials were scheduled to attend the briefing, which would provide an overview of several military-related topics. Among the subjects discussed was expected to be the U.S. military's approach to a potential conflict with China, which has been a point of tension between the two superpowers for years.

EU plans increase in defence spending

AGENCIES
BRUSSELS

The European Union has announced a major increase in its defence spending, committing to allocate €800 billion (USD 868 billion) over the next four years. This decision, made during the EU summit in Brussels, aims to significantly bolster Europe's defence capabilities in the face of growing security challenges.

A key component of this plan is the provision of €150 billion in loans to support weapons projects, enhancing the EU's military infrastructure and resources. Additionally, the EU will offer exemptions from its strict debt rules for defence-related investments, allowing member states to allocate more resources without breaching fiscal limits.

Heathrow Airport shut after fire at power substation

AGENCIES
LONDON

A massive power outage, triggered by a fire at a nearby electricity substation, has led to the temporary closure of London's Heathrow Airport, one of the busiest air travel hubs in the world. The fire, which broke out late Thursday, forced the airport to shut down operations on Friday, creating widespread travel chaos for thousands of passengers.

Heathrow officials an-



A massive power outage, triggered by a fire at a nearby electricity substation in London. Agency

The disruption was expected to affect up to 290,000 passengers, according to Cirium, an aviation data company. With flights grounded and passengers stranded, the situation quickly escalated into a major travel crisis

nounced that the airport would remain closed until midnight, although significant disruptions were expected to continue through the weekend. The fire, which impacted a critical electricity substation, raised concerns about the resilience of the airport's infrastructure, particularly its heavy reliance on a single power source. The incident has sparked questions about why such an important airport would be vulnerable to a failure in one key facility.

Ed Miliband, the UK's

energy secretary, stated early Friday that there was no indication of foul play, though the exact cause of the fire remained unclear. Later, London's Metropolitan Police Service confirmed that counterterrorism experts were investigating the incident due to the critical nature of the substation's location and the extensive impact on national infrastructure.

As of Friday morning, the power outage had also knocked out at least one backup generator, worsen-

ing the situation and delaying the restoration of power. This failure has intensified scrutiny on the reliability of Britain's infrastructure, particularly in such a high-stakes location like Heathrow.

SUBSTATION FIRE DETAILS

The fire occurred at the North Hyde electricity substation, located near Heathrow. London's fire brigade confirmed that the blaze had been brought under control by 6:30 a.m. local time on Friday. The fire had forced the evacuation of about 150 people living in the area surrounding the substation. National Grid, the energy company overseeing the power infrastructure, reported that nearly 4,900 customers were without electricity as of Friday morning.

IDF strikes Hezbollah targets in Lebanon

AGENCIES
JERUSALEM

The IDF (Israel Defense Forces) said it recently attacked a military site containing underground infrastructure in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon, and a military site containing rocket launchers in southern Lebanon, where Hezbollah terrorist organization activity was observed.

Earlier, The IDF (Israel Defense Forces) confirmed that Israeli forces eliminated the terrorist Essam Dib Abdullah al-Dalis, Hamas' prime minister and the senior government figure in the Gaza Strip, who replaced Ruhi Mushtaha in that role after the latter was killed in July 2024.

As part of his role, al-Dalis was responsible for the functioning of the Hamas terrorist organization's terror regime in the Gaza Strip, including all of the organization's systems and their



Representative Image

use for terrorist activities.

The killing of al-Dalis, the IDF said, came as over the past 24 hours Israeli forces attacked dozens of targets and terrorists from the Hamas terrorist organization throughout the Gaza Strip, including mid-level commanders and senior figures in the political wing of Hamas. This is with the aim, said the IDF, of harming the military and governmental capabilities of the Hamas

terrorist organization and removing a threat to the State of Israel and its citizens.

In addition, at this stage, the IDF reported that it can be determined with a "high degree of probability," based on the information available to the IDF and Shin Bet (Israel's anti-terror General Security Service), that the following senior terrorists were eliminated in strikes in the past 24 hours:

HISTORIC CONVERSATION BETWEEN TRUMP AND PUTIN TO STOP THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR; ISRAEL-PALESTINE WAR RESUMES

This week is concluding with a complex situation regarding the two ongoing conflicts. On one side, Trump and Putin engaged in a dialogue lasting more than 90 minutes, aiming to explore potential solutions for ending the Russia-Ukraine war. Conversely, Israel launched an attack on Hamas, thereby violating the ceasefire agreement, citing Hamas's failure to release its captives as the justification for their actions.

This week, Trump and Putin engaged in a phone conversation concerning the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Following their discussion, both leaders reached a consensus to pursue peace, initiating with a ceasefire focused on energy and infrastructure, along with technical discussions aimed at establishing a maritime ceasefire in the Black Sea. In the aftermath of the call,

Putin committed to suspending attacks on energy infrastructure in Ukraine for a period of 30 days, as confirmed by a statement from the Russia. However, he did not fully endorse a more extensive 30-day ceasefire proposal supported by the US, which Ukraine has expressed its willingness to implement.

Ukrainian President Zelenskyy initially expressed his willingness to endorse the US initiative aimed at ceasing assaults on Russian energy facilities. However, he cautioned that Russia is trying to prolong ceasefire discussions and undermine Kyiv's position. Zelenskyy urged Ukraine's allies to exert pressure on Russia to agree to a peace agreement by implementing sanctions and other strategies, while also advising them to dismiss any requests from Russia to halt military assistance. European leaders expressed their commit-

WORLD RECAP

ANSHU JOSHI



ment to further enhance their support for Ukraine.

On the contrary, the leader of Russia expressed apprehensions that a ceasefire might allow Ukraine to recruit additional troops and replenish its military resources during a lull in the ongoing three-year conflict. According to the statements from Russia, Putin also conveyed to Trump that a fundamental requirement for averting further escalation of the hostilities and advancing towards a resolution through political and diplomatic channels would be the total halt of foreign military assistance and the sharing of intelligence with Ukraine.

As the global community expressed relief over a re-

cent positive turn of events, Israel initiated airstrikes throughout the Gaza Strip this week, resulting in the deaths of many. This action effectively ended a ceasefire that had been in effect since January, as Israel sought to compel Hamas to release additional hostages and surrender control of the region. Israel PM Benjamin Netanyahu authorized the strikes following Hamas's refusal to meet Israeli demands to release half of the remaining hostages as a condition for prolonging the ceasefire.

The Israeli military has instructed residents of eastern Gaza to evacuate towards the central region of the territory, suggesting that renewed ground op-

erations may be imminent. This development occurs as humanitarian organizations alert that essential supplies are depleting, following Israel's blockade of food, medicine, fuel, and other necessities for the Palestinians living in Gaza. The impending offensive could mark a complete resurgence of a conflict that has already resulted in the deaths of thousands of innocent individuals on both sides. Additionally, it raises significant concerns regarding the fate of approximately two dozen hostages believed to be alive and held by Hamas.

Netanyahu has declared that the assault represents merely the initial phase, asserting that Israel will continue its efforts until it fulfils its objectives, which include the complete eradication of Hamas and the liberation of all hostages held by the organization. He stated that any sub-

sequent ceasefire discussions would occur under the fire, as conveyed in his statement given during a recent interview. The US has indicated that it was consulted on the matter and expressed its backing for Israel's actions. The US attributed the resurgence of hostilities to Hamas. The US clearly stated that that Hamas had the opportunity to release hostages in order to continue the ceasefire, but it opted for the conflict.

Under the ceasefire that commenced in mid-January of this year, Hamas released 25 hostages along with the remains of eight others in exchange for over 1,500 Palestinian prisoners, as decided and directed in the initial phase of the agreement. However, both the parties did not engage in discussions regarding the second phase. This subsequent phase was intended to fa-

cilitate the release of the remaining living hostages, conclude the conflict, and ensure a complete Israeli withdrawal from Gaza. Israel asserts that Hamas also possesses the remains of additional captives. Israel insisted that Hamas release half of the remaining hostages in exchange for an extension of the ceasefire and a vague commitment to eventually pursue a lasting peace agreement. Hamas, on the other hand, rejected this proposal, insisting that both parties adhere to the original terms, which included a continuation of the ceasefire during negotiations for the second phase. Now, Israel maintains that it will not cease hostilities until it has dismantled Hamas' governing and military structures and secured the release of all hostages.

I am not sure why Zelenskyy fails to recognize that Ukraine has ultimately

borne the brunt of the war with Russia. He continues to seek support from European nations, despite the realization that the political landscape has shifted, after Trump 2.0 regime has started. A visible rift can be seen within both the EU and NATO, with some member states advocating for a withdrawal from the conflict. Meanwhile, on the other hand, Hamas appears to be preparing for a truce, yet strays from the path of genuine peace, provoking further aggression from Israel. While all parties involved in global politics aspire for mutually beneficial outcomes, it is crucial for them to reconsider their definitions of a 'win-win' scenario. I sincerely hope that leaders will adopt this perspective and work towards the cessation of wars.

The author is Professor, School of International Studies, JNU

PICTURE PERFECT



Tripti Dimri poses for her social media. (INSTAGRAM)

'CHHAAVA' RULES BOX OFFICE, BECOMES YEAR'S HIGHEST-GROSSING FILM

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Indian movie industry continued to be in strong form from January into February with a combined home box office gross of Rs 1,245 crore. Vicky Kaushal's historical drama Chhaava was the top performer, sharing a whopping 53% of the month's revenue.

The total box office collection, as per The India Box Office Report of Ormax Media, also counts the estimated collections of films which are currently still playing in theatres. Laxman Utekar's Chhaava, which stars Rashmika Mandanna alongside the lead, released on February 14 and ruled the box office. The biopic of Maratha ruler Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj was a blockbuster hit.



The report also mentioned that only the Hindi-box office numbers of Chhaava were taken into account, since its Telugu version opened in March 2025 and will be accounted for in subsequent reports.

The total box office collections of films that were released in the year 2025 now stand at Rs 2,264 crore, a 39% rise from the same period of 2024. This also

makes February 2025 the highest-grossing February post-pandemic.

Chhaava dominated the charts, breaking Rs 650 crore and placing it on the list of all-time highest-grossing Hindi films. Dragon, a Tamil-language blockbuster, was the only other movie to reach over Rs 100 crore, outgrossing the much-hyped Tamil big-budget film Vidaamuyarchi.

'CHHAAVA' LEAKED ONLINE

MUMBAI: An FIR has been registered in connection with the piracy of Vicky Kaushal-starrer 'Chhaava'. According to the Mumbai Police, the complainant, Rajat Rahul Haksar, CEO of August Entertainment, an anti-piracy agency appointed by Maddock Films, flagged '1,818 internet links' through which the period drama was circulated illegally. Accordingly, a case has been registered at South Cyber Police Station under CR No. 23/2025 for offenses under Sections 316(2) and 308(3) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), read with Sections 51, 63, and 65A of the Copyright Act, Section 6AA of the Cinematograph Act, 1952 (Amendment 2023), and Sections 43 and 66 of the Information Technology Act.

Akshay drops hint about 'Kesari 2'

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Actor Akshay Kumar's blockbuster film 'Kesari' has completed six years in the cinema horizon, and to mark the occasion, the actor has shared an exciting update with his fans about the much-awaited 'Kesari 2'.

The 2019 film, which continues to resonate with audiences even today, is set to return with a fresh chapter, promising even more thrilling moments and captivating storytelling. On the anniversary of the film's release, Akshay Kumar took to social media to share a special clip from 'Kesari' featuring intense battle se-



The actor's post celebrated the success of the film, writing, "Celebrating 6 years of Kesari. Celebrating the spirit of Kesari."

The actor's post celebrated the success of the film, writing, "Celebrating 6 years of Kesari. Celebrating the spirit of Kesari. Celebrating a new chapter that begins...soon!" The clip left fans buzzing with anticipation, especially as it was revealed that 'Kesari 2' is on the way, with a fresh update expected to be shared the following day.

Samay Raina reschedules India tour amid controversy

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

YouTubeur and comedian Samay Raina has rescheduled his India tour amid the ongoing India's Got Latent row. Taking to his Instagram handle, Samay shared the news and promised refunds to people who bought tickets for the show. He wrote, "Hello guys, I am rescheduling my India tour. You all will get the refunds shortly, see you soon."

The comedian's decision to reschedule the India tour came amid the ongoing case against him for promoting obscenity and vulgar content through his show India's Got Latent.

The controversy erupted after an FIR was filed earlier this month against Makhija, YouTubeurs Ashish Chanchlani, Ranveer Allahbadia, Samay Raina, and others associated with the India's Got Latent show. The FIR was based on al-



legations of promoting obscenity and engaging in sexually explicit discussions during the publicly accessible YouTube show.

Ashish Chanchlani and Ranveer Allahbadia have already approached the Maharashtra Cyber Cell to record their statements in connection with the matter.

The Maharashtra cyber police have reportedly summoned more than 30 people for questioning after registering an FIR against them. However, the police have not yet recorded the statement

of comedian and YouTubeur Samay Raina, who hosted the 'India's Got Latent' show. The show came under scrutiny after Ranveer Allahbadia made some offensive remarks on the show.

During an appearance on the 'India's Got Latent' show, the podcaster asked a contestant, "Would you rather watch your parents... or join in once and stop it forever?" The video soon went viral on the internet, with social media users slamming Allahbadia for his offensive remarks.

BRAIN PICKING



The whole nepotism debate did make me question if I deserved to be in this position and I realized that the right answer to it is that I'm not.

— JANHVI KAPOOR

(Indian Actress)

'Coco 2' in development, set for theatrical release in 2029

TDG NETWORK
WASHINGTON

Disney has confirmed that a sequel to the beloved animated film 'Coco' is officially in the works. According to The Hollywood Reporter, 'Coco 2' is scheduled for a theatrical release in 2029. Disney CEO Bob Iger shared the exciting news with fans and investors at the company's Annual Shareholder Meeting.

Though the project is still in its early stages, Iger's announcement has left audiences eager for more details. "While the film is just in the initial stages, we know it will be full of humour, heart, and adventure, and we can't wait to share more soon," Iger said, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

The sequel will bring back the key members of the creative team from 'Coco', including director Lee Unkrich and co-director Adrian Molina. Mark Nielsen, who previ-



ously worked on 'Toy Story 4' and 'Inside Out 2', will serve as the producer for the highly anticipated film. Released in 2017, 'Coco' became an instant classic, earning widespread acclaim for its vibrant animation, rich cultural storytelling, and unforgettable music.

The film follows Miguel, a 12-year-old boy who dreams of becoming a musician, who is accidentally transported to the 'Land of the Dead'.

There, he embarks on a journey to seek out his great-great-grandfather, a deceased musician, in hopes of convincing his family to allow him to follow his musical passion. 'Coco' won numerous prestigious awards, including two Academy Awards for Best Animated Feature and Best Original Song for 'Remember Me,' composed by Robert Lopez and Kristen Anderson-Lopez.

REVIEW: NOVOCAINE ****

NOVOCAINE

PRAVEEN NAGDA

Since the special spider bit the young Peter making genetic changes in his body, the super-powerful Spiderman has entertained children and adults alike for decades. Movies taking a leaf out of sci-fi have generally been entertaining as they create intrigue and mystery around our own lives and make us engage with them. Just imagine a medical condition and a serious disorder becoming the biggest strength of your life.

Just imagine when a physical disorder that was a matter of insult for you in your childhood turns up becoming a reason to exist, live, and love as you grow up. Jack Quaid and Amber Midthunder starring Novocaine, directed by Dan Berk and Robert Olsen, this 2025 American action comedy is one such film. Novocaine is going to entertain you with comical interactions interspersed with serious action and a little bit of romantic indulgences all through the film. Nathan or Nate (Jack

Quaid) is a bank employee, a bit timid and introverted having a crush on her colleague Sherry Margrave (Amber Midthunder), who keeps passing on mysterious smiles at various points in time. Once accidentally, Sherry pours hot coffee over his hands and feels extremely sorry about it, only to discover later that Nate doesn't feel any pain due to the medical disorder, despite his skin disfiguring and requiring antiseptic treatment.

Sherry proposes to Nate for a night out and romance blossoms in their lives, however, it is a very short-lived one. Robbers come into the bank where Nate works in the dress



of Santa Claus and loot away the booty breaking the vaults and killing the Bank Manager, who refuses to share passcodes. In the process, Sherry is kidnapped by the attackers and is taken hostage.

Nate vows to bring back Sherry from the clutches of attackers and chases them ends up becoming one of the suspects in the eyes of detective cops.

Everything is built around the pain-free maneuvers of Nate, who experiences the worst kind of torture from the attackers in his journey to bring back Sherry. Nate picks up a knife from the boiling sauce, and effortlessly pushes a knife into the bul-

let wound taking away the bullet, gets his back broken often, suffers serious fractures, gets wounded severely by the traps laid by the culprits, has blood oozing out from all over his body, and still doesn't give up fights as he just doesn't feel the pain of it.

One by one Nate kills the robbers and takes the help of his video game companion, an online friend Roscoe Dixon (Jacob Batalon), whom he had never met all his life. Roscoe comes to his rescue just in time to save him from being killed by one of the attackers. While he is chasing the robbers, he has no clue that Sherry too was a part of the gang and had a role

to play in the bank robbery. The cat-and-mouse game between him and the robbers continues with serious actions, and bloodshed and one can see really gory images on screen almost all the time.

While the film is pitched as a romantic action comedy, in my opinion, it is indeed a good comedy, but the action is too much and not required in many places. Romantic encounters are almost non-existent and are missing a lot from the film. Overall it's a fun film to watch!

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

NAVIGATING THE FINE LINE BETWEEN CONFIDENCE AND EGO



KEN O'DONNELL

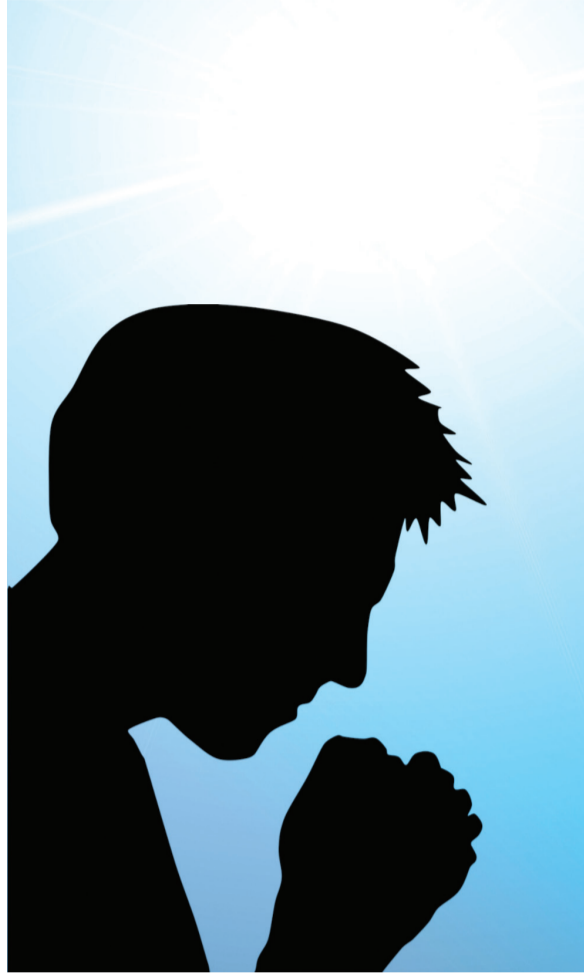
We are all born with an 'ego', that is a sense of self, but confidence is something that we develop. We may develop it early if we have parents who continually inspire and support us, or we may develop confidence as we begin to acquire talents and skills and find success in using them. When that confidence becomes imbued with the false sense of self, then what is experienced by others is arrogance, and often termed 'ego'. A false sense of self is one whereby my worth is measured by my accomplishments, titles,

and roles that I play in the physical world. The true sense of self is the awareness of the consciousness, the soul, and is not made of the physical elements. That is when we can be said to be living in spiritual awareness.

My own journey into spiritual awareness was sparked by my mother. When I was about 15 years old, she was in hospital having an operation. During the operation she needed an urgent blood transfusion. However, her blood type was rare, and blood could not be found quickly enough to prevent her body starting to shut down. She was 'dead' for about four minutes. They did resuscitate her and her blood transfusion was carried out. She later told us children what she had experienced. She felt as if she was floating away and it was the most peaceful and beautiful experience she had ever had. She was not a religious person, but she said that the whole event

had left her completely devoid of the fear of death. In fact, when she did eventually, years later, 'leave' her body, no one cried, because they knew that she would have moved on, unafraid.

It was after she had passed on that I began my own journey. I had been fascinated by the story she told and had many questions to answer. If she could 'see' her body beneath her and it was not her, then who are we? I had a good education and finished it earlier than most, and at 18 years old went on a quest to discover what was out there in the world, what other people believed in, and if I could find the answers I was looking for. With very little money, I travelled by land to London, and it took six months. This could be said to have been 'ego'. I had very little money but was not worried about how I would survive. I had growing confidence and faith and felt like nothing could stop me. By the time I was 22 years old, I



When we see the self as an instrument of the Divine, it quiets all ego, or arrogance.

had visited 40 countries. I had learned about living and surviving and was not afraid of anything; that is the value of confidence. It was in London though, that I finally found the answers I had been looking for when I came into contact with the Brahma Kumaris.

In meditation we develop

false sense of 'I', makes us blind to our own faults, and if there is any conflict with anyone, it will be all down to ego; to two people in disharmony based on the individual egos. In fact, it does not matter what our gender and personal physical circumstances are. We all have one deep thing in common;

Communication means, and is based on, the sharing of what is common. If we relate to others, aware of the true self and of the true other, then there will always be harmony and deep communication. If we are able to focus on what is real and true and durable, see the self as a spiritual being going through a human experience, we can separate from the 'unreal' in ourselves.

the awareness of who we are, but then we forget, if we pay more attention to what we are doing and what is going on, rather than who is carrying out the actions and what is going on in the consciousness. Ego, the

we are spiritual beings and inside us are the soft and loving qualities of peace and joy. Communication means, and is based on, the sharing of what is common. If we relate to others, aware of the true self and of the

true other, then there will always be harmony and deep communication. If we are able to focus on what is real and true and durable, see the self as a spiritual being going through a human experience, we can separate from the 'unreal' in ourselves. To do this well, we need to connect with the Divine and see the self as an instrument of the Divine. This will quell all ego, or arrogance. Then we will be able to offer and share our experiences and insights in a way that will help others. It is also very important to learn the art of 'pause'; take one minute each hour to centre. Then we become a detached observer of what is going on out there, and can focus on what is going on inside. The other 59 minutes will be more powerful, more productive; full of confidence and lacking any kind of 'ego' or arrogance.

Ken O'Donnell is an author and the director of Brahma Kumaris' services in South America.

The artificial transformed by authentic awareness



JIM RYAN

We belong to the human race, we are collectively called humankind, and yet, if we look closely at what we are displaying in our interactions with one another, it is hardly kind, and in some cases, barely human. Less cynically, we could say that many inventions and innovations, especially in the realms of the artificial, are created with an avid enthusiasm for the far-reaching benefits they could provide. The results are often the inverse. In recent times, whatever we seem to do and create has generally ended in a destructive mode.

Rampant greed and selfishness have pervaded all levels of intention and attitudes, which have led to epidemics of negative mindsets and behaviours, and the turbulence and violence of social upheaval. We seem to see, more than ever, the haves and have-nots, a disadvantaged, sorrow-centred and exploitative world of multiple needs, spiralling increasingly into an abyss of chaos.

When we look at the roots of such chaos under a microscope, we see that the basis and seed of actions are always centred on physical consciousness. The all-encompassing belief that all is matter, and all that matters is the world of form. There is no sense of continuum, no desire to see things slowly grow and mature - 'Take as much as you can', 'you only have one shot at this'. Things must be immediate, now, and desires gratified right now. As a result, fast and artificial forms and structures



We can bring deep and natural calm to our chaotic world if we recognise the truth that we are spiritual beings living a human life.

There is time to breath, and recognise that the fear and hopelessness that feeds the manic search for something new, has no strength in the face of the spiritual.

are created to meet such short-term needs.

However, spirituality offers another platform to produce ways to enable truth and beauty to be recognised and developed in interactions and lifestyles. The spirit is not temporary. The acceptance of the permanency of the spiritual, halts the downward spiral of form-

related beliefs. There is time to breath, and recognise that the fear and hopelessness that feeds the manic search for something new, has no strength in the face of the spiritual.

A new meaningfulness is introduced into existence, not just a clever philosophy but an awareness directly con-

nected to the vibrancy of the individual's personality. Recognition of the spirit makes connecting to God's light energy easy, and brings immediate redirection and realignment to the world of truth. Active spiritual energy is revived and begins to circulate within the soul. The core nature of consciousness is reanimated, and a new awareness emerges, bringing new, pure enthusiasm and joy into old scenarios.

Humankind is made up of human beings. Humans are physical, but beings are spiritual. We forget this at our peril. We can bring deep and natural calm to the chaos if we so choose. We can explore the realms of spirituality and look forward to a completely different kind of existence - all with one awareness in the heart.

Jim Ryan has a background in education. He is an author and a Brahma Kumaris Rajyoga teacher, based at the Global Retreat Centre, Oxford, UK.

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

The 'detached observer' practice is the act of stepping back slightly from the situation or person I am interacting with. This 'stepping back' happens in my mind and creates a small mental space between myself and the other, giving me a chance to see clearly. It creates a protective distance, an emotional buffer, in which to check my reactions and transform them into the most accurate and elevated response. Today let me create a little respectful space between myself and the world.

Vegetarianism — a small choice that has a big impact



B.K. USHA

Vegetarianism, first recorded in ancient India and Greece, is closely connected with the idea of non-violence, and has been promoted by religious groups and philosophers. Until some decades ago, it was regarded by many people as little more than a fad, but has since gained acceptance the world over as a healthy alternative to meat-based diets.

Scientific studies have established the positive effects of a vegetarian diet on health. They have found that body mass index, cholesterol levels, and blood pressure are usually on the lower side in vegetarians, who also have lower incidence of heart disease,

type 2 diabetes, Alzheimer's Disease, and other ailments. Meat-based diets, on the other hand, have been found to be directly associated with increased risk of cancer and cardiovascular disease.

While the healthful nature of vegetarian food is now widely acknowledged, its effect on human behaviour is less appreciated, perhaps because this has not been studied to the same extent. The relationship between food and our state of mind has been known for centuries in Eastern cultures. The *Bhagavad Gita* classifies foods into three types: *sattvic* or pure, *rajasic* or stimulating, and *tamasic* or impure. Pure foods, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, are said to bring calmness and clarity to the mind and promote a sweet disposition. Stimulating foods such as meat, eggs, onion, garlic, and spices lead to restlessness, passion, and emotional outbursts. Impure foods, including putrefied, processed, and preserved foods, dull the mind and contribute to chronic mental ailments. They are said



The healthful nature of vegetarian food is widely acknowledged, but its positive effect on our behaviour is less appreciated.

to cause early ageing and death.

The effect of diet on behaviour can be clearly observed in nature. Carnivores such as the tiger, lion, and crocodile are known to be aggressive. Notably, all predators, who hunt, kill, and consume other animals, are meat-eaters. Herbivores, on the other

hand, do not show predatory behaviour except when driven by unusual circumstances, such as survival needs or stress. Dogs, who are regarded as omnivores, meaning they can eat both animal-based and plant-based foods, are known to become more aggressive when fed large meat rations.

The effect of meat on behaviour is not just a biochemical process; there is a spiritual aspect to it. The production of meat involves callousness, cruelty, and violence towards other creatures. Eating such food can hardly be wholesome. As per the law of karma, one who partakes

of such food condones and becomes complicit in the violence used to procure it. In effect we kill a small part of our conscience when we consume the flesh of a murdered animal. This almost unconscious act of stifling the conscience gradually alters our state of mind and makes us callous towards

the suffering of others, and prone to aggression. When entire populations regularly consume meat, much of which is produced by mechanised industrial-scale

At a time when peace of mind is becoming increasingly rare for more and more people, and social aggression is on the rise, as evidenced by people's

Pure foods, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, are said to bring calmness and clarity to the mind and promote a sweet disposition. Stimulating foods such as meat, eggs, onion, garlic, and spices lead to restlessness, passion, and emotional outbursts.

slaughter, a rise in levels of aggression and violence is to be expected.

However, there still exist vegetarian communities with non-violent cultures. Certain tribes in Africa, religious groups in India, indigenous communities in South America, and some spiritual groups have built peaceful societies where individuals exhibit mutual respect, love, and cooperation, with little to no aggression in their interactions.

online behaviour, political polarisation, and the declining quality of public discourse, it would be worthwhile to learn from these communities that are examples of peaceful coexistence. If merely choosing something different to eat can help us make the world a better place, it is worth giving it a try.

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

DRIZZLE THREATENS IPL OPENER TODAY

Despite the rain disrupting practice sessions, the full ground covers at Eden Gardens ensured the playing surface remained protected ahead of the IPL 2025 opener between KKR and RCB.

AGENCIES
KOLKATA

A steady drizzle in the evening brought a premature end to the practice sessions of Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) and Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) on the eve of their IPL 2025 opener at Eden Gardens on Saturday. Practice began as scheduled at 5 pm, but rain set in around 6 pm, bringing the ground staff into action while the players had to pack up.

Fortunately, Eden Gardens is one of the few venues with full ground covers, ensuring the playing surface remained protected.

The Indian Meteorological Department's (IMD) New Alipore office has issued an "orange alert" for Friday and Saturday, warning of thundersqualls, gusty winds, lightning, hailstorms, and moderate rainfall across several districts, including Kolkata.

"Thundersqualls with gusty winds, lightning, hailstorms, and light to moderate rainfall are likely in Jhargram, Purba and Paschim Midnapore, Bankura, Purulia, Purba Bardhaman, Hooghly, and Howrah on Friday," the IMD stated.

For Saturday, the forecast includes thunderstorms



Covers seen at Eden Gardens Stadium due to rain on the eve of the Indian Premier League 2025 opener match between Kolkata Knight Riders and Royal Challengers Bengaluru, in Kolkata on Friday. ANI

"Thundersqualls with gusty winds, lightning, hailstorms, and light to moderate rainfall are likely in Jhargram, Purba and Paschim Midnapore, Bankura, Purulia, Purba Bardhaman, Hooghly, and Howrah on Friday," the IMD stated.

with gusty winds, lightning, and moderate rainfall in Nadia, Birbhum, Murshidabad, Purba Bardhaman, and North and South 24 Parganas.

The match has a 7:30 pm start, with the toss scheduled for 7 pm. A glittering opening ceremony featuring Shreya Ghoshal and Disha Patani among oth-

ers is planned at 6 pm, but it remains to be seen if the weather plays a spoilsport.

According to IPL regulations, the league-stage matches have a one-hour extension window, meaning the cut-off time for a five-over match is 10:56 pm, with play needing to conclude by 12:06 am.

Kolkata has already ex-

perienced rain disruptions in the lead-up to the season opener, with a KKR intra-squad practice match being washed out after just one innings.

The IPL 2025 season opener on Saturday between reigning champions KKR and RCB in Kolkata could be impacted by rain, according to a

report by ESPNcricinfo. The Indian Met Department (IMD) has issued an "orange alert" for the area. "Light to moderate rainfall, thunderstorms, lightning, and strong winds are expected" until Saturday, the report said.

In the days leading up to the season opener, Kolkata experienced brief periods of rain, which resulted in one KKR inter-squad practice match being cancelled after just one innings. Light rain fell in the city on Wednesday and Thursday, although both teams managed to conclude their practice sessions.

The concern is largely with March 22, the day of the season opener, with the met department saying Friday and Saturday could witness the maximum amount of rain, according to ESPNcricinfo.

Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) and Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) are set to kick off the 2025 Indian Premier League (IPL) at the iconic Eden Gardens on March 22. Both squads have experienced a change in leadership, with Ajinkya Rahane assuming command of KKR and Rajat Patidar at the helm of RCB. RCB is eager to end its string of defeats against KKR, as it has been unsuccessful in its last four meetings with them.

Yuvraj Singh to lead India in World Championship of Legends Season 2

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Former India cricketer Yuvraj Singh has confirmed his participation as the captain of India Championship of Legends, in the second season of the World Championship of Legends, scheduled to take place in July in the United Kingdom, as per the WCL press release.

The esteemed all-rounder previously guided India to victory in the tournament's inaugural edition. Yuvraj will be accompanied by accomplished opening batsman Shikhar Dhawan, who will be making his tournament debut following his retirement from international cricket last year.

Talking about leading India again in the second edition of the WCL T20 tournament, which is backed by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), Yuvraj Singh said, "I'm looking forward to represent our nation at the World Championship of Legends again. The memories of our victory in the first edition of the tournament, alongside my teammates, will always remain close to my heart."

The previous edition of the World Championship of Legends featured stunning performances from Yuvraj Singh, Suresh



Raina, Robin Uthappa, Irfan & Yusuf Pathan, and many more cricketing stalwarts from India, proving that their passion for the game remains as strong as ever.

The tournament quickly became a global sensation, as Indian fans witnessed their cricketing idols delivering impactful performances on the grand stage.

Harshit Tomar, Founder of the World Championship of Legends, shared his vision for the tournament as quoted by WCL press release, "I've always seen this tournament as a way forward for cricket to have its future through its senior cricketers."

He further added, "It's been a fulfilment and satisfaction to see cricket's very own superstars recreating the same magic that made them immortal. Our cricketing heroes are our sentiments, and hosting them to the best of our

ability and care has always been our vision."

Adding to the excitement, Nishant Pitti, Chairman & Founder and Chief Patron of WCL, expressed his enthusiasm for the league's impact on global cricket.

"The World Championship of Legends is more than just a tournament--it's a celebration of the sport's greatest players and their enduring legacy. We are thrilled to be part of this remarkable journey that brings together legendary cricketers, revives iconic rivalries, and offers fans a nostalgic yet highly competitive cricketing experience," Nishant Pitti said.

The India Champions, owned by Sumant Bahl, Salman Ahmed, and Jaspal Bahra, are set to return to Edgbaston, ready to engage in fierce battles against top international stars from Australia, West Indies, England, Pakistan, and South Africa.

MI vs CSK is biggest rivalry of IPL: Mark Boucher



AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Legendary South African wicketkeeper Mark Boucher has said that Mumbai Indians and Chennai Super Kings "is the biggest rivalry" of IPL.

Boucher, a former Mumbai Indians coach, said many great players are playing in IPL who like to perform and take the game away from their opponents.

"Mumbai Indians and Chennai Super Kings is the biggest rivalry of IPL. I am not taking any thing away from any franchise, any team on any day can rock it this is a lovely part of T-20 cricket. Many great players are playing in IPL who

like to perform and take the game away from their opponents. But I think the biggest rivalry is MI vs CSK because of the titles they have won. And for RCB, they have to win 2-3 IPL titles, then they can be among the biggest rivals." Mark Boucher, a Jio Star expert for IPL 2025, told the media

He was asked if Chennai Super Kings vs Mumbai Indians or Chennai Super Kings vs Royal Challengers Bengaluru is the biggest rivalry of the IPL.

MI will take on CSK at the MA Chidambaram Stadium (also known as Chepauk) on Sunday, March 23. Both teams have deep talent and boast of a significant fan following.

Khelo India Para Games 2025: TN's Ramesh Shanguman clinches gold in athletics

NEW DELHI
JOHANNESBURG

Tamil Nadu's Ramesh Shanguman gave his state a flying start as track and field events in athletics started on Day 2 of the Khelo India Para Games 2025 here on Friday.

A former basketballer, Chennai's Shanguman won the first gold of the Games and it came in the men's 800m T53/T54 event, as per a press release from SAI Media.

At the time of writing, 31 gold medals had been decided and Tamil Nadu had won eight of them. Maharashtra (five golds) and Haryana (four golds) were second and third, respectively. Forty-four finals, all in different categories of athletics are scheduled on Friday.

Hailing from a farming family in Mannathampatty village, Tiruchirappalli, Shanguman was struck by tragedy when he lost his legs in a lorry accident at the age of eight. However, he did not let the setback hold him



Ramesh Shanguman.

back and took to sports. He started as a para basketball player but then shifted to wheelchair racing.

Speaking to SAI Media about his victory at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, Shanguman said, "I have faced a lot of struggles in my life. I need to achieve something. But I had the desire to make a name for myself. I have to prove myself. I motivate myself every day. Now my parents are very happy. In the first KIPG in 2023, I won the bronze medal, this time I won the gold medal. My family is a big support. Without them, I could not have been a medallist."

It was Day 2 in the para-

ATHLETICS

MENS DISCUS THROW F11

Gold - Monu Ghangas (Haryana); Silver - Sagar (Haryana); Bronze - Praveen Sharma (Rajasthan)

MEN SHOT PUT F40/F41

Gold - Ravi Rongali (Andhra Pradesh); Silver - Abhishek (Haryana); Bronze - Manoj Singaraja (Tamil Nadu)

MENS 100M RUN T13

Gold - Chaitanya Vijay Pathak (Maharashtra); Silver - Meet Tadhani (Gujarat); Bronze - Kalaram Patel (Chhattisgarh)

MENS 100M RUN T35 FINALS

Gold - Vipin (Uttar Pradesh); Silver - Jatin Singh (Delhi); Bronze - Ravi Kumar (Uttar Pradesh)

MENS 100M RUN T36

Gold - Chirag (Delhi); Silver - Arpit Sharma (Madhya Pradesh); Bronze - Haryana.

WOMEN SHOT PUT F53/F54

Gold - Keerthika Jayachandran (Tamil Nadu); Silver - Kanchan Lakhani (Haryana); Bronze - Geetha Kannan (Tamil Nadu)

badminton competition at the Indira Gandhi Stadium. Friday saw some exciting encounters with the likes of Paris Paralympian Nitesh Kumar and Tokyo Paralympics Gold medallist Krishna Nagar showing their dominance.

Paris 2024 gold medallist Nitesh Kumar made the finals in his category while Krishna Nagar entered the semifinals. Nithya Sre and Palak Kohli, the other top names in the badminton competition, also advanced in their respective sections.

Ashleigh Gardner injured as Australia register win over NZ Women in first T20I

AGENCIES
AUCKLAND

Off-spinner Ashleigh Gardner met with an injury during the first T20I at Eden Park as Australia registered a magnificent win over New Zealand Women in the first T20I of the three-match series on Friday, as per the ICC.

Beth Mooney's 75* off 42 in her 200th international for Australia helped her team to a stellar eight-wicket win against New Zealand, helping the side get off to a winning start to the three-game



series. However, injury to experienced all-rounder Ash Gardner has given some concerns to the Australia setup.

Gardner bowled 14 balls in the New Zealand innings

before injuring herself during the 17th over. She tried to go for a return catch against a powerfully hit shot from Sophie Devine; however, she ended up injuring her right index finger. Gardner immediately left the field, with her remaining over being completed by Georgia Wareham.

While she wasn't needed during Australia's chase of 138, which was superbly aided by Mooney and Georgia Voll, there are concerns about her immediate availability.

"Gardner was taken for scans after she was struck

on the right index finger while attempting to hang onto a powerfully struck return catch from Devine. She immediately left the field, with her involvement in the remainder of the series currently under a cloud," a statement from Cricket Australia read.

Australia's reliable all-rounder has 78 wickets and 1411 runs in the format, and will be dearly missed if she fails to play in the remainder of the series.

The second T20I is all set to be played at Mount Maunganui on 23rd March.

Ujjawal Choudhary sets national record in open throw

AGENCIES
NAVI MUMBAI

Haryana's Ujjawal Choudhary put in a splendid display on the opening day of the 4th Indian Open Throws Competition at the Jio Institute in Ulwe in Navi Mumbai on Thursday, winning the gold in the U20 discus throw event with a new national record. Choudhary's best of 59.34m broke the previous record of 58.11m.

Speaking after his win, Choudhary said, "I prepared in the pre-season in South Africa and was confident of doing well. I'm very happy that I broke the national record and am now targeting the Asian Championships later



This year."

Himachal Pradesh's Vaibhav (53.48m) and Haryana's Ritik (52.88m) won silver and bronze respectively behind Choudhary.

In the marquee men's javelin throw event's qualification round, Karnataka's Shashank Patil topped the charts with a throw of 72.48m. Army's Ni-

tesh Yadav (72.34m) and Sunny Sheoran (71.43m) finished second and third.

In the U-18 discus throw, Reliance Foundation's Usmanali Khan won gold with a best throw of 55.11m. Speaking post his gold, Usmanali said, "I'm seeing a lot of improvement in my performance since becoming a part

of Reliance Foundation. The training facilities and infrastructure are really world-class here. It is one of the best places in India to train at and I have been working a lot on my technique."

Sonu (Delhi) and Yashraj Jain (Madhya Pradesh) won silver and bronze in the category by hurling the discus to a distance of 52.15m and 51.44m, respectively.

In the first senior competition of the day, Haryana's Seema won Gold in the women's discus throw event with an impressive effort of 56.39m, with Neetika Verma and Priya winning silver (50.23m) and bronze (48.88m).