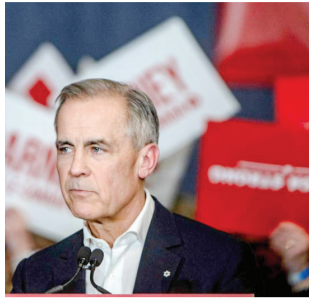




4
PRIYANKA RAISES LOCAL ISSUES AS SHE LAUNCHES CULTURAL CENTRE IN WAYANAD



11
US-CANADA TRADE WAR STRENGTHENS MARK CARNEY'S LEADERSHIP



16
IPL 2025: PATIDAR POWERS RCB TO 196 WITH FIFTY AGAINST CSK

Over 150 people die as earthquake of 7.7 magnitude rocks Myanmar, Thailand



Thai Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra has announced a state of emergency in Bangkok

AGENCIES
BANGKOK

A powerful earthquake rocked Myanmar and neighbouring Thailand on Friday, destroying buildings, a bridge and a dam. At least 144 people were killed in Myanmar, where photos and video from two hard-hit cities showed extensive damage. At least 10 died in the Thai capital, where a high-rise under construction collapsed.

The full extent of death, injury and destruction was not immediately clear — particularly in Myanmar, one of the world's poorest countries. It is embroiled in a civil war, and information is tightly controlled.

"The death toll and injuries are expected to rise," the head of Myanmar's military government, Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing said as he announced on television that at least 144 people were killed and 730 others were injured in his country.

In Thailand, Bangkok city authorities said 10 people were killed, 16 injured and 101 missing from three construction sites, including the high-rise.

The 7.7 magnitude quake struck at midday, with an epicentre near Mandalay, Myanmar's second-largest city. Aftershocks followed, one of them measuring a strong 6.4 magnitude.

Photos from Myanmar's capital, Naypyidaw, showed rescue crews pulling victims from the rubble of multiple



Mahamuni Buddha Temple in Mandalay, Myanmar, following the earthquake.

India stands ready for all possible help, agencies on standby

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday expressed concern over the devastating earthquake in Myanmar and Thailand and said India stands ready to offer all possible assistance to the two countries.

The earthquake rocked many parts of Thailand including its capital Bangkok, the venue for next week's summit of BIMSTEC regional grouping that is scheduled to be attended by Modi among other leaders.

"Concerned by the situation in the wake of the Earthquake in Myanmar and Thailand. Praying for the safety and wellbeing of everyone," Modi said on X.

"India stands ready to offer all possible assistance. In this regard, asked our authorities to be on standby. Also asked the MEA to remain in touch with the Governments of Myanmar and Thailand," he said. It is learnt that India is preparing to send assistance to the two countries.

RS 62,000-CR DEAL TO BUY 156 LCHs GETS CABINET NOD

Biggest order for Hindustan Aeronautics

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Cabinet Committee on Security on Friday gave its nod for the biggest ever deal to buy 156 Light Combat Helicopters worth over Rs 62,000 crore for the Indian Army and Air Force from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.

This would be the biggest order for the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited so far, and the choppers would be built at their plants in Bengaluru and Tumkur in Karnataka.

The 156 choppers would be divided between the Indian Army (90) and the Indian Air Force for operations along the China and Pakistan borders and would be a major step towards

ATMANIRBHAR



- Choppers would be built at plants in Bengaluru and Tumkur in Karnataka.
- Of 156 Light Combat Helicopters (LCH), Army will get 90
- LCH, also known as Prachand, an attack helicopter that can land and take off at an altitude of 5,000 meters (16,400 ft),
- Prachand is also

capable of firing a range of air-to-ground and air-to-air missiles.

- Both sides have been holding negotiations to end the standoff since September 2020.
- India had said China ties can't be normal unless there is peace in border areas.

Rs 22k-cr funding for electronics parts making scheme

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Friday approved the Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme with a funding of Rs 22,919 crore to make India "atmanirbhar" in the electronics supply chain.

Briefing reporters after a meeting of Union Cabinet, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said this scheme aims to develop a robust component ecosystem by attracting large global and domestic investments in electronics component manufacturing ecosystem, increasing Domestic Value Addition (DVA) by developing capacity and capabilities, and integrating Indian companies with Global Value Chains.

The meeting of the Union Cabinet was chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The scheme envisages attracting investment of Rs.59,350 crore, resulting in the production of Rs 4,56,500 crore and generating

Rajya Sabha Chair walks out of BAC meeting

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar walked out of



a meeting of the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) Friday, with House sources saying that a "lack of decorum" was the reason, but Opposition members claimed he left midway due to sharp differences between them and ruling MPs on issues to be taken up.

According to an Opposition leader, the Chairman walked out due to disagreements between ruling and Opposition members over the demand for a discussion on "duplicate" voter id (EPIC) numbers, and sending bills for scrutiny by parliamentary committees.

Rajya Sabha sources, however, insisted the EPIC (Elector Photo Identification Card) issue was not discussed. They said

PM Modi: India's policy now is 'equi-closeness'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Noting that India's presence is becoming stronger in the global arena, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said that the country earlier had a policy of "equi-distance" which has now changed to "equi-closeness".

Speaking at an event here, PM Modi said that the world's eyes are on India and people there are filled with a new curiosity about the country.

He made a veiled reference to the foreign policy pursued earlier of seeking to keep distance from major power blocs.

"Today India has the largest youth population in the world. These youth are becoming skilled rapidly and is accelerating innovation. Amidst all this, the mantra of India's foreign policy has become India First. At one time, India had a policy of...



Initiatives like International Yoga Day, WHO Global Centre highlight India's growing influence in the new world order

— Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

maintaining equal distance from everyone, the policy of equi-distance. The policy of today's India is equally close to everyone, the policy of equi-closeness," PM Modi said.

He said under India's G20 presidency, the African Union became a permanent member of the grouping.

"Today, India is emerging as a powerful voice for the Global South nations in global decision-making institutions. Initiatives like International Yoga Day, the WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine, and efforts across various sectors highlight India's growing influence in the new world order. This is just the beginning, and on the global platform, India's presence is becoming stronger than ever," PM Modi said.

He said India became the

India follows treatment of minorities in Pak: EAM



NEW DELHI: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said that India follows and tracks "very closely" the treatment of minorities in Pakistan and takes it up on an international level also.

During Question Hour in Lok Sabha, responding to a question on 'Crime and atrocities against minorities in Pakistan' on Friday, Jaishankar said that mentioned 10 cases of atrocities that were committed in Pakistan in February, which includes seven of them related to abduction and forcible conversion, two of them related to abduction and one related to police action against students who were celebrating Holi.

Dallewal drinks water, says stir will continue

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

Eight days after stopping water intake, fasting farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal took water at a private hospital in Patiala, where he has been admitted. This came after the release of all detained farmer leaders and activists from various jails across Punjab.

However, in a statement the farmer leaders made it clear that the agitation for pending demands including guaranteed MSP to continue. The development came af-



In a significant development, the Supreme Court on Friday acknowledged Jagjit Singh Dallewal as a "genuine farmer leader without any political agenda".

ter retired ADGP Jaskaran Singh, retired DIG Narinder Bhargav, and retired DSP Gurjit Singh Romana—acting as emissaries of the Punjab government—persuaded Dallewal to drink water. The farmer leader had conditioned his water intake on the unconditional release of arrested farmers and compensation for their missing belongings from protest sites.

Dallewal, along with hundreds of others, was detained on March 19 while returning from a meeting with Union and Punjab ministers in



Devotees offer prayers (namaz) on the occasion of 'Alvida Jumma' (Last Friday) of Ramzan, at a Mosque in Bikaner on Friday. ANI

INDIA FOLLOWING CLOSELY TREATMENT OF MINORITIES IN PAKISTAN, EAM TELLS LS

Says there were 10 cases of atrocities against Hindu community in neighbouring country in Feb

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said that India follows and tracks "very closely" the treatment of minorities in Pakistan and takes it up on an international level also.

During Question Hour in Lok Sabha, responding to a question on 'Crime and atrocities against minorities in Pakistan' on Friday, Jaishankar said that mentioned 10 cases of atrocities that were committed in Pakistan in February, which includes seven of them related to abduction and forcible conversion, two of them related to police action against students who were celebrating Holi.

Jaishankar said, "I sympathize with the sentiments expressed by the honourable member. There are two parts to the question. One, whether we follow what are the crimes and atrocities



External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar speaks in the Lok Sabha during the Budget session of the Parliament, in New Delhi on Friday. (ANI Photo/Sansad TV)

ties against the minorities in Pakistan. And secondly, what are we doing about it internationally? So, the first part of it is yes, sir, we follow very closely, we track very closely the treatment of minorities in Pakistan. And as an example, I would like to apprise the House that just in the month of February, there were 10 cases of atrocities

against the Hindu community, seven of them related to abduction and forcible conversion, two related to police action against students who were celebrating Holi." He said that there were three incidents related to the Sikh community in Pakistan and two cases pertaining to the Ahmadiyya community.

He stated that a Christian person, who reportedly was mentally unstable was charged with blasphemy in Pakistan.

Jaishankar said, "There were three incidents relating to the Sikh community in Pakistan. In one case, a Sikh family was attacked. In another case, a Sikh family was threatened because

of the reopening of an old gurdwara. There was also an abduction and conversion issue with one girl from that community. There were two cases pertaining to the Ahmadiyya community. In one case, a mosque was sealed and in another case, 40 graves were desegregated and there was one case pertaining to the Christian community, where a Christian person who reportedly was mentally unstable was charged with blasphemy."

He said that India takes up the issues at international level and cited the remarks of India's representative at the UN Human Rights Council and India's Ambassador in the UN General Assembly.

Elaborating on how India takes up the issue on international level, Jaishankar said, "So the answer to the Honourable Member Sir is, yes, we track it very, very closely. We take it up, and we take it up at the international level also.

Parliament adjourned till April 1

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha, Lok Sabha were adjourned on Friday and will meet again on April 1 at 11 am.

The Lok Sabha on Friday passed the Carriage of Goods by Sea Bill, 2024, which aims to modernise regulations governing the responsibilities, liabilities, rights, and immunities of carriers involved in the transportation of goods by sea.

The bill, which also addresses matters connected therewith or related thereto, was introduced to repeal and replace the century-old pre-Independence legislation, the Indian Carriage of Goods by Sea Act, 1925.

Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal, highlighted the significance of the new legislation, stating that it updates a framework that has been in place for 100 years.

"This bill intends to repeal and replace the 100-year-old pre-independence leg-



Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla conducts the proceedings of the House during the Budget session of the Parliament, in New Delhi on Friday. (ANI Photo/Sansad TV)

islation, the Indian Carriage of Goods by Sea Act, 1925," Sonowal said.

Earlier, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said that India follows and tracks "very closely" the treatment of minorities in Pakistan and takes it up on international level also.

During Question Hour in Lok Sabha, responding to a question on 'Crime and atrocities against minorities in Pakistan' on Friday, Jaishankar said that mentioned 10 cases of atrocities that

were committed in Pakistan in February, which includes seven of them related to abduction and forcible conversion, two of them related to abduction and one related to police action against students who were celebrating Holi.

Jaishankar said, "I sympathize with the sentiments expressed by the honourable member. There are two parts to the question. One, whether we follow what are the crimes and atrocities against the minorities in Pakistan.

And secondly, what are we doing about it internationally? So, the first part of it is yes, sir, we follow very closely, we track very closely the treatment of minorities in Pakistan. And as an example, I would like to apprise the House that just in the month of February, there were 10 cases of atrocities against the Hindu community, seven of them related to abduction and forcible conversion, two related to abduction, one related to police action against students who were celebrating Holi."

Carriage of Goods by Sea Bill passed in LS, century-old legislation replaced

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

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cance of the new legislation, stating that it updates a framework that has been in place for 100 years.

"This bill intends to repeal and replace the 100-year-old pre-independence legislation, the Indian Carriage of Goods by Sea Act, 1925," Sonowal said. The minister further elaborated that the Act applies to ships transporting goods from an Indian port

to a foreign port and between Indian ports, thereby encompassing both international and domestic carriers of goods by sea.

"The Act is applicable when ships are carrying goods from an Indian port to a foreign port or from one Indian port to another, covering international carriers of goods from India as well as domestic carriers of goods by sea," he added.

'Centre nets Rs 25.46 lakh crore, spends Rs 38.93 lakh crore in FY 24-25 up to Feb'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Government of India's monthly account up to February 2025 (FY2024-25) has been consolidated, and reports have been published, according to the release.

The Government of India has received Rs 25,46,317 crore (80.9% of corresponding RE 2024-25 of Total Receipts upto February 2025, comprising Rs 20,15,634 crore of Tax Revenue (Net to Centre), Rs 4,93,319 crore of Non-Tax Revenue and Rs 37,364 crore of Non-Debt Capital Receipts, as stated in the release.

RS MP moves motion for setting up National Council for Future Affairs akin to Haryana

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

In a forward-looking initiative aimed at preparing India for the next era of technological and strategic transformation Kartikeya Sharma, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) from Haryana, introduced a private members' resolution in the Upper House today, calling for the establishment of a Council for Future Affairs (CFA). This proposed apex institution would serve as a national-level body to coordinate, innovate, and lead India's advancement in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, quantum computing, and small modular nuclear reactors.

The resolution envi-



sions the CFA as a unified platform for integrating research, industrial development, policy strategy, and global collaboration, enabling India to become not just a participant but a leader in shaping the future global order.

Shri Sharma's proposal draws inspiration from

the Government of Haryana's bold step in announcing the creation of a "Department of Future", making Haryana the first state in India to institutionalize strategic foresight in governance. This department is designed to function as a think tank, catalyst, and coordina-

tion hub across vital sectors including agriculture, healthcare, education, urban development, and sustainability. Shri Sharma praised the progressive governance of Haryana Chief Minister Shri Nayab Singh Saini, stating that "under his visionary leadership, Haryana has emerged as a national model in future-oriented governance, showing how states can lead the way for national policy innovation."

The Hon'ble MP also lauded Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's visionary leadership, noting that the proposed Council for Future Affairs is a natural extension of the Prime Minister's transformative vision for a digitally empowered and self-reliant India.

Waqf Bill to be introduced in ongoing session: Shah

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah made it clear on Friday that the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, which was referred to a joint parliamentary committee (JPC) in August 2024, will be reintroduced in the current session of Parliament.

Only four working days are left for the ongoing bud-

get session to come to an end on April 4.

"We will introduce the Waqf Bill in Parliament within this session," Shah said at the "Times Now Summit 2025".

He said no one should be afraid of the proposed legislation as the Narendra Modi government is amending the Waqf Act in accordance with the ambit of the Constitution.

"The opposition is misleading Muslims. No rights of Muslims will be curbed. They are just telling lies after lies," he said.

The home minister said the government had to bring the amendment bill to the existing law as the original legislation was enacted due to the politics of appeasement.

He claimed that the Congress had made rules in the

Waqf Act that were not in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution.

"We have aligned the Waqf Bill within the ambit of the Constitution, while the Congress had twisted the law for its political advantage," he said.

Shah said the BJP-led NDA government is working in a way that the legislation can be challenged in courts.

GLIMPSES FROM PARLIAMENT



Union Minister Jitin Prasada, RS MP Kartikeya Sharma and others at Parliament House premises on Friday. ANI



Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari and BJP MP Kamakhya Prasad Tasa at Parliament House. ANI



Awami Ittehad Party chief Sheikh Abdul Rashid speaks in the Lok Sabha. ANI



NCP-SP MP Supriya Sule speaks in the Lok Sabha during the Budget session. ANI



BJP MP Rajiv Pratap Rudy speaks in the Lok Sabha. ANI



Congress MP Imran Pratapgarh at Parliament House. ANI



Lok Sabha proceedings underway during the Budget session of Parliament, in New Delhi on Friday. (ANI Photo/Sansad TV)

Customs duty cuts, levy withdrawals ongoing process, not linked to global events: Sitharaman

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said the ongoing process of rationalizing customs duties and withdrawing the 6 per cent equalization levy, which began in 2023, is independent of any global events and will continue.

Sitharaman said customs duty reductions are part of India's broader objective to strengthen its manufacturing hub and boost battery and advanced chemistry capacities.

Replying to a debate on the Finance Bill 2025 in Ra-



jya Sabha, Sitharaman said, "Consistently, budget after budget, we are coming up with a reduction in duties so that India's aspiration for being a manufacturing hub and India's aspiration in building capacities for battery manufacturing and advanced chemistry is being supported. So, this is a consistent thing." "I heard quite a few mem-

bers say, "Oh, the tariff war has started, so in response to the tariff announcements made by President Trump, here we are doing it. No, we have been doing it since 2023, steadily, every year. Newer items are being brought in, keeping in mind Atmanirbhar Bharat and, at the same time, Viksit Bharat's requirements, as well as simplifying

the customs duty and compliance details," Sitharaman said.

"So, this is an ongoing process. It has nothing to do with today's global situation but is a process that will continue even in the future," she added. India reduced Customs duties on many items and withdrew the equalisation levy of 6 per cent

In a significant policy announcement from the Oval Office, President Donald Trump has declared a 25 per cent tariff on all imported vehicles entering the United States, a move he described as "very exciting" for domestic manufacturing.

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON HINDU RASHTRA VS CONSTITUTION

36% say it's due to the system dissatisfaction, 29% support monarchy

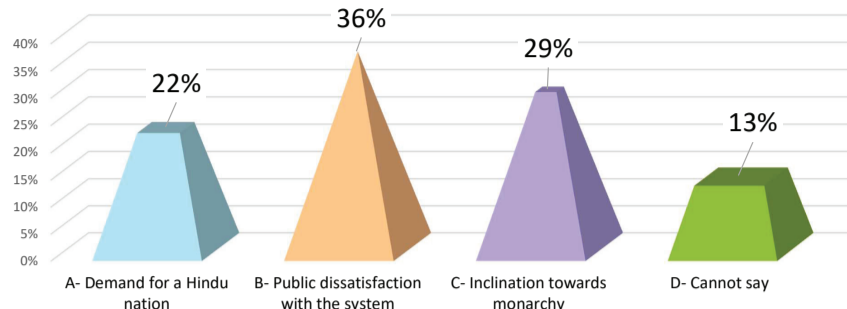
The unrest in Nepal regarding the demand for the return of monarchy is mainly driven by 36% of the popu-

lation's dissatisfaction with the current political system, which includes issues like instability, corruption, and

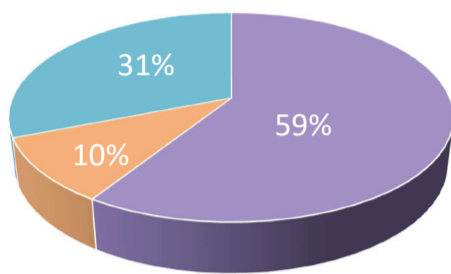
inefficiency. Additionally, 22% support the idea of reinstating a Hindu nation.

Q1.

What do you think is the real meaning behind the unrest in Nepal regarding the demand for the return of monarchy?



- A- India should become a Hindu nation
- B- The demand for a Hindu nation is wrong
- C- Things should remain as they are

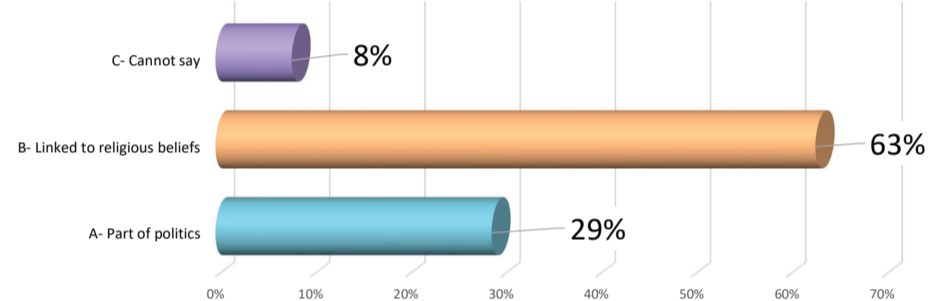
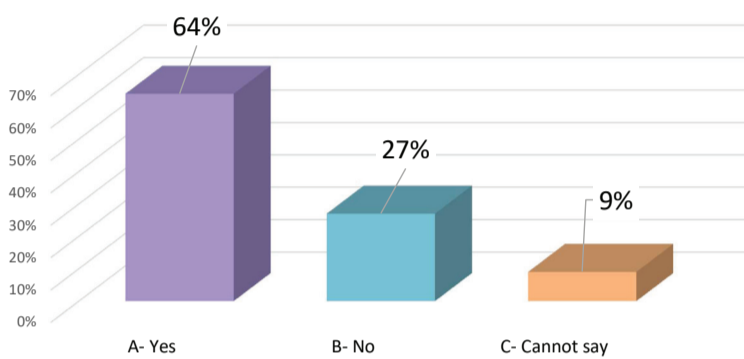


Q2.

The demand to declare India a Hindu nation is gaining momentum. What is your opinion?

Q3.

Is the demand for a Hindu nation in Nepal necessary for India's security?



Q4.

Is the demand for a Hindu nation a part of politics or linked to religious beliefs?

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON EID NAMAZ CONTROVERSY

Around 72% of participants believe that banning Eid prayers on roads in Uttar Pradesh is the right decision, while 28% disagree.

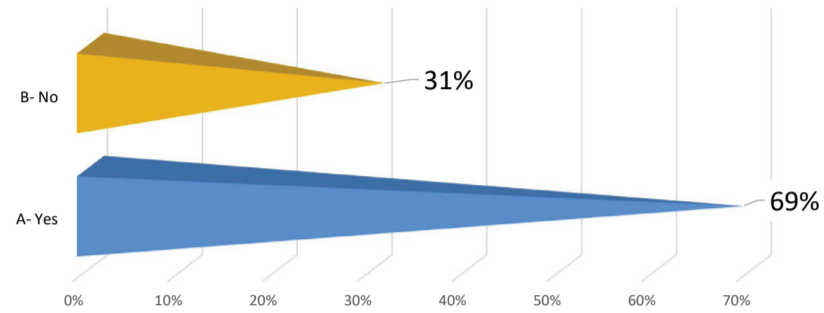
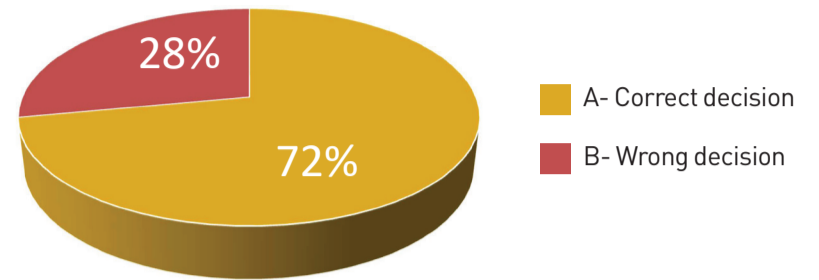
The decision to ban Eid prayers on roads in Uttar Pradesh has sparked mixed reactions. 72% of respon-

dents view it as a correct decision, citing safety concerns and traffic disruption, while 28% believe it

limits religious freedom and expression, arguing for alternative solutions.

Q1.

In Uttar Pradesh, Eid prayers on roads have been banned. What is your opinion on this decision?

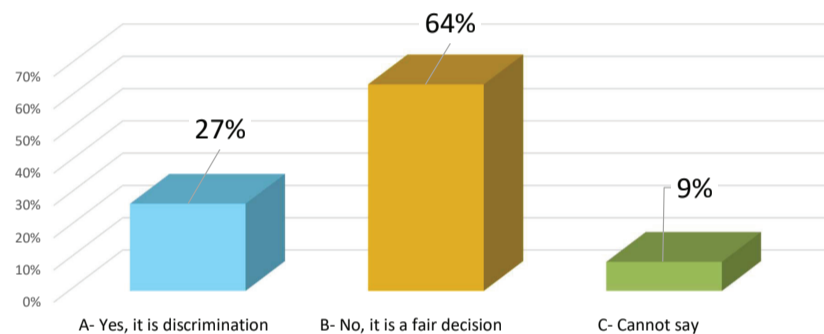
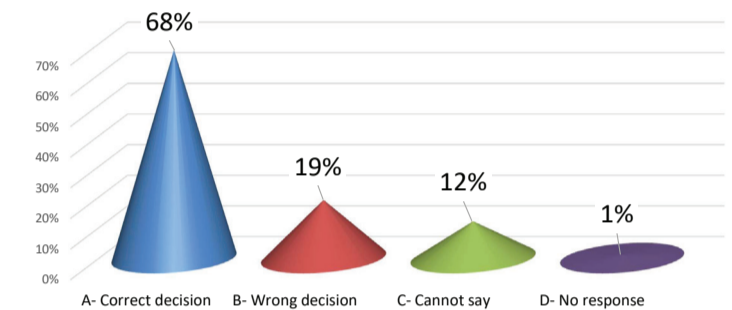


Q2.

Have you ever faced traffic jams or any other inconvenience during Eid prayers on roads?

Q3.

Meerut Police stated that if Eid prayers are held on roads, passports and licenses will be suspended. Do you think this is justified?



Q4.

Do you think the Uttar Pradesh government's order is a fair decision, or do you see it as discrimination against a particular religion?

Over 150 people die

CONTINUED FROM P1

buildings used to house civil servants.

Myanmar's government said blood was in high demand in the hardest-hit areas. In a country where prior governments sometimes have been slow to accept foreign aid, Min Aung Hlaing said Myanmar was ready to accept assistance.

At the United Nations, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the world body is mobilizing to respond to Myanmar's appeal for international help.

But as images circulated of buckled and cracked roads, a collapsed bridge and a burst dam, there were concerns about how rescuers would even reach some areas in a country already enduring a humanitarian crisis.

"We fear it may be weeks before we understand the full extent of destruction caused by this earthquake," said Mohammed Riyas, the International Rescue Committee's Myanmar director.

In Mandalay, the earthquake reportedly brought down multiple buildings, including the Ma Soe Yane monastery, one of the largest in the city, and damaged the former royal palace. A video posted online showed robed monks in the street, shooting their own video of the multistorey monastery before it suddenly fell into the

ground. It was not immediately clear whether anyone was harmed.

Christian Aid said its partners and colleagues on the ground reported that a dam burst in the city, causing water levels to rise in the lowland areas.

In the Sagaing region just southwest of the city, a 90-year-old bridge collapsed, and some sections of the highway connecting Mandalay and Myanmar's largest city, Yangon, were also damaged.

Yangon residents rushed out of their homes when the quake struck. In Naypyitaw, some homes stood partly crumbled, while rescuers heaved away bricks from the piles of debris. An injured man reclined on a wheeled stretcher, while another man fanned him in the heat.

In a country where many people already were struggling, "this disaster will have left people devastated," said Julie Mehigan, who oversees Christian Aid's work in Asia, the Middle East and Europe.

"Even before this heart-breaking earthquake, we know conflict and displacement has left countless people in real need," Mehigan said.

Myanmar's military seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021, and is now involved in a

bloody civil war with long-established militias and newly formed pro-democracy ones.

Government forces have lost control of much of Myanmar, and many places are incredibly dangerous or simply impossible for aid groups to reach. More than 3 million people have been displaced by the fighting and nearly 20 million are in need, according to the United Nations.

In Thailand, a 33-story building under construction crumpled into a cloud of dust near Bangkok's popular Chatuchak market, and onlookers could be seen screaming and running in a video posted on social media. Vehicles on a nearby freeway came to a stop.

Sirens blared across the Thai capital's downtown as a rescuers streamed to the wreckage. Above them, shredded steel and broken concrete blocks, some stacked like pancakes, rose in a towering heap. Injured people were rushed away on gurneys, and hospital beds were also wheeled outside onto a sidewalk.

"It's a great tragedy," Deputy Prime Minister Suriya Juangroongruangkit said after viewing the site, adding that there was hope that there were still survivors.

The city's elevated rapid transit system and subway shut down.

Rs 62,000-cr deal

CONTINUED FROM P1

creating jobs and expanding the aerospace ecosystem within the country," said a defence source.

Hindustan Aeronautics (HAL) received the tender for 156 Light Combat Helicopters (LCH) in June last year.

The IAF is the lead agency for this joint procurement, they said.

The LCH, which is also known as the Prachand, is the world's only attack helicopter that can land and take off at an altitude of 5,000 meters (16,400 ft), which makes it ideal to operate in the high-altitude areas of the Siachen glacier and Eastern Ladakh. The Prachand is also capable of firing a range of air-to-ground and air-to-air missiles and can destroy

Rs 22k-cr funding

CONTINUED FROM P1

additional direct employment of 91,600 persons and many indirect jobs as well during its tenure.

Electronics is one of the highest-traded and fastest-growing industries globally and is expected to play a pivotal role in shaping the global economy and advancing a country's economic and technological development.

The domestic production of electronic goods has increased from Rs.190 lakh crore in FY 2014-15 to Rs.9.52 lakh crore in FY 2023-24 at a CAGR of more than 17%. The exports of electronic goods have also increased from Rs.0.38

the enemy's air defence operations.

The government has been emphasising the intention to go for self-reliance in defence manufacturing through Make in India as part of Atmanirbhar Bharat initiatives. The government has placed the biggest order for indigenous defence systems including the 83 Light Combat Aircraft and is in the process of ordering 97 more for which the negotiations have been concluded.

The Cabinet Committee on Security recently cleared the deal for 307 ATAGS howitzers and the deal for it is scheduled to be signed on Wednesday this week. The Rs 7,000 crore deal is divided between two companies, including Bharat Forge and the Tata group.

lakh crore in FY 2014-15 to Rs.2.41 lakh crore in FY 2023-24 at a CAGR of more than 20%.

Projections indicate that India's electronics production will reach USD 300 billion by 2026.

India has made significant progress in mobile and electronics manufacturing and become the world's 2nd largest mobile manufacturing country.

In 2014, India had only two mobile manufacturing units but fast forward to today, the nation boasts over 300 manufacturing units, underscoring a significant expansion in this vital sector.

In 2014 -15 only 26 per

cent of the mobile phones which were being sold in India were made in India, the rest were being imported. Over 99 per cent of all mobile phones which are sold in India are made in India.

The manufacturing value of mobile phones has surged from Rs 18,900 crore in FY14 to a staggering Rs 4,22,000 crore in FY24. More than 325 to 330 million mobile phones a year are being manufactured in India and on average there are about a billion mobile phones in use in India.

The exports, which were almost non-existent in 2014, have now surpassed Rs 1,29,000 crore.

Rajya Sabha Chair walks out of BAC meeting

CONTINUED FROM P1

Dhankhar decided to walk out as the government and Opposition members refused to budge from their respective positions on these issues.

The BAC meeting was called to decide the business for the Upper House for the coming week.

According to the senior opposition leader quoted above, their MPs wanted the government to fix the time for debates on issues like EPIC cards, the Manipur situation and scrutiny of bills. Opposition leaders insisted they are giving notices everyday for discussions on different issues, however, no time was being allotted for those.

The Opposition MPs stressed while they supported government business, the issues they are seeking to discuss are not being listed, leading to a standoff between the rival members.

Amid the disagreement, the Chairman walked out of the meeting, the leader said.

Another Opposition leader, meanwhile, said they have conveyed to the Chairman that they are flexible

on the rules under which discussion on EPIC can be held, as well as the wording of the notice, but the discussion should be taken up.

The Trinamool Congress, which has been raising the issue continuously in the House with multiple MPs giving notices almost every day, has warned of protests if the debate is not take up in Parliament.

The BAC meeting was convened on a day heated exchanges were witnessed in the Upper House between treasury and opposition benches over remarks made by Samajwadi Party leader Ramji Lal Suman.

Speaking in the Rajya Sabha recently, Suman had called Rajput king Rana Sanga a 'traitor'. In protest, Karni Sena workers vandalised his residence in Agra on Wednesday.

The Rajya Sabha saw a brief adjournment and a walkout by opposition over this issue on Friday.

The Opposition MPs condemned the attack on his residence, while ministers and ruling BJP MPs slammed Suman for his remarks and demanded an unqualified apology from him.

India's policy is 'equi-closeness'

CONTINUED FROM P1

fifth largest economy from the 11th largest in just seven to eight years

"Today the world's eyes are on India, on our country. Wherever you go in the world, people there are filled with a new curiosity about India. What

happened that a country which became the 11th largest economy in 70 years became the 5th largest economy in just 7-8 years?" he said.

PM Modi also referred to India's GDP doubling in ten years.

"New figures from the IMF have come out, these

figures say that India is the only major economy in the world that has doubled its GDP in 10 years. In the last decade, India has added UDS two lakh crore to its economy," he said, adding that 25 crore people have come out of poverty and are part of "neo-middle class".

CONTINUED FROM P1

Chandigarh. Following his detention at the PWD rest house in Jalandhar, he stopped consuming water in protest. As he was later admitted to a private hospital in Patiala, senior officials and farmer leaders visited him upon their release, and he finally took water.

In a significant development, the Supreme Court of India on Friday acknowledged Jagjit Singh Dalle-

Dallewal drinks water, says agitation will continue

wal as a "genuine farmer leader without any political agenda." This came while the Punjab government informed the court that he had broken his prolonged hunger strike amid protests over various demands.

Meanwhile, a bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh dismissed contempt proceedings against the Punjab Chief Secretary and Director General of Police for alleged non-compliance with an earlier order to provide medical

assistance to Dallewal. The Punjab government also reported that the protesting farmers at Khanauri and Shambhu borders had been dispersed, and all roads and highways had been reopened to traffic.

The court directed Punjab and Haryana governments to submit a status report on the ground situation, remarking, "We know some people did not want the settlement of farmers' grievances. We are not sitting in an ivory tower. We know

everything." Despite taking water, farmer leaders emphasized that Dallewal's hunger strike is still ongoing and warned against government-backed rumors suggesting otherwise.

They stated that his health remains critical, and he is facing difficulty in speaking. Farmer leaders also condemned the Punjab government's actions, particularly the March 19 arrests, calling them "deceptive, anti-democratic, and unethical."

NO GANGRAPE IN RG KAR INCIDENT, CBI TELLS CALCUTTA HIGH COURT

Agency now probing any 'larger conspiracy' and destruction of evidence

SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA

The CBI on Friday informed the Calcutta High Court that the 31-year-old victim of the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital tragedy was not gangraped. The CBI counsel informed the High Court that the agency was now investigating into any 'larger conspiracy' and the destruction of evidence.

Questioned by Justice Tirthankar Ghosh of the Calcutta High Court, the CBI counsel said: "We have brought the status report, further investigation is going on. All the queries have been answered in the report."

Justice Ghosh asked the CBI counsel again whether the Central probe agency had made a list of suspects.

"All forensic reports were taken, all DNA samples collected from the scene of crime was examined. A medical board comprising

MADE A LIST OF SUSPECTS? COURT ASKS CBI

Justice Ghosh asked the CBI counsel again whether the Central probe agency had made a list of suspects.

The CBI counsel informed the High Court that the agency was now investigating into any "larger conspiracy" and the destruction of evidence, for which daily investigation was being conducted.

"You are investigating the destruction of evi-

14 experts from different medical institutions across the country from gynaecology, orthopaedics, DNA experts was formed. They opined that this is not a case of gang rape," the CBI counsel replied.

The CBI counsel informed the High Court that the agen-



ence. Is this examination on conspiracy related to commission of offence?" Justice Ghosh asked the CBI counsel

cy was now investigating into any "larger conspiracy" and the destruction of evidence, for which daily investigation was being conducted.

"You are investigating the destruction of evidence. Is this examination on conspiracy related to commission of offence?" Justice Ghosh

The State's counsel Kalyan Banerjee said the State had no objection to the investigation on destruction of evidence.

asked the CBI counsel.

When Justice Ghosh asked, how the CBI left out section 70 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita related to gang rape, the CBI counsel replied the agency was probing the post offence conduct.

"Therefore, you say that incident was by a single

person. Even if there was no second offender, there was no conspiracy on the substantive offence," said Justice Ghosh.

The State's counsel Kalyan Banerjee said the State had no objection to the investigation on destruction of evidence.

"I have no objections regarding the investigation into the destruction of evidence. But, the investigation was concluded and the charge sheet was filed. Therefore, there cannot be any further investigation," said Banerjee, senior counsel and Trinamool Lok Sabha MP from Serampore.

Banerjee argued that further investigation can be done at the stage of trial and not after the conclusion of trial. A trial court had convicted former Kolkata Police civic volunteer Sanjay Roy of rape and murder and gave him a life sentence. The CBI has appealed against the lower court verdict.

Priyanka raises Wayanad local issues as she launches cultural centre in city

TDG NETWORK
WAYANAD



Congress Lok Sabha MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra inaugurated the 50-acre Kattunayikkal Unnathi Cultural Centre in Vadakkanad, a small village located in Wayanad, situated between Sultan Bathery and Mananthavady.

Addressing the gathering, she highlighted several local issues, including the lack of drinking water and the delay in completing a 12.5 km road project.

"There are many difficulties here, like drinking water or the 12.5 km road project, which urgently needs to be completed. It is already included in the central government's list of roads, but I will be happy to meet the concerned Minister to expedite the project," Priyanka Gandhi said.

She also expressed concern over the non-implementation of a crash guard iron rope fencing project despite funds being sanc-

tioned. "It is sad that the crash guard iron rope fencing you have asked for has not been built despite money being sanctioned for it already," she remarked.

Congress Lok Sabha MP emphasized the need for a permanent structure for the community, acknowledging the high costs involved.

"It is important for you to have a permanent structure, which, of course, costs a lot of money, which is why the government is reluctant to sanction money for them," she noted.

She further assured that she would write to the state government to press for the fulfilment of the community's original demand for the crash-guard fence.

Earlier today, Lok Sabha MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also laid the foundation stone for several women-led developmental projects in the Thavinhal Gram Panchayat in the Wayanad district in Kerala, highlighting the importance of women's involvement in such projects and the district's "huge tourism potential."

"Today, the foundation stone that I am laying is for the model Anganwadi 'take a break centre', which is the rest and recreation centre mainly for tourists, but it will be operated by the Kutumbachi ladies, and the women's run cafeteria and park as well," Priyanka Gandhi said while addressing the people in the area.

Haryana Cong MLAs, Chandigarh cops argue as vehicle not allowed entry into dinner venue

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

At least six Haryana Congress MLAs indulged in heated arguments with the personnel of the Chandigarh police when they were allegedly stopped outside a government bungalow.

The incident took place late night Wednesday when the MLAs were on their way to a dinner hosted by Education Minister Mahipal Dhandra. However, police blocked their vehicles, citing a full parking space, and asked

them to walk inside. This led to a heated argument between the police and the MLAs.

When the MLAs identified themselves and requested permission to take their vehicles inside, a police officer allegedly said, "Don't show power here."

The situation escalated when a policeman pushed MLA Induraj Narwal, making matters worse.

A 2-minute 15-second video of the incident went viral on social media on March 28, showing Congress MLAs

Jassi Petwad and Induraj Narwal arguing with police officers.

In the video, Petwad can be heard accusing the police of blocking their vehicle, saying, "You ran and placed barricades in front of our car. Our driver was just about to drop us and leave."

MLA Induraj Narwal claimed that the police threatened their driver and used abusive language. "We were sitting quietly, but the police started pushing us," he was seen alleging in the video.

Traffic Inspector Suba Singh defended the police action, stating that the barricade was placed due to lack of parking space. "We asked the MLAs to walk inside, but they refused," he said. After a brief argument, the police eventually allowed them to enter.

Congress MLA Jassi Petwad later said that they did not file any complaint after the matter was resolved. He accused the police officer of being disrespectful but said they did not wish to escalate the issue further.

MP Karti meets PM, raises dogs' menace issue

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Congress leader and MP Karti Chidambaram met Prime Minister Narendra Modi at his Parliament House office on Friday, highlighting the growing health and safety concerns posed by stray dogs in the country.

Taking to X, Chidambaram noted that India has over 6.2 crore stray dogs, one of the largest populations globally, and remains endemic for rabies, accounting for 36 per cent of the world's rabies-related deaths.

"Met the Hon'ble Prime Minister today in his Parliament House office to bring to his notice the growing health & safety concerns posed by stray dogs. India is home to one of the largest stray dog populations globally, with over 6.2 crore stray dogs. India is also endemic for rabies, responsible for 36% of the world's rabies-related deaths," he posted on X.

ONOE JPC chief Chaudhary meets PM Modi, briefs committee's progress

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Chairman of Joint Parliamentary Committee on One Nation-One Election and MP from Pali (Rajasthan) PP Chaudhary met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Friday.

MP PP Chaudhary, Chairman of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on One Nation-One Election and MP from Pali (Rajasthan), met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Friday. During the courtesy visit, Chaudhary briefed the Prime Minister on the progress of the committee's discussions about the "One Nation-One Election" initiative.



Chaudhary also presented Prime Minister Modi with a traditional miniature painting made by the Maa Chamunda Self Group, a women's collective from the Bhil tribal community. This group is focused on empowering women from low-income and backward families in tribal areas. Modi expressed his happiness and appreciation for their efforts. After the meeting, Chaud-

hary shared the moment on his social media, calling it an emotional experience. He praised Modi's leadership, which has strengthened India's global position and accelerated progress across various sectors. Chaudhary expressed his gratitude for the Prime Minister's warmth and guidance, considering it a great privilege to work under his leadership to build a developed India.

'Committed to make Yamuna pollution-free'

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

Haryana Environment Minister Rao Narbir Singh has said asserted that the state government is committed to make river Yamuna pollution free and efforts are being made in this direction.

The minister said that polluted water from Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, and Haryana flows into the Yamuna River, affecting its water quality. Singh assured that once the Yamuna Action



Plan is fully implemented by 2027, the pollution problem in the Gurgaon Canal and other connected waterways

by Congress MLA Aftab Ahmed, Singh outlined the steps being taken to tackle pollution. He stated that 1,239 million litres per day (MLD) of sewage is generated in 34 towns that discharge wastewater into the Yamuna.

He said that to manage this, 89 sewage treatment plants (STPs) with a capacity of 1,526 MLD have been set up, 65 of which were built in the last decade. Additionally, three new STPs are being installed, and 13

old plants are being upgraded.

He also pointed out that Delhi is generating more sewage than its treatment capacity, worsening Yamuna's pollution. Despite having STPs of 3,474 MLD capacity, Delhi produces 3,600 MLD of sewage. However, steps taken by authorities have improved water quality, bringing down the Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) level from 32 mg/l in 2018 to 21 mg/l in December 2024.

Actor Vijay's party TVK passes resolution against three-language policy, delimitation, Waqf Bill

TDG NETWORK
CHENNAI

During its first general council meeting, actor Vijay's party Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) has passed a total of 17 resolutions, including a resolution against the three-language policy, proposed delimitation and Waqf (Amendment) Bill.

TVK, in the meeting, decided that they would ask the Centre to withdraw the Waqf (Amendment) Bill.

The resolution on the language policy stated that the party will remain dedicated to the two-language policy and proposed a three-language policy under the New Education Policy is against "federalism" and TVK will never accept "imposition" of another language politically.

Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) also passed a resolution against the proposed



delimitation, calling it "not necessary." The resolution states that the proposed delimitation will reduce the seats of the southern states.

During the meeting, TVK also condemned the ruling DMK government for not controlling drugs in the state. They accused DMK of making "false promises" on Old pension scheme to government employees.

Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam also raised the issue of fishermen arrested by Sri Lanka Navy and demanded a permanent solution for

it. The party extended its firm support to the fishermen.

The party also condemned the Union and Tamil Nadu government for not bringing of a permanent solution for fishermen issue. The resolution stated that "Prime Minister Narendra Modi should consider Tamil fishermen equal to Gujarat fishermen" and should bring permanent solution for fishermen problems."

A resolution was also passed against new Chennai proposed airport in Parandhur. The first general council meeting of TVK is underway at Ramachandra Convention Hall in Thiruvannamur.

Massive cutouts welcoming the party chief, Vijay was put outside the venue, and its entrance has been designed to resemble the entrance of Tamil Nadu Secretariat.

PM to launch Rs 33,700 crore worth of projects in Chhattisgarh

TDG NETWORK
RAIPUR

To accelerate Chhattisgarh's development, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to make historic announcements in Bilaspur on March 30. He will lay the foundation stone for several key projects worth over 33,700

crore and inaugurate multiple completed projects. These initiatives will strengthen infrastructure in power, railways, roads, gas supply, education, and housing across the state.

To make Chhattisgarh self-reliant in the energy sector, the Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone for two major power projects. These include the Sipat Super Thermal Power Project (800 MW) and the first supercritical thermal power project (2X660 MW) by Chhattisgarh State Power Generation Company. These projects will significantly improve electricity availability, benefiting industries

and the general public. Additionally, three transmission projects worth 560 crore will be launched to further enhance power distribution. The Prime Minister will also lay the foundation stone for the city gas distribution project in Korea, Surajpur, Balrampur, and Surguja districts. With over 1,000 km of gas pipelines and new CNG stations, the initiative aims to provide affordable and clean energy to residents. Additionally, the construction of a 540 km-long multipurpose petroleum pipeline from Visakhapatnam to Raipur will begin, ensuring a smoother fuel supply chain.

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Three held in digital arrest fraud case

TDG NETWORK
HYDERABAD



In a significant breakthrough, the Hyderabad Cybercrime Police have arrested three individuals from Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh, for their involvement in a digital arrest fraud case, according to a press statement by the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Cyber Crimes.

The accused have been identified as Thota Srinivasa Rao (59), Lam Jeevankumar (38), and Tammishetty Raghuvuvar (40). These accused were involved in a sophisticated scam that targeted vic-

tim across India.

According to the police, a resident from Hyderabad, Veeraboina Sai Raj was duped by these cyber fraudsters who convinced him to transfer Rs 3,57,998 to their bank accounts. The accused had contacted Raj, claiming to be a Head Constable from Mumbai, and informed him that a case had been registered against him. Raj was then instructed to transfer the money to the accused's account for verification purposes. The fraudsters assured Raj that the amount would be refunded to his account within 24 hours, and would also be provided with a Police Clearance Certificate. As a result, he ultimately lost the transferred amount of Rs. 3,57,998. The complainant further stated that the group of telecallers, with the help of several bank accounts, as per their well-orchestrated plan, impersonated themselves as bank officials and cheated him to the tune of an amount of Rs. 3,57,998.

RESIDENTS TAKE TO STREETS AS POWER CUTS ADD TO WOES AMID RISING TEMP

Discoms say outage is routine related to maintenance practices undertaken during lean power consumption period

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Residents of Jagatpur village in Burari blocked Outer Delhi Ring Road on Thursday, protesting against a prolonged power outage. The demonstration, fuelled by mounting anger over frequent cuts, brought traffic to a standstill.

As the summer heat looms, Delhiites are bracing for the worse.

The residents staged a protest against Delhi's electricity department, claiming to face prolonged power cuts.

Previously, Atishi claimed the situation deteriorated as soon as the AAP government was removed.

Power discoms dismissed the instances of power failure reported by Atishi. "These are instances related to routine maintenance practices undertaken during lean power consumption period," said a discom official, requesting anonymity.

"For the past three days different parts of Delhi have



Residents of Jagatpur village in Burari stage a protest on Thursday. X

been experiencing prolonged power cuts. This is not limited to just one area. If one checks social media, they will see numerous complaints. On February 9, Sainik Enclave faced a four-hour outage. Sunlight Colony 2 had an all-night blackout on February 8. Radheypuri, Vikaspuri KG-2, and Anand Parbat also suffered extended cuts," she said, adding that over 30 complaints had surfaced online.

A resident of Karol Bagh WEA (Western Extension Area), Atul Goyal, said there was a three-hour-long power outage in his area on February 11 between 10am to 1.30pm.

"After inquiry we found that it was a scheduled power cut to allow the laying of an electric cable in the area. The power was subsequently restored," said Goyal, who is also the president of Urja, an umbrella body of resident welfare associations in Delhi.

Meanwhile, On 15 February, the discoms in Delhi have claimed stable supply without any outages following allegations by outgoing Chief Minister Atishi that power cuts were reported from various parts of the city after AAP's defeat in Assembly polls.

POWER SITUATION 'WORSE' UNDER BJP: KEJRIWAL

NEW DELHI: Aam Aadmi Party's chief Arvind Kejriwal slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Delhi government on Friday for "making the power situation worse" in the national capital.

Claiming that the previous AAP-led government had set up the power system with "great difficulty," Kejriwal, in a post on X said, "We had set up the power system in Delhi with great difficulty, we had worked very hard. And we kept an eye on it daily. There was no power cut anywhere for ten years. These people have made the power situation worse in just one and a half months."

AAP leaders Atishi and Manish Sisodia also weighed in on the matter, warning of an impending crisis as temperatures are set to rise in the coming months. Atishi criticised the current administra-

tion's handling of the power infrastructure, stating, "The condition of electricity in Delhi in March is such that people are forced to take to the streets due to power cuts. So what will happen when the peak demand increases in the scorching heat of May-June?"

"Arvind Kejriwal ji's government provided 24-hour electricity to the people of Delhi for 10 years continuously, but the 'vipada' government proved in just one month that providing 24-hour electricity is beyond their capacity," she added.

Sisodia highlighted what he described as the BJP-led government's failure to sustain the uninterrupted electricity supply ensured by the AAP regime. "There was always electricity 24 hours a day in Delhi when Arvind Kejriwal ji was in power," he wrote.

Govt discontinues AAP's education initiatives, to bring new ones

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The previous AAP government's flagship education schemes, like Business Blasters, Happiness Curriculum and Mission Buniyaad, introduced in Delhi government schools, have been discontinued, an official said on Friday.

The BJP-led government in Delhi is preparing to replace them with new initiatives, including 'Rashtrantit', 'New Era of Entrepreneur Ecosystem and Vision (NEV)' and 'Science of Living', an official from the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) said.

He said that one of the major changes is the introduction of the NEV, which will replace the Business Blasters programme.

While both programmes deal with providing financial aid to students for launching their startups, the structure and implementation will be different.

In the now-discontinued scheme, students were given Rs 2,000 each as seed money. Under NEV, the fund has been raised to Rs 20,000, and the amount will be given to a group of students, the official explained.

Other programmes, such as the Happiness Curriculum, Yoga sessions and Vil-



This new programme will focus on teaching students moral values, caring for the elderly and incorporating various meditation techniques, including yoga, mindfulness and stretching exercises, he added.

lage Tour, have now been merged into a single initiative called Science of Living, he said. This new programme will focus on teaching students moral values, caring for the elderly and incorporating various meditation techniques, including yoga, mindfulness and stretching exercises, he added.

"Previously, these different programmes occupied multiple sessions over weeks and months. Now, instead of three separate sessions, we will have a single session covering all aspects," the official mentioned.

A timetable will be prepared to ensure that all

components of the Science of Living programme are effectively implemented, he added. The Business Blasters program was introduced in 2021 as part of the Entrepreneurship Mindset Curriculum. It provided seed money to students in classes 11 and 12 to help them develop startup ideas.

The Happiness Curriculum, started in 2018, was designed for students from nursery to class 8 and included daily activities such as storytelling and self-expression exercises to promote emotional well-being. The Dalai Lama attended its launch.

AAP MLAs marshalled out for 'disruption' of Assembly

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Several opposition MLAs including Leader of Opposition Atishi were marshalled out by Speaker Vijender Gupta from the Delhi Assembly for allegedly disrupting the Question Hour. AAP MLAs carrying posters and pamphlets on why the BJP government has not given the monthly aid to women it promised ahead of the elections.

The uproar started when AAP MLA Surender Kumar asked the government when the Rs 2,500 assistance under the Mahila Samridhi

Yojna would be provided. Cabinet Minister Parvesh Verma replied that a four-member committee was formed to implement the scheme. He also said the honorarium will be provided soon after the committee's notification and the formulation of eligibility guidelines.

AAP MLA Sanjiv Jha, however, brought out a poster at this moment and the speaker ordered him to be marshalled out.

One after the other, AAP legislators, including Atishi, Mukesh Ahlawat, Jarnail Singh, Vishesh Ravi and Prem Chauhan, were

ATISHI ATTACKS GOVT OVER THE SOURCE OF FUNDS FOR STATE BUDGET

NEW DELHI: Former Delhi chief minister and Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Atishi on Friday attacked the BJP government over the source of funds for the state budget.

Speaking at a press conference, Atishi said, "It is unclear where the money shown in the budget is coming from." She also criticised the government for not presenting the Economic Survey during the budget session, calling it a deviation from long-standing practice.

"The Economic Survey is a technical document that provides financial clarity. It has been presented in the Assembly for decades, but this time, the BJP government did not table it," she said.

Atishi said that if the survey had been

presented, it would have clarified whether the government's claim of a 20 per cent budget increase from the previous year was accurate.

She also asserted that during Arvind Kejriwal's tenure, the government never faced financial losses.

"Now, with the BJP in power, they are claiming the government is in deficit," she added.

The ruling party is yet to respond to Atishi's claims.

On Tuesday, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, who also holds the finance portfolio, presented the budget for the financial year 2025-26 with an outlay of Rs 1 lakh crore, marking a 31.5 per cent increase from the previous year.

Speaker Gupta clears path for MLAs to ask questions on Services Dept

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi MLAs will be able to ask questions related to the Services department of the Delhi government in the Assembly, Speaker Vijender Gupta said in a ruling on Friday. A common complaint of the MLAs during the previous AAP regime was that the Services department refused to provide replies to questions asked by them citing some communication from the Centre.

"In the matter of 'Services' the Supreme Court has decided that it is not a reserved



subject and questions related to the department will be admitted and answered," Gupta said in a statement.

The Services department matters like transfer and posting of Group A officers including those of Indian

Assembly refers CAG findings to PAC for investigation

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The CAG reports on finance and appropriation accounts of the previous AAP government in Delhi, revealing non-submission of bills and utilisation certificates worth hundreds of crores of rupees and risk of fund misuse, referred on Friday to the Assembly's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) for investigation. Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Wednesday tabled the reports in the Assembly. Finance Accounts and Appropriation Accounts of

the Delhi government for the financial years 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta said that in the Financial Accounts for the year 2021-2022, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) found that an amount of Rs 432.42 crore was outstanding due to non-submission of bills by government departments.

It means there was no way to confirm whether the amount was actually spent as approved by the Legislative Assembly. In the year 2022-2023, this amount was Rs 574.89 crore, he said.

6 illegal B'deshi migrants posing as trans to avoid cops held

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Six suspected illegal Bangladeshi migrants, disguised as transgender women to avoid detection, were arrested from Delhi's Jahangirpuri area, a police official said on Friday.

They underwent "minor surgeries" and "hormonal treatments" to change their appearance and blend into the local transgender community, the official said.

Police said they were found using a banned application to communicate with their family in Bangladesh.

All six migrants were handed over to the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) in RK Puram for further deportation proceedings.

Delhi Home Minister Ashish Sood in a statement on Friday said that not a single illegal infiltrator will be allowed to stay in national capital.

"In collaboration with the police, a well-planned crackdown will be carried out against all illegal infiltrators, including Bangladeshi infiltrators and those who shelter them.

FIR filed against Kejriwal for 'misusing' public money: Police tells court

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court was on Friday informed by police that an FIR was filed against former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal and others for allegedly misusing public money by putting up large hoardings in the national capital in 2019. Delhi Police made the submission in its compliance report filed before additional chief judicial magistrate Neha Mittal. "Copy of FIR has been filed in compliance of order dated March 11, 2025. A copy

of FIR and status report have been supplied to the counsel for the complainant (Shiv Kumar Saxena)," the judge noted.

The judge on March 11 directed police to lodge the FIR on a complaint that has alleged violation of Prevention of Defacement of Property Act.

The court has posted the hearing on April 18 after the police sought time to investigate the matter, saying the "matter is very old".

"Put up for filing of further status report on April 18,

2025," the judge said.

The police informed the court in its one-page status report that the FIR was lodged on March 26 at Dwarka Police Station and the investigation was underway.

"It is, therefore, requested that some time is required to complete the investigation as the matter is very old," the police said. Aside from Kejriwal, the court had ordered the FIR against former MLA Gulab Singh and then Dwarka councillor Nitika Sharma, for installing "large-sized" banners.

AAP, Congress anti-Dalit parties: BJP

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Friday called AAP and the Congress "anti-Dalit", alleging that the Arvind Kejriwal-led party underutilised Dalit welfare schemes' funds in Delhi while the Congress government in Karnataka has introduced 4 per cent quota for Muslims to take away the rights of the Scheduled Caste (SC) members.

There was no immediate reaction from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Con-



gress to the BJP's charge. Addressing a press conference here at the BJP headquarters, party national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia said the erstwhile government of AAP in Delhi allocated Rs 70 crore for the implementation of the Jai Bhim Mukhyamantri Pratibha Vikas scheme in

2022-23 but did not utilise any amount from the earmarked fund.

In the 2023-24 Budget, it reduced the budgetary outlay on this head to Rs 20 crore and utilised just Rs 1 lakh of the allocated fund, he added.

Citing other examples, Bhatia said the erstwhile AAP government allocated Rs 65 crore for improvement of Dalit 'bastis' (settlements) in the city in the 2020-21 Budget but utilised only Rs 50 lakh, less than 1 per cent.

CENTRE TRANSFERS JUSTICE VARMA TO ALLAHABAD HIGH COURT

Transfer made under Article 222 of the Constitution, after consultation with the CJI

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Central Government has issued a formal notification approving Justice Yashwant Varma's transfer from the Delhi High Court to the Allahabad High Court.

Notification stated that in exercise of the power conferred by clause (1) of Article 222 of the Constitution of India, the President, after consultation with the Chief Justice of India, is pleased to transfer Justice Yashwant Varma, Judge, Delhi High Court, to be a Judge of Allahabad High Court and to direct him to assume charge of his office in the Allahabad High Court.

Justice Varma's transfer comes amidst controversies surrounding allegations of

CASH CONTROVERSY

- Transfer follows allegations of unaccounted cash found after a fire at his residence.
- Supreme Court has formed a committee to investigate the cash discovery.
- Justice Varma denies involvement, stating neither he nor his family placed the cash.
- Allahabad High Court Bar Association protests Justice Varma's transfer with an indefinite strike.



unaccounted cash discovered at his official residence in New Delhi.

The incident occurred on March 14, following a fire at his Lutyens' Delhi home, during which semi-burnt

wads of cash were reportedly found.

This discovery led to an in-house inquiry initiated by the Supreme Court, which appointed a three-member committee to in-

vestigate the matter.

Justice Varma has strongly denied any involvement, asserting that neither he nor his family members placed the cash in the store-room. The controversy has

had significant repercussions for Justice Varma's role at the Delhi High Court. His name was notably absent from the recently reconstituted administrative committees, and his judicial work was withdrawn following a directive from the Chief Justice of India.

Despite these developments, the Supreme Court has emphasised that the transfer decision is separate from the ongoing inquiry.

Members of the Allahabad High Court Bar Association recently launched an indefinite strike, voicing their dissent against the Supreme Court Collegium's recommendation to transfer Justice Yashwant Varma from the Delhi High Court to the Allahabad High Court.

All states, UTs, except West Bengal, onboarded for Ayushman Bharat: Nadda

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Except for West Bengal, all states and Union Territories across the nation have been onboarded for the Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) as of March 26, Union Health Minister J P Nadda told the Lok Sabha on Friday. More than 8.9 crore hospital admissions worth Rs 1.26 lakh were authorised under AB-PMJAY since its inception till March 1, 2025, Nadda said.

Responding to a question, Nadda said that as of March 20, more than 10.21 lakh, 14.47 lakh, and 14.76 lakh Ayushman cards have been created for Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs), Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) and Anganwadi Helpers (AWHs) beneficiary families, respectively, under the scheme.

Till March 1, 30,957 hospitals, including 13,866 private and 17,091 public hospitals, were empanelled under the scheme.

Nadda said that till March 1, over 2.21 crore hospital admissions worth Rs 34,954 crore were authorised under AB-PMJAY for FY 2024-25.

Regular update such as expansion of beneficiary base, inclusion of new proce-



dures, empanelment of new hospitals and other improvements are done in the scheme as per requirements from time to time, he said.

Nadda said that under AB-PMJAY, the eligibility criteria for the beneficiary families were initially identified from the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) of 2011 on the basis of six deprivation and 11 occupational criteria across rural and urban areas, respectively. Further, in January 2022, on the basis of decadal growth rate of 11.7 per cent, the Government of India revised the beneficiary base to 12 crore families and provided the flexibility to states and Union Territories to use other databases (of similar socio-economic profile) for verification of beneficiaries against such SECC beneficiaries who could not be identified and verified. Several states and Union Territories (UTs) implementing AB-PM-

JAY have further expanded the beneficiary base under the scheme using non-SECC data sources (including the National Food Security Act, state specific datasets).

In March 2024, the eligibility criteria under the scheme were expanded to include 37 lakh ASHA workers, AWWs, AWHs and their families, Nadda said.

Further, on October 29, 2024, the government expanded AB-PMJAY to provide free treatment benefits of up to Rs 5 lakh per year to approximately six crore senior citizens aged 70 years and above, belonging to 4.5 crore families, irrespective of their socio-economic status.

Under AB-PMJAY, the health benefit packages have been revised five times since the launch of the scheme. Initially, the scheme included 1,359 packages, but the Health Benefit Package (HBP) 2022 now comprises 1,961 packages across 27 medical specialities, the minister said. A total of 365 new treatment procedures have been added and the rates for 832 packages have been increased. High-end procedures such as bone marrow transplants and cochlear implant surgeries have been introduced in addition to the already covered kidney transplants, he said.

Cabinet approves subsidy rates for kharif on phosphatic, potassic fertilizers

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the proposal of the Department of Fertilizers for fixing the Nutrient-Based Subsidy (NBS) rates for KHARIF Season 2025 (from 01.04.2025 to 30.09.2025) on Phosphatic and Potassic (P&K) fertilizers, said a official statement.

The budgetary requirement for the Kharif season of 2024 would be approximately Rs 37,216.15 cr. This is approximately Rs 13,000 crores more than the budgetary requirement for the Rabi seasons of 2024-25.

The availability of fertilizers to farmers at subsidised, affordable and reasonable prices will be ensured.

Rationalisation of subsidy on P&K fertilisers in view of recent trends in the international prices of fertilisers and inputs. The subsidy on P&K fertilisers, including NPKS grades, will be provided based on approved



rates for Kharif 2025 (applicable from 01.04.2025 to 30.09.2025) to ensure smooth availability of these fertilisers to the farmers at affordable prices.

The government is making available 28 grades of P&K fertilizers to farmers at subsidised prices through fertiliser manufacturers/importers. The subsidy on P&K fertilisers is governed by NBS Scheme w.e.f. 01.04.2010. In accordance with its farmer-friendly approach, the Government is committed to ensuring the availability of P&K fer-

tilizers to the farmers at affordable prices. In view of the recent trends in the international prices of fertilizers & inputs, i.e. Urea, DAP, MOP and Sulphur, the Government has decided to approve the NBS rates for Kharif 2025 effective from 01.04.25 to 30.09.25 on Phosphatic and Potassic (P&K) fertilizers, including NPKS grades.

The subsidy would be provided to the fertilizer companies at approved and notified rates so that fertilizers are made available to farmers at affordable prices.

HC asks Rashid Engineer to deposit Rs 4 lakh for going to Parliament

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday asked Jammu and Kashmir MP Abdul Rashid Sheikh, alias Engineer Rashid, to deposit Rs 4 lakh with the prison authorities as travel expenses for attending Parliament.

A bench of Justices Chandra Dhari Singh and Anup Jairam Bhambhani on March 25 allowed him to attend the ongoing Parliament session "in-custody" till April 4 and rejected the NIA's apprehension that he was a flight risk.

Rashid counsel on Friday said he had already deposited Rs 1.45 lakh with the authorities and would deposit the remaining Rs 2.55 lakh within three days.

The bench said upon depositing the amount, he would be taken to the Parliament to attend the session.

The court observed it did not want the purpose of its

order on allowing Rashid to attend the Parliament session to be defeated and therefore it was trying to strike a balance between the interest of both the parties.

Rashid, the court said, should at least deposit 50 per cent of the total amount of Rs 8.74 lakh and posted the matter on May 19.

The NIA, in the meantime, was directed to respond to Rashid's plea for a waiver of the condition to bear travel expenses to attend the Parliament session within four weeks.

Rashid said the March 25 order granting him permission to attend Parliament was uploaded on the court's website on March 26 afternoon and in the evening his counsel received an e-mail from the jail authorities that he was required to pay around Rs 1.45 lakh each day for travel and other arrangements.

It summed up to Rs 8.74 lakh for the six-day duration, the plea said.

Community is against this bill: AIMPLB's Ilyas on Muslims wearing black armbands

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Muslims in India are staging a peaceful protest against the Waqf Amendment Bill by wearing black armbands during Alvida Namaz on Friday.

All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) spokesperson Dr Syed Qasim Rasool Ilyas said that this form of protest is a democratic way to express dissent.

"This is a way to mark protest in a democracy. Today, you will see Muslims wearing black armbands come to offer namaz. This will send a clear message that the community is against this bill," AIMPLB spokesperson Rasool Ilyas said.

By wearing black armbands, Muslims aim to convey their opposition to the bill and assert their voices in the democratic process.

Muslim leaders also joined the protest. In Hyderabad, AIMIM chief and Lok Sabha MP Asaduddin Owaisi, who is also part of the JPC on the Waqf bill, joined in the symbolic protest wearing a black armband as he offered prayers on Friday.

Similarly, in Lucknow, AIMPLB member Khalid Rasheed Farangi Mahli, along with representatives of other Muslim organisa-



tions, wore black armbands.

"On the proposed Waqf amendment bill, AIMPLB and other muslim orgs had put forward their opinion to the (Joint Parliamentary) committee that the amendment is not agreed by us. Waqf is a muslim matter, and there should not be any changes to it so that waqf properties cannot be in the danger zone," AIMPLB member Mahli said.

The protest follows an earlier appeal by AIMPLB on March 27, urging Muslims to wear black armbands to mark Alvida Juma, the last Friday of Ramadan.

Sharing a letter on X, AIMPLB stated, "The strong protests by Muslims at Jantar Mantar in Delhi and Dharna Sthal in Patna have at least caused a stir among BJP's allied parties.

Now, a massive protest is also scheduled to take place in Vijayawada on March 29, 2025."

The AIMPLB expressed

its concerns over the bill, describing it as a "sinister conspiracy" that aims to deprive Muslims of their religious and charitable institutions.

Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath criticised the opposition for spreading misinformation about the BJP's stance on mosques and Waqf properties.

CM Yogi Adityanath questioned the opposition's motives, asking how much land they intend to take over in the name of Waqf and what welfare initiatives they have undertaken using Waqf properties.

Adityanath alleged that Waqf properties have been misused for personal gain, with some properties being sold multiple times, leading to disputes.

"What will the BJP do by taking over the Masjids? I think they (the Opposition) are trying to mislead. In the name of Waqf, how much land will you take over? Secondly, have they done any welfare in the name of Waqf? You can't even name one. Look, they have misused that property for their personal selfishness. It has been sold at any cost. What is the situation today? They have sold one property to many people. Now there's a dispute because of it," Yogi Adityanath said.

Odisha govt silent as 20,000 women go missing in 8 months, alleges Pawan Khera

TDG NETWORK
BHUBANESWAR

Congress leader Pawan Khera on Friday raised serious concerns over the alleged rising number of missing women and young girls in Odisha, alleging government inaction and suppression of protests.

Addressing the issue, Khera stated, "This is a very serious matter. Everyone across the country is surprised by what they have done to a beautiful state like Odisha...In the last 5 years of the BJP regime, 44,000 women and young girls

went missing. It has been 8 months since the BJP came to power, and 20,000 women and young girls went missing. They replied on this in the Assembly. These are not Congress's data. This means that 4 women go missing every hour. What can be more serious than this?"

He further criticized the government's refusal to form a House Committee on the matter, saying, "We demand a house committee, but they don't want to form that...All 14 of our MLAs were suspended, and



when our leader and workers took to the streets, they were beaten up...DGP is issuing political statements. It is not the work of bureaucracy to stand as a shield of the ruling party. When

women used to go missing during the BJD regime, the BJP used to stay silent. Now when it is happening during BJP rule, BJD is silent...This is a silent understanding between them. Congress will expose this understanding and raise its voice."

Khera also alleged police brutality against Congress leaders, stating, "I'm coming from the hospital. Our leaders are lying injured there, and some are in the ICU."

During a press conference, Congress leader Pawan Khera also raised concerns over the safety of girls in the

country.

"How are the girls missing? Is there an organ trade happening? Where have they been? How did they get missing? It is shocking to know that 6th grade girl in a government school hostel got pregnant...Is this a joke? And then you say, save your daughter, educate her. We know where that fund goes. It doesn't go for the welfare of the daughters," Khera said, questioning the government's efforts and the allocation of funds meant for the welfare and education of girls.

Eateries can't impose service charge on customers: Delhi High Court

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Restaurants cannot mandatorily levy service charge on food bills in a "camouflaged and coercive" manner as it is against public interest and amounts to unfair trade practice, the Delhi High Court on Friday held.

The high court said collection of service charge was proving to be a "double whammy" for consumers who were forced to pay Goods and Services Tax on top of the service tax.

"Service charge or TIP as is colloquially referred to, is a voluntary payment by

the customer. It cannot be compulsory or mandatory. The practice undertaken by restaurant establishments of collecting service charge that too on a mandatory basis, in a coercive manner, would be contrary to consumer interest and is violative of consumer rights (sic)," Justice Prathiba M Singh said in a 131-page judgment.

The high court, therefore, dismissed the petitions of the restaurant bodies challenging the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) guidelines prohibiting hotels and restaurants from mandatorily levying service charge on food bills.

The court upheld the guidelines and imposed Rs 1 lakh cost each on the petitioners to be deposited with the CCPA towards consumer welfare.

It said the mandatory levy of service charge by the restaurant establishments was against public interest and undermined the economic and social fabric of consumers as a class.

"It imposes an additional financial burden on the customers and distorts the principle of fair trade as the customer is mandatorily asked to pay the same, regardless of the consumer's satisfaction for the said service," it said.

The verdict added, "Fur-



thermore, such a charge creates an unfair pricing structure which lacks transparency and is therefore contrary to public interest."

Federation of Hotels and

According to the NRAI, it has 7,000 restaurants in India and 2,500 member outlets in Delhi NCR.

FHRAI claimed to represent the interests of 55,000 hotels and 5,00,000 restaurants across the country.

The court, while referring to consumer complaints and restaurant bills, said it was convinced that the service charge was being arbitrarily collected and coercively enforced and in such a situation it couldn't "be a mute spectator".

CCPA, the court said, was fully empowered to pass the guidelines under the Consumer Protection Act (CPA)

and they would have to be mandatorily complied with.

The fundamental right to conduct business would permit the restaurants to charge for the food being sold and services being provided, it added.

"An establishment is free to price its products in the manner as it pleases taking into account the raw-materials, salaries, expenditure, capital expenses on premises, man and machinery, etc. However, once the pricing is done, to collect over and above the price, a prescribed rate of service charge - that too on a mandatory basis would not be justified," Jus-

tice Singh said.

Freedom under Article 19(1)(g) would be curtailed or hindered only if the establishment was barred from pricing its goods as it pleased and not if a step was taken in consumer interest, it said.

The court said collecting service charge and using different terminologies for it is "misleading and deceptive" and constituted an unfair trade practice under the CPA. It rejected the justification given by restaurants bodies for collection of service charge, that they were part of labour settlements and agreements with staff.

UNION, STATE BUDGETS SIGNAL INFRA PIVOT FROM ROADS TO UTILITIES

Govt reprioritizes spending, boosting utilities as transport capex slows.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI


The government is shifting its capital expenditure (capex) priorities from traditional sectors like roads to areas such as water supply, sanitation, digital infrastructure, urban development, and irrigation, according to a report by Elara Securities.

The report, which analyzed 18 state budgets announced so far, also indicated that the growth of capital outlay is expected to slow down to 15.9 per cent year-on-year (YoY) in the Budget Estimates (BE) for FY26. This is a moderation compared to the average growth of 23.4 per cent in the past two years. A similar trend was also observed in the Union Budget for FY26, which suggested a slower pace of capex growth.

It said, "Increased focus on sectors such as Water Supply and Irrigation away from

QUICK VIEW

- Govt shifts capex focus from roads to water, sanitation, digital infra, and irrigation: Elara report.
- Capex growth slows to 15.9% in FY26BE, down from 23.4% avg over two years; transport spend sees steep drop.
- Big boost for water & irrigation with 33.5% and 19.6% YoY hikes in FY26 allocations.
- Spending lags persist — only 54.3% of FY25RE used by Jan; shortfalls risk full target miss.



Roads indicates a shift in government priority."

The report stated that the budget allocation for transport is projected to grow by just 3.2 per cent YoY in FY26BE, a sharp decline from the 18.3 per cent average growth recorded in the past four years.

Meanwhile, allocations for water supply and sanitation

are set to rise by 33.54 per cent YoY, while irrigation will see a 19.56 per cent increase. This is a notable jump from the growth rates of 8.03 per cent and -1.32 per cent YoY, respectively, in the Revised Estimates (RE) for FY25.

Despite the shift in spending priorities, the capital outlay as a percentage of Gross State Domestic Product

(GSDP) has remained stable at 2.8 per cent in FY26BE, slightly higher than 2.7 per cent in FY25RE. However, spending remains a challenge, with only 54.3 per cent of the revised estimates for FY25 spent by January of this financial year.

This raises concerns about whether the full target will be met. Historically, there has

The report, based on 18 state budgets, projects capital outlay growth to slow to 15.9% year-on-year in the FY26 Budget Estimates (BE).

been an average deviation of 13.5 per cent between revised estimates and actual spending, with a shortfall of 14 per cent recorded in FY24.

The report suggested that this shift in capex focus will create new opportunities for diversified infrastructure companies. Increased investments in water supply, sanitation, digital infrastructure, urban development, and irrigation are expected to drive fresh order inflows for companies operating in these sectors.

'BSNL rolling out 1 lakh indigenous 4G towers': Scindia

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) is currently rolling out 1,00,000 fully indigenous 4G towers under the Atmanirbhar Bharat scheme, which includes Core technology by C-DOT (a government entity), RAN (telecom towers) by Tejas Networks and System integration by TCS.

Speaking at the Times Now Summit 2025, Union Minister for Communication Jyotiraditya Scindia stated that the government aims to complete the target by June this year, and once the target is achieved, these towers will be switched to 5G.

"Currently, only four countries—China, Finland, Sweden, and South Korea—have companies producing a telecom stack. India is now the fifth country to achieve this with our indigenous 4G telecom stack. BSNL is rolling out 100,000 fully indigenous 4G towers under Atmanirbhar Bharat. This includes: Core technology by C-DOT (a government



Union Minister for Communication Jyotiraditya Scindia addresses the 41st FLO Annual session, at Federation House in New Delhi. ANI photo

Device (D2D) satellite messaging services. More importantly, after 18 years, BSNL has finally turned profitable. In the October-December quarter, BSNL posted a Rs262 crore net profit, compared to a "Rs1,262 crore loss" in Q3 last year. At the same time, we have cut costs by 18%, leading to a "3x growth in EBITDA, from Rs450 crores to Rs1,500 crores. India remains one of the few countries with four competing telecom operators. While global markets are seeing telecom consolidation, India is experiencing rapid telecom expansion," Scindia stated.

Scindia credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership for giving importance to telecom and IT and said if India needs to become a global market leader, these sectors shall always be at the forefront. "Bharat today is firing on all cylinders. What the industrial revolution was a hundred years ago, today the communication revolution is going to make an exponentially bigger change on that same paradigm.

Scindia further opened up on BSNL's profits and said that the government has already launched Direct-to-Device (D2D) satellite messaging services. "BSNL is already ahead of the curve. We have launched Direct-to-

India should increase healthcare, education spending to achieve Viksit Bharat goal: EY

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India must significantly increase its spending on healthcare and education to achieve the goal of Viksit Bharat and become a developed nation by 2047, according to a report by EY.

The report suggested that the government should raise its expenditure on education to 6.5 per cent of GDP and healthcare to 3.8 per cent of GDP over the next two decades.

It said "Education spending by the government may need to rise to 6.5 per cent of GDP by FY2048 from its current 4.6 per cent"

At present, India's education spending stands at 4.6 per cent of GDP, while healthcare spending is much lower at 1.1 per cent as of 2021.

At present, India's education spending stands at 4.6 per cent of GDP, while healthcare spending is much lower at 1.1 per cent as of 2021.

The report highlighted that to match the standards of high-income countries, India should raise its education spending to at least 4.8 per cent of GDP. Some peer nations, such as South Africa and the Euro area, allocate even higher proportions, ranging from 5.05 per cent to 6.55 per cent of GDP. India needs to raise its per capita expenditure on education seven fold by 2048 for the Viksit Bharat goals.

"We have estimated the required level of per capita expenditure consistent with the per capita GDP of a developed country threshold at close to USD600. This means that going forward, the per capita government expenditure on education may have to be augmented from its present level of USD83.2 to US\$600, a more than seven-fold increase. This increase may be required to be brought about during FY26 to FY48," said the report

It added "we require to factor in the share of young population that needs to be educated and trained. For this purpose, we consider the share of population up to the age of 20 years. The higher is the share of this young population, the higher is the requirement of expenditure on education".

For healthcare, the report noted that increasing spending to 3.8 per cent of GDP by FY2048 is essential to ensure better access to medical facilities and improved health outcomes.

The study estimated that a 2.5 percentage point increase in education expenditure and a 3 percentage point rise in healthcare spending will be necessary over the coming years.

"By the time India reaches a developed country status, the general government per capita spending on education may be required at 6.5 per cent of GDP," the report states.

Given India's young population and expanding workforce, higher investment in education is crucial to prepare the country for future challenges.

Export loss due to US tariff to remain limited at 0.1% of GDP: Report

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India's direct export loss due to tariffs imposed by US President Donald Trump is expected to remain limited at only 0.1 per cent of the country's GDP, according to a report by CareEdge Ratings.

However, the report added that the broader impact of global trade tensions may have more significant consequences through indirect channels such as weaker exports, lower investment and consumption sentiment, and pressure on capital flows and the currency.

It said "India's direct export loss due to such tariffs could be limited to around 0.1 per cent of GDP".

But the overall direct impact on India's GDP is ex-



pected to be minimal. The real concern, however, is the possibility of a larger global trade war, which could create uncertainty in international markets and affect India's economy through multiple channels.

One of the key risks identified is the potential volatility in foreign portfolio investment (FPI) flows. With growing global uncertainties, FPI flows into India are likely to fluctuate, which may put additional pressure on the Indian rupee.

The report projects that the Indian rupee to trade with a depreciation bias and expects the USD/INR ex-

change rate to be around 88-89 by the end of the financial year 2025-26 (FY26).

On the monetary policy front, the report anticipated that the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) could reduce the policy interest rate by 25-50 basis points in FY26. This expected rate cut is based on moderating inflation and the need to support economic growth.

However, the RBI is also likely to take global economic trends into account before making any policy decisions.

The report further noted that the RBI has shown

greater tolerance for rupee depreciation in the second half of FY25. One of the reasons for this is concerns over the rupee being overvalued. India's 40-currency trade-weighted real effective exchange rate (REER) had reached a record high of 108.1 in November 2024, indicating significant overvaluation.

However, following a decline in the rupee, the REER corrected to 102.4 by February 2025, suggesting that the currency was no longer overvalued when compared to its five-year average of around 104.

While India's direct export loss from US tariffs is expected to be limited, the broader impact of global trade tensions remains uncertain.

Policymakers will need to monitor external risks carefully and take necessary steps to protect India's economic stability.

Digital media drives Rs 2.5 trillion M&E market, TV slips

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Digital media overtook television to become the largest segment, contributing 32 per cent of media industry revenues in 2024, according to a report by FICCI & EY.

The report stated that for the first time, digital media has overtaken television to become the largest segment in India's Media and Entertainment (M&E) sector. The rapid growth of digital media continues, with projections indicating an 11.2 per cent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) between 2024 and 2027.

The report said "Digital media overtook television for the

first time to become the largest segment".

In contrast, television, which once dominated the sector, is facing a decline. It registered negative growth of -0.6 per cent during the same period, highlighting the shifting preferences of audiences toward online platforms.

New media (comprising digital media and online gaming) grew to Rs 113 billion (12%) and now comprise 41 per cent of the M&E sector's revenues.

Core traditional media (television, print, radio and music) together saw their revenues drop by (-)3% or Rs 30 billion, and their share of the total M&E sector fall to 41 per cent. Outside the home media (comprising filmed entertain-

Animation and VFX segment fell 9.4 per cent due to global supply chain issues, mainly in the US due to the writers' strike.

ment, live events and OOH media) grew at a combined 3 per cent, and now contribute 14 per cent of the total M&E sector

Animation and VFX segment fell 9.4 per cent due to global supply chain issues, mainly in the US due to the writers' strike. The report added that print media, while still relevant, is expected to see only a modest growth of

0.9 per cent in the coming years.

Overall, the Indian M&E sector grew by 3.3 per cent in 2024, adding Rs 81 billion to reach a total value of Rs 2.5 trillion (USD29.4 billion). The industry now contributes 0.73 per cent to India's GDP and has grown 30 per cent above its pre-pandemic 2019 levels. However, traditional segments such as television, print, and radio continue to lag behind their pre-2020 level revenues.

The advertising sector played a key role in driving growth, expanding by 8.1 per cent in 2024. A significant portion of this growth came from digital media, particularly performance advertis-

ing and e-commerce platform spending.

Looking ahead, the report stated that the Indian M&E sector is expected to expand at a faster pace in 2025. The industry is projected to grow by 7.2 per cent, reaching Rs 2.68 trillion (USD 31.6 billion). By 2027, it is estimated to grow at a CAGR of 7 per cent, reaching Rs 3.07 trillion (USD 36.1 billion). As digital media continues to dominate the market, the Indian entertainment landscape is undergoing a major transformation. With more consumers shifting to online platforms, the industry is adapting to new trends, shaping the future of media consumption in the country.

ECONOMY WRAP

Medical tourism to hit \$13.4 billion by 2026

Driven by cost advantage, tech adoption, and rising hospital networks, India's medical tourism sector is projected to reach USD 13.42 billion by 2026. AI-powered healthcare, growing insurance coverage, and rural demand are also fuelling growth.

Q-commerce must expand beyond metros: Report

Bain & Flipkart say quick-commerce firms must adapt to smaller cities to sustain profitability. The sector, growing over 40% annually, now includes



and new investments will boost India's industrial and logistics sector in 2025.

Modern warehouses, 3PL, and FMCG demand will drive growth, despite land acquisition and legal hurdles.

Markets open flat amid global jitters

Indian markets opened flat as investors tread cautiously ahead of a long weekend. Auto tariffs, global pressure, and muted volumes marked early trading, while Nifty Auto led minor gains.

MCE growth slows to 3% after 26% surge last year: ICRA

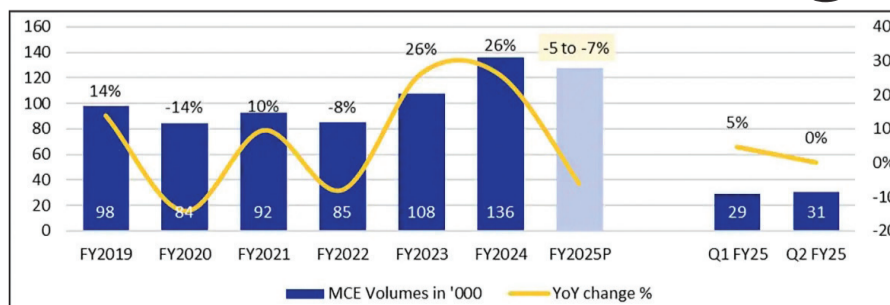
TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Indian Mining and Construction Equipment (MCE) industry experienced muted volume growth of about 3 per cent in first 11 months of FY2025, a notable decline compared to 26 per cent growth in both FY2024 and FY2023.

According to a report by ICRA, the slowdown is because of the reduced domestic project awards and execution momentum in the

first half of the fiscal year due to the general elections code of conduct, followed by extended monsoon-related impediments. The export momentum also witnessed a tapering during the same period. While a recovery began in Q3 FY2025, overall industry volumes are expected to remain largely flat, with a modest 2-3 per cent growth in FY2025.

Within the domestic market, earthmoving equipment, the dominant sub-segment, saw a 5 per cent (YoY)



ICRA revises MCE sales decline to 5-7% for FY25, improving outlook. Source: NBM Media

growth, contrasting with declines in most other sub-segments in the 11 months of FY2025.

In exports, concrete and

road equipment showed remarkable growth, with increases of 133 per cent and 122 per cent (YoY) respectively. However, overall

export volume growth moderated to 7 per cent (YoY), following a 49 per cent jump in FY2024.

ICRA anticipates modest

growth of 2-5 per cent for MCE industry volumes in FY2026 as well. This projection is set against a high base, with sales exceeding 1 lakh units for three consecutive years. The report also highlights the impact of tight liquidity with Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs). The MCE sector is heavily dependent on financing, with 85-90 per cent of MCEs sold in India being financed. The industry will also pose a challenge as tight liquidity may affect disbursement

and lower loan-to-value ratios particularly for the first-time buyers. Price escalations are set against a high base, with sales exceeding 1 lakh units for three consecutive years. The report also highlights the impact of tight liquidity with Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs). The MCE sector is heavily dependent on financing, with 85-90 per cent of MCEs sold in India being financed. The industry will also pose a challenge as tight liquidity may affect disbursement

government emphasis on infrastructure development and favourable commodity prices.

The report forecasts that the credit metrics of the domestic MCE industry will remain stable in FY2026, with revenue growth of 8-10% YoY. However, profitability margins are expected to contract by 50-100 bps, driven by higher costs, estimated to increase by 12-15 per cent due to regulatory changes and the staggered passing of these costs to customers.

ICRA says that despite potential dampening effects on demand due to price hikes and a constrained financing environment, the industry's stable outlook is supported by expectations of continued

REIMAGINING HIGHER EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

OPINION

DR. DEBAJIT PALIT
DR. ANANDAJIT GOSWAMI



INTRODUCTION

Agenda 2030 is the international blueprint for sustainable development, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015. Higher education institutions (HEIs) have a significant role to play in shaping the future of nations, and their potential to drive the Agenda 2030 cannot be overstated. Agenda 2030 comprises of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. The SDGs that aim "to secure a sustainable, peaceful, prosperous and equitable life on earth for everyone now and in the future" have gained significant attention worldwide as a comprehensive framework for addressing global challenges and promoting sustainable development. While all SDGs are important and have their own significance, two crucial goals, SDG4 (Quality Education) and SDG7 (Affordable and Clean Energy),

are interconnected and play a vital role in achieving a sustainable future for India.

The Incheon Declaration constitutes the commitment to Education 2030 and SDG4 focusing on quality education for all with the central tenet being human right achievement. Education, from primary school to tertiary education and lifelong learning, is a prerequisite of any developmental process and is considered the golden thread that runs through all 17 SDGs.

Literature on learning indicates that learning can be bracketed into the paradigms of - 3-5, 5-8, 8-11 in terms of the age group and 80% of the learning adaptability is shaped up by the age of 14. Cognitive studies on the psychology of learning mentions that real learning application can also start to happen post age 14. In many human beings, application of idea shaping of childhood

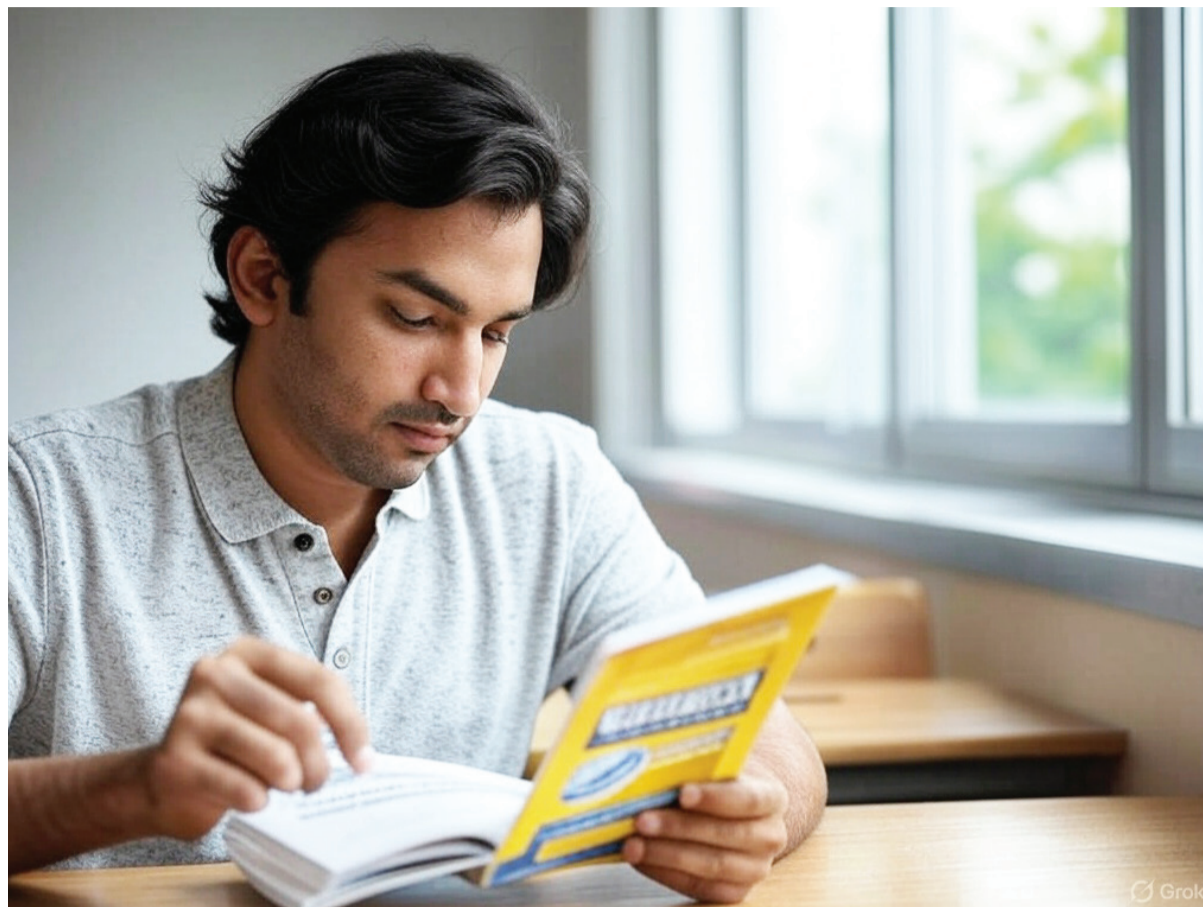
imagination, memories can foster and take a tangible shape even beyond 20 and further needs to be sustained through higher education.

UNESCO through a strong sustainability framework defines education for sustainable development as a means of empowerment "to take informed decisions, actions for ecological integrity, economic viability and a just society, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity." This can be achieved through 2020 National Education Policy enabling a strong sustainability framework of higher education.

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY AND SDG 7

The 2020 National Education Policy of India brings to the forefront access, equity, quality, affordability and accountability in education. SDG7 relies on access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, by connecting economic growth, social equity, environmental sustainability. In this regard, higher education institutions of India of the private university spaces are bringing in courses and curriculum which are industry oriented and driven by sustainability needs of the industry.

For instance, students are being taught about sustainable building materials and its implications for achieving sustainable habitat based ecosystems. These students are then also absorbed by Sustainability Wings of Industry Partners which belong to



the building industry. Alternatively renewable energy sector companies are also bringing in topics in the curriculum which are about finding sustainable solutions for the respective industries. These are being done to make the student ready for facing solutions of tomorrow's challenges with the support of higher educational institutions to make a stronger impact on the society.

Hence, a connection between SDG 4 and SDG 7 is being established through the UG, PG courses of Higher Educational Institutions along with their PhD Programs. The pertinent question right now is how to create an incentive structure within the

ranking and accreditation framework so that HEIs move towards an integrated, strong sustainability curriculum design.

Currently, Times Group, private groups have initiated SDG ranking matrix, certification for Higher Educational Institutions. However, public governance, institutional framework of accreditation of HEIs based on their sustainability performance is required for each year by means of a regulatory framework for strong sustainability through quality assessments and governance frameworks.

To achieve strong sustainability, time has come to integrate field and practice oriented courses

on these issues of interconnections of clean energy access and sustainable educational solutions for communities. While designing curriculum for these courses in the public and private university spaces, field agencies can be involved to design the course curriculum for students of UG and PG programmes in Sustainability and Renewable Energy Solutions.

Universities like Manav Rachna International Institute of Research and Studies, TERI SAS, Adani University have implemented such courses within their UG and PG programmes in India which needs to scale up further with a structured time bound action plan.

SUCH AN ACTION PLAN SHOULD ADDRESS SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES

Absence of integration of sustainability principles, practices across various disciplines - Even though such an integration has started to happen in many private university spaces there is a gap in terms of scaling it up further through a well laid out governance and institutional framework and structure

RDCs (Research and Development Cell) of HEIs have to implement actual research and development in an integrated manner by joining SDG 4, SDG 7 with a focus on as-

sociated issues of strong sustainability.

Another challenge is the presence of outdated curricula that fail to equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills to address complex sustainability challenges.

The country needs a massive infrastructure, retraining of current educators, teachers, faculties, trainers to make them more relevant for the upcoming age of education.

Reimagining higher education for sustainable development in India is a complex yet crucial task. Essence of such a reimagination will be transcendental thinking and new age training to find out the organic semblance space of our traditional education of modernity with Western thought, Indian Critical Thought in order to find out a new educational doorway of strong sustainability oriented education amidst the demands of new age technological progress within a rising machine consciousness.

Once it is done, oonly then Viksit Bharat 2047 will be achievable through Rabinranath Tagore's dream of a true education which is not based on information but through a cosmic harmonic experience of an individual of India!

Dr. Debajit Palit is Centre Head, Centre for Climate Change & Energy Transition at Chintan Research Foundation and Dr. Anandajit Goswami is Professor and Head of Research at Manav Rachna International Institute of Research & Studies. Views are personal

Shubham karoti kalyanam

OPINION

PRIYA TANDON



Spring is in the air. The plant kingdom celebrates spring with vim and vigour. New leaves, flowers and baby fruits, sprout. Trees, shrubs, creepers, climbers ... all are dressed at their best. Nature is truly the personification of the invisible God. Come Spring, and nature presents omens for new beginnings, prosperity and unending hope.

The ancient Indians celebrated the New Year in the spring season, as the Vikram Samvat. The famous King Vikramaditya was coronated on the first day of the Vedic Lunar calendar. The Vikram Samvat

or the Hindu calendar is named after him.

The Gregorian calendar was adopted on 22 March, 1957, for official purposes. As per the Vedic Lunar calendar, the Vikram Samvat 2082, shall start on 30th March, 2025. This year shall be the Sri Vishwavas Nama Samvatsara. It is the 39th year in the 60 year cycle of Samvatsaras (years). 'Viswavas' indicates that it shall be a year of beneficence, peace and good fortune.

The first day of the Vikram Samvat, marks the first day of Chaitra Navratri. Lord Brahma started creating the universe on the first day of Chaitra Navratri. The first crop cultivated, was Jau (barley). We sow Jau and grow Khetri in our homes, during Navratri, in reverence of this crop and offer it back to Mother Nature. The fully mature, green Khetri, is symbolic of abundance. It is considered to be the harbinger of goodness and prosperity. It is offered to the Devi and

then to young girls during Kanya poojan on Ashtami or Naumi day. The rest of the barley when put into flowing water, helps cleanse it.

Worship of God in any form, is done with the sole purpose of establishing a connect with God. In Nav-ratri (festival of nine nights), we worship the feminine aspect of Divinity. The nine forms of the Devi are Shailaputri, Brahmacharini, Chandraghanta, Kushmanda, Skandamata, Katyayani, Kalratri, Mahagauri, and Siddhidatri. The nine nights of darkness, can be thought of as the darkness of ignorance. Man is plagued by the vices embedded in his own inner consciousness. These are Kama (Lust), Krodha (anger), Lobha (greed), Moha (attachment), Madha (pride) and Matsarya (Malice). These vices, reduce man to a demon. These demonic tendencies have to be overpowered and annihilated by the supreme alchemy of the divine urge. This is the true purpose of Navratri pooja.

As per the legend, the female aspect of Divinity manifested as Durga. Goddess Durga fought the demon Mahishasura for nine nights before she finally annihilated him. Goddess Durga was an embodiment of the Satwic (God-



The first day of the Vikram Samvat, marks the first day of Chaitra Navratri. Lord Brahma started creating the universe on the first day of Chaitra Navratri. The first crop cultivated, was Jau (barley).

dess Saraswati), Rajasic (Goddess Lakshmi), and Tamasic (Goddess Maha Kali). She overcame the forces of vice, wickedness etc. during the nine nights of struggle. Navratri basically celebrates the victory of good over evil.

We can think of it this way; Maa Lakshmi bestows wealth. This wealth could be financial, intellectual, intuitive powers, wealth of good charac-

ter. Maa Saraswati being the Goddess of learning, empowers us to inquire, think, discriminate, convince, understand, orate, sing, compose etc. Maa Mahakali showers us with physical, mental and spiritual energy.

Chaitra Navratri happens when nature is at its best. So it is also an occasion to revere and offer gratitude to nature (Prakriti) in all its forms. Resources like

land, water, air, minerals should not be misused but revered. Navratri is a time to propitiate the inner and outer divinity.

The purpose of observing the Navratri fasts and prayers, is to spend these days in purification of the body (by fasting) and the mind (by contemplation on the Devi) to cleanse all the impurities within. One could read the Durga Saptshati, Gauri Poojan, Durga chalisa etc.

Navratri culminates in Asthmi or Navami, when we do kanya poojan. We offer halwa and poori to the Mother Goddess and distribute it amongst prepubescent girls and adulterate them as little goddesses. We give them dakshina along with bin-

dis, bangles or hair-clips etc. This too is a subtle reminder to respect and value the girl child. Deep seated knowledge would have led to this custom being adopted by the society. While doing Devi-Poojan and Kanya-Poojan, we must remember to extend the respect to all the living goddesses around us ... our mother, mother-in-law, wife, sister, daughter, daughter-in-law and all other women around us.

The ninth day of the Chaitra Navratri is Ram Navami. This marks the birthday as well as the coronation of Bhagwan Rama as the King of Ayodhya.

How to celebrate the Navratri festival? Sri Sathya Sai Baba guides us beautifully, "Convert your will power (Iccha shakti) into a yearning for God. Convert purposeful action (kriya shakti) into a force for doing Divine actions. Convert your power of discernment (jnana shakti) into the Divine Itself." This verily means, tune your mind, body and soul into thinking, doing and seeking divinity!

For those not spiritually inclined; let Navaratri be a time to revere nature and offer thanksgiving for all that nature has bestowed upon us. If we want the generations to come, to

enjoy nature, we have to conserve the environment.

On a physical front; Navratri is placed at the time of the change of season from winter to summer or from summer to winter. This is the time when the body needs to detox to prepare for the next season. Eating fruits, potatoes, lauki, kaddu, Kuttu ka atta, Swank ke chawal, amaranth, singhare ka atta etc. detoxify the body.

Basically when the focus all day is on prayers, one eats less. The food being cooked in sehenda namak, is great for detox. The key is that a fast is a fast, and we should not convert it into a feast. Navratri, it's a great time to rest and rejuvenate the digestive system.

Navratri offers options for all. It depends on what you're looking for. Navratri could be a time for prayer, fasting, feasting, losing weight, pilgrimages, Jagran etc. Each of us has to find their calling. At the onset of the Navratri festival, we should pray for Shubham Karoti Kalyanam - May it bring auspiciousness and well-being for all!

Priya Tandon is Member, National Stock Exchange. She is Vice-President of Competent Foundation.

India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has rekindled debates about language, heritage, and inclusion. At the heart of this debate is Sanskrit – an ancient language of India that once traversed continents and now sits at the crossroads of educational reform. To understand the NEP's emphasis on Sanskrit and the concerns it raises, it helps to look at the global history and influence of Sanskrit. This historical lens reveals how Sanskrit has served as both a unifying medium of knowledge and a symbol of elite exclusivity. By examining Sanskrit's journey from ancient India to Southeast Asia and Europe, and then analyzing its role in the NEP alongside India's richly multilingual fabric, we can gain a nuanced perspective on whether promoting a classical language today is an inclusive revival or a hegemonic imposition.

Sanskrit is one of the world's oldest documented languages, originating in ancient India over 3,000 years ago. It was the language of the Vedas and classical Hindu philosophy, and also carried the wisdom of Buddhism and Jainism in many historical texts. For millennia, Sanskrit functioned as a pan-Indian lingua franca of scholarship and spirituality. Its influence was not confined to India's borders – Sanskrit ideas, scriptures, and vocabulary spread far across Asia. By the first millennium CE, Sanskrit had become a prestigious medium from Afghanistan to Java. Kings and poets in Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam used Sanskrit for inscriptions and literature, blending it with local languages. Sanskrit epics like the Ramayana were retold in Javanese and Khmer courts, and scripts in Southeast Asia were often adapted to write Sanskrit alongside native tongues.

Sanskrit's influence also extended westward. In the late 18th century, European scholars in India discovered Sanskrit and were stunned by its sophistication and similarity to classical Western languages. In 1786, British philologist Sir William Jones famously observed that Sanskrit bore a striking resemblance to Greek and Latin. This insight marked the birth of modern linguistics and led to the formulation of the Indo-European language family hypothesis. European linguists built on Jones's finding to reconstruct Proto-Indo-European, recognizing Sanskrit as a key that un-



Saivite Sanskrit inscription. Over 800 Sanskrit inscriptions were found in S.E. Asia until fifty years ago. Wikipedia

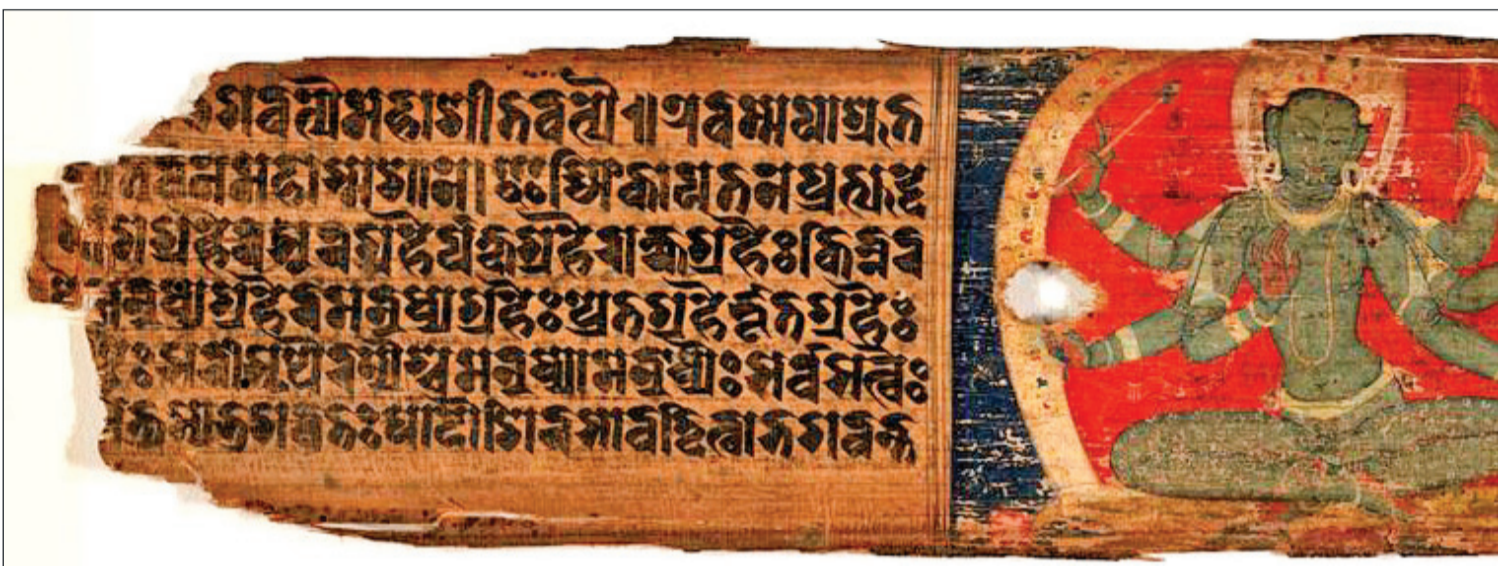
locked the deep historical connections among many European and Iranian languages. Thus, Sanskrit's global journey includes not only its geographic spread in Asia but also its pivotal role in shaping European scholarly thought.

In the modern era, Sanskrit continues to captivate people around the world

in different ways. In India, Sanskrit's everyday usage has waned – as of the 2011 Census, only about 24,821 Indians reported Sanskrit as their mother tongue. Yet, interest in Sanskrit is rising abroad. Prestigious Western universities offer specialized Sanskrit courses, and scholars study Sanskrit not only to explore

SCRIPTED IN STONE, WRITTEN IN POLICY

From temple walls to textbooks, Sanskrit's legacy moves from ancient inscriptions to modern policy – stirring pride, debate, and questions of inclusion.



The Goddess Mahasivatavi, Folio from a Buddhist Manuscript Nepal ca. 12th century. Source: metmuseum.org



A 7th century Buddhist inscription. First part in Sanskrit, second part in old Khmer. A specific stele (stone slab with an inscription) catalogued as Ka 3029 and its corresponding inscription number K 116, housed at the National Museum of Cambodia. Source: publikam.com

keepers. It was inclusive in the sense that it transcended region and even religion – Sanskrit texts were produced by Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and others. However, it was also used as an instrument of elite privilege. In traditional Hindu society, fluency in Sanskrit was largely restricted to upper castes. Many were denied access to Sanskrit scriptures. Counter-movements sought a more inclusive approach – the Buddha taught in the vernacular, and Bhakti saints composed poetry in regional languages to reach the masses.

Europe had a similar experience with Latin. For centuries, Latin was the learned language of Europe, comprehensible only to the educated elite. But by the Renaissance and Reformation, vernacular languages gained prominence. Latin eventually gave way to English, French, and German. This history offers a valuable parallel: classical languages like Sanskrit or Latin can be tools of unity or exclusion.

Against this complex historical backdrop, NEP 2020 places emphasis on multilingualism and Indian languages, with Sanskrit finding a prominent mention. The policy aims to mainstream Sanskrit in schools and higher education as one of the language options within the flexible three-language formula. It envisions Sanskrit universities evolving into multidisciplinary institutions. Proponents argue that learning Sanskrit can strengthen understanding of modern Indian languages and give students access to India's classical heritage.

NEP 2020 also emphasizes other classical languages

– Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia – as well as Pali, Prakrit, and Persian. It encourages states to create strong departments for all Indian languages. It recommends instruction in the home language/local language until at least Grade 5, preferably Grade 8. As of 2021, 28 different Indian languages were being used as mediums of instruction in primary schools. The NCERT has developed digital content and textbooks in 104 languages and dialects. Some states have introduced bilingual textbooks, such as Telugu and English in Andhra Pradesh, and Assamese, Bodo, Bengali in Assam.

Despite this inclusive vision, the NEP has triggered fears of a hegemonic agenda – particularly a bias toward Sanskrit and Hindi. Tamil Nadu, with its strong tradition of linguistic pride, has resisted the three-language formula. Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has labeled NEP a Hindutva policy prioritizing Hindi and Sanskrit over regional languages. Critics argue that Sanskrit is being positioned as a hidden apex language behind Hindi's wider spread. There is concern for minority and tribal languages, and whether they will lose space if Sanskrit and Hindi gain more ground in curricula.

The central government has repeatedly denied any intent to impose languages. The NEP states explicitly that no language will be imposed on any state. Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan emphasized that the choice of languages is left to states, schools, and students. The policy encourages multilingualism, not

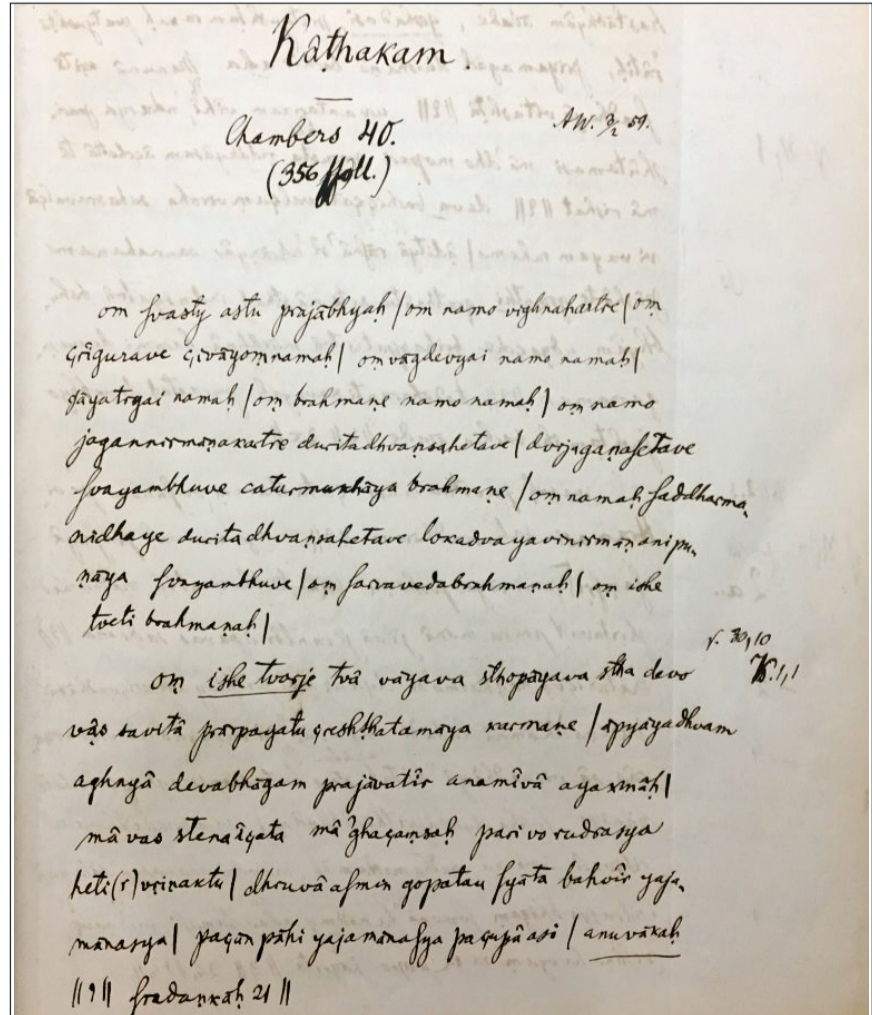
monolingualism. From the government's perspective, NEP opens the door for Sanskrit and other classical languages to be learned if desired, while supporting mother tongue instruction and translation across languages.

History suggests that classical languages thrive not by compulsion but by inspiration. If Sanskrit is taught in engaging ways and offered as a bridge to India's past, it may be embraced rather than resisted. The NEP's approach of offering Sanskrit as an optional subject aligns with this idea. It is a resource, not a burden. Moreover, multilingualism has long been a strength in Indian education. In ancient and medieval India, scholars often mastered multiple languages for different purposes – spiritual, philosophical, poetic.

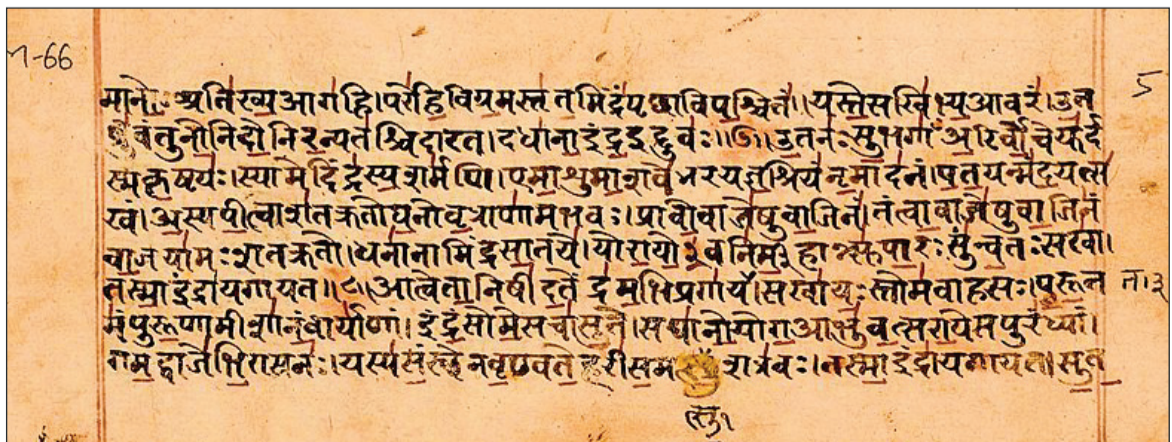
Ultimately, the inclusive vs. hegemonic use of Sanskrit in education depends on how it is implemented. Historical evidence offers both inspiration and caution. Kerala's example of non-Brahmin and even Christian Sanskrit scholars shows that Sanskrit can be democratized. In contrast, when Sanskrit was used to exclude, it lost its relevance. The NEP can draw on inclusive traditions by promoting Sanskrit as a shared treasure, while giving equal space and funding to regional and tribal languages.

India's challenge is to ensure that Sanskrit enriches its education system without diminishing its pluralism. With sensitive implementation, Sanskrit can be part of a mosaic that includes all of India's linguistic heritage. The goal should be a multilingual citizenry – comfortable in a regional language, a national or global language, and a classical language. Students could grow up reciting Kalidasa, singing folk songs, and reading world literature – without one language eclipsing the others. By learning from the past and honoring diversity, NEP 2020 can be an opportunity to embrace heritage while preserving inclusion.

Compiled by
Ruchira Talapatra



Weber Ms. 14, the Kathaka Samhita of the Black Yajur Veda, an ancient Hindu scripture in Sanskrit with a mixture of verbal formulas, or mantras, used in religious rituals. This manuscript in the Weber collection is in Sanskrit with romanized transliteration, and it bears Albrecht Weber's initials with the date of August 23, 1859. South Asian rare book collection, Asian Division. Source: Library of Congress



1500-1200 BCE Rigveda, manuscript page sample ii, Sanskrit, Devanagari. Wikipedia

SUPREME COURT REJECTS PETITION TO REGISTER FIR AGAINST JUSTICE YASHWANT VARMA OVER CASH ROW

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Mathews J Nedumpara and Ors. v. Supreme Court of India and Ors. observed and has refused to entertain a petition filed seeking registration of a First Information Report, FIR against Justice Yashwant Varma, the former Delhi High Court Judge, over the alleged discovery of illicit cash at official premises.

The bench comprising of Justice Abhay Oka and Justice Ujjal Bhuyan was

hearing the present matter.

The bench also stated that the petition filed challenging the in-house inquiry being conducted by a committee of three judges as per the directions of the Chief Justice of India, CJI was premature.

The bench of Justice Oka told the petitioner, Advocate Mathews J Nedumpara:

'Mr. Mathews J Nedumpara, this court have seen the prayers. After the in-house inquiry is over, several options are open. The Chief Justice of India, CJI can direct the register of the FIR



or refer the matter to the Parliament after examining the report. Today it is not the time to consider this petition. After the in-house report, all options are open. The petition is

premature.'

Advocate Mathews J Nedumpara before the court highlighted the need to review the judgments shielding Judges from regular investigation.

Let the in-house procedure be over and after that all options are open to the Chief Justice of India, CJI.'

Nedumpara stated before the court that in Kerala, there was a POCSO case allegation against a then-sitting High Court Judge; however, the Police did not register an FIR.

Nedumpara also stated that investigation is not

the job of the Court and should be left to the police. Therefore, the in-house committee is not a statutory authority and cannot be a substitute for criminal investigations undertaken by specialised agencies.

Advocate Mathews J Nedumpara said that with regards to the Justice Yashwant Varma case, the common man is asking several questions- Why no FIR was registered on the day when the cash was discovered on March 14? Why no seizure mahazar was prepared? Why the scandal was kept secret for one

week? Why the criminal law was not set into motion.

The bench of Justice Oka stated that, 'This court cannot interfere at this stage. Let the in-house procedure be over and after that all options are open to the Chief Justice of India, CJI.'

Advocate Mathews J Nedumpara again referred to the common man's concerns.

Justice Oka told Nedumpara to educate the common man about the judgments of the Supreme Court, laying down the in-house procedure and the

reasons for evolving such a special process.

Advocate Mathews J Nedumpara requested the bench to at least admit the petition and examine the issues raised.

The bench did not entertain the prayer and passed an order dismissing it.

The bench also stated with regards to the 'wider prayers' in the petition filed seeking the reading down of the judgments in K Veeraswami and other cases (on in-house procedure), that it was not necessary to go into that aspect at this stage.

Delhi High Court grants relief to BharatPe, restrains use of 'Bharatpay' mark and website

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court in the case Resilient Innovations Private Limited Versus M/S Bharat Pay And Ors observed and has granted relief to fintech company "BharatPe" and the court restrained the use of "Bharatpay" mark as well as the domain name which is being used for payment of utility bills, data recharge services, insurance and financial services.

The bench headed by Jus-

The court stated that, 'It being a prima facie case of infringement of trade marks and passing off is made out on behalf of the plaintiff in its favour.'

stice Amit Bansal was hearing the present matter.

The bench in the case observed that Bharatpay mark was phonetically identical with, and visually, structurally and is being similar to, the BharatPe mark.

The court in the case passed ad interim injunc-

tion order in favour of Resilient Innovations Private Limited, the company which owns BharatPe, in its trademark infringement suit against M/S Bharat Pay. The court stated that, 'It being a prima facie case of infringement of trade marks and passing off is made out

on behalf of the plaintiff in its favour.'

The court also observed that the defendant no.1 portrayed before the court that the impugned services rendered by the defendant no.1 are associated with the plaintiff. It has been contended by BharatPe before the court that it came across a mobile application of Bharatpay which was being used to render services under the impugned mark which were identical with those of the fintech compa-

ny. The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case observed and has ordered suspension of the impugned domain name 'www.bharatpay.net' as well as blocking of the telephone number which is used by the defendant entity.

Further, the court directed the defendant no.4 and defendant no.6 to issue notifications calling upon the internet service providers, ISPs to block access to the impugned website.

HC: Power to issue interim orders under Section 9 of Arbitration and Conciliation Act are wide

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court in the case M/S Gtl Infrastructure Ltd Versus S.C. Wadhwa And Sons (Huf) observed and has held that the powers of the court to order interim measures of protection as stated under Section 9 of the Act are wide and are not confined solely to orders that can be passed under Order XXXIX Rules 1 and Rule 2 of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908.

Therefore, it has been stated that the court be guided by the principles underlying the Code and such kind of orders would also extend to granting the relief, if such relief is admissible on admitted facts.

The bench comprising of Justice Vibhu Bakru and Justice Tejas Karia was hearing the present matter.

FACTS OF THE CASE

The present matter relates to a mobile or cellular tower erected on top of the respondent's property.

The parties entered into a License Agreement for granting a license for an area of 800 sq. ft. on the roof of the respondent's property to the appellant for the purpose of erecting a cellular tower.

The respondent due to certain problem, terminated the License Agreement and also initiated arbitration proceedings for claiming the license fee as well as restoration of the licensed property to the condition



The bench comprising of Justice Vibhu Bakru and Justice Tejas Karia was hearing the present matter.

in which it was originally licensed.

The respondent filed an application under Section 9 of the Arbitration And Conciliation Act, 1996 for immediately removing the Mobile or Cellular Tower erected by the appellant on top of the respondent's property.

The Commercial Court in the case directed the appellant to immediately remove the mobile or cellular tower. Aggrieved with the said order, the appellant has filed the present appeal under Section 37(1)(b) of the Act, wherein it challenged the order passed by the Commercial Court.

OBSERVATIONS MADE BY COURT

The court in the case observed that the powers of the court to order interim

measures of protection as stated under Section 9 of the Act are wide and are not confined solely to orders that can be passed under Order XXXIX Rule 1 and Rule 2 of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908.

It has also been stated that the court would be guided by the principles underlying the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908.

The court stated that such kind of orders would also extend to granting the relief, if such relief is admissible on admitted facts.

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case noted that the appellant does not dispute that the appellant is obliged to remove the tower on termination of the license.

The court observed that the respondent has also averred that non-removal of the tower is causing damage and harm to its property.

Further, the court stated that the measure of protection required would entail mandatory injunction in order to remove the tower from the premises to ensure that the respondent does not continue to suffer any loss or damage.

Delhi HC: SCN cannot be issued after one year, detention of goods impermissible under Section 110 of Customs Act

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court in the case Mohammad Arham v. Commissioner Of Customs observed and has held that detention of goods by the Customs Department cannot continue beyond a period of one year, if a show cause notice was not issued to the assessee within such period of time.

The Division bench comprising of Justice Prathiba

M. Singh and Justice Rajeev Kumar Gupta was hearing the present matter.

The bench in the case cited Section 110 of the Customs Act, 1962 which prescribes a period of six months. Further, subject to complying with certain formalities, a further extension for a period of six months for the Department to issue a show cause notice can be given in terms of Section 110(5).

The court observed that, 'One year period itself has elapsed, thus no show cause notice can be issued. Therefore, the detention is impermissible.'

In the present matter, the court was hearing a petition filed by a (then) minor, who was intercepted by the Customs department at the Delhi airport and two yellow bangles weighing 50 grams were recovered from him.

The petitioner in the plea alleged that no show cause notice has been issued and more than one year has passed.

On the other hand, the Revenue admitted that no SCN was issued.

However, the court directed for release of goods and waived warehouse charges.

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case observed that, 'Once the goods are

detained, it being mandatory to issue a show cause notice and afford a hearing to the Petitioner.'

The counsel, Mr. Ashish Pandey, Mr. Ajay Singh, Mr. Akshat Raghuvanshi, Ms. Kiran Pandey and Mr. Anshuman Gupta, Advocates appeared for Petitioner.

The counsel, Mr. Harpreet Singh, SSC with Ms. Suhani Mathur & Mr. Jai Ahuja, Advocates represented the Respondent.

Supreme Court rejects mother's plea to evict son: Senior Citizens Act does not mandate eviction of children from parents' home in every case

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Samtola Devi Versus State Of Uttar Pradesh And Ors observed and has noted that the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, the 2007 Act ensures maintenance for elderly parents but does not explicitly permit eviction.

The Supreme Court in the case was hearing a petition filed by an elderly mother to evict her son from their ancestral home following a strained relationship.

The court in the case stated that the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 Act does not mandate the automatic eviction of children from parental property; the eviction orders can only be



passed in exceptional cases to safeguard the senior citizen's well-being.

The bench comprising of Justice Pankaj Mithal and Justice SVN Bhatti was hearing the present matter.

The bench in the case observed that, 'The provisions of the Senior Citizens Act, nowhere specifically provides for drawing proceedings for eviction of persons from any premises owned or belonging to such a senior person.' The bench

noted that as per the Act, the Tribunal can provide for the monthly maintenance and expenses, and in case of default, it can issue a warrant to levy fines and even sentence the defaulter to imprisonment for a term which may extend to one month. The court referred to the judgement in the case S. Vanitha vs. Commissioner, Bengaluru Urban District & Ors., wherein the court stated that the Tribunals got jurisdiction to pass

eviction orders. The court also stated that the Tribunal under the Senior Citizens Act may also order eviction if it is necessary and expedient to ensure the protection of the senior citizens.

The same was followed by the judgement in the case Urmila Dixit vs. Sunil Sharan Dixit & Ors., wherein the court held that Tribunal 'may' order eviction.

The court observed that the Appellants-elderly parents were directed to be paid the monthly maintenance by their two sons by the family court.

Therefore, the Appellant's husband initiated a proceeding under the 2007 Act for his son's eviction from the ancestral house, where the son was operating a utensils shop at one portion of the same house, citing his

ill-treatment towards his father, and failure to look after the daily needs.

The Tribunal upheld the family court's direction to pay maintenance to the elderly parents, thus, the Tribunal instead of directing the eviction of the son, it directed him to not encroach upon any part of the house without the permission of his parents except the shop in which he is carrying utensil business and the room with a bathroom occupied by him in which he resides with his wife and children. Aggrieved with the decision of Tribunal, the Appellant along with her husband approached the Appellate Tribunal under the 2007 Act which set aside the order of Tribunal and directed the eviction of Appellant's son.

Centre approves transfer of Justice Yashwant Varma to Allahabad High Court

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Central Government on March 28 notified the repatriation of Justice Yashwant Varma from Delhi to the Allahabad High Court based on the Supreme Court Collegium's recommendations on March 24. Justice Varma is facing

an in-house inquiry by a 3-judge panel constituted by the Chief Justice of India over the allegations regarding the discovery of illicit cash currencies at his official premises. It is significant to note that the transfer order has come despite the protests of the Allahabad High Court Bar Association. The Supreme Court rejected

a petition seeking the registration of FIR and launch of a criminal investigation against Justice Varma saying that the outcome of the in-house inquiry must be awaited.

Justice Varma, who originally belonged to the Allahabad High Court, was transferred to the Delhi High Court in 2021.

Centre notifies transfer of Orissa High Court judge Justice Arindam Sinha to Allahabad High Court

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Union Government on March 28 notified the transfer of Justice Arindam Sinha, senior-most puisne Judge of Orissa High Court as a Judge of the Allahabad High Court. Last week, the Supreme Court Collegium had recommended his transfer.

Justice Sinha originally belongs to the Calcutta High Court, where he was appointed as an Additional Judge on October 30, 2013 and as a permanent Judge on March 14, 2016.

He was later on transferred to Orissa High Court and took oath on October 08, 2021.

The Division bench comprising of Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela was hearing the present matter.

Senior Advocate.

In the present matter, the petition was filed by a retired judge, having extensive experience in the Uttar Pradesh Higher Judicial Service, wherein he challenged the rule as being arbitrary, discriminatory, and violative of Articles 14, 19(1)(g) and 21 of the Constitution of India. The retired judge submitted before the court that the impugned Rule 9B was arbitrary and discriminatory as it restricts the privilege of submitting a request letter for designation as a Senior

Advocate, to the retired judicial officers of the Delhi Higher Judicial Service with 10 years of service.

Further, it was submitted before the court that the impugned Rule was creating an unreasonable classification under which any retired judicial officer from other state judiciaries who regularly practices before the Delhi High Court were arbitrarily excluded from availing the benefits of being designated as senior advocate in Delhi.

The court while rejection the petition stated that expecting the Judges of the Delhi Court to confer designation as a Senior Advocate upon retired judicial officers of other states was not possible. The court also stated that, 'After all, designation as a Senior Advocate by a High Court under the Rules is not merely on the basis of records available but also on the basis of the aforesaid parameters of an individual's personality.'

US-CANADA TRADE WAR STRENGTHENS MARK CARNEY'S LEADERSHIP

Carney, who replaced Justin Trudeau as Prime Minister of Canada earlier this month, has quickly emerged as a figurehead of national unity and resilience in the face of these mounting pressures.

TDG NETWORK
WASHINGTON

The ongoing trade war between the United States and Canada has dramatically reshaped the political landscape of Canada, creating an unexpected but significant opportunity for Prime Minister Mark Carney. The trade conflict, initiated by U.S. President Donald Trump, has placed considerable strain on Canada's economy and international relations, but it has also catalyzed a resurgence in the political fortunes of Canada's Liberal Party and, notably, its new leader, Carney.

Earlier this year, President Trump announced sweeping trade tariffs on Canadian imports, which have included a 25 percent tariff on steel and aluminum. Furthermore, Trump has threatened to impose even harsher measures, including a similar tariff on Canadian automobiles, set to be implemented on April 2. The trade war, already a significant source of tension, reached new heights with these announcements, forcing Canada into a precarious position.

Carney, who replaced Justin Trudeau as Prime Minister of Canada earlier this month, has quickly emerged as a figurehead of national unity and resilience in the face of these mounting pressures. Having previously served as the Governor of the Bank of Canada and the Governor of the Bank of England, Carney's credibility and experience in economic matters have made him an increasingly central figure in Canada's response to the trade war. At a time



Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada Mark Carney gives a speech to his supporters during a rally at the Grand Quay of the Port of Montreal. File Photo

TDG EXPLAINER

when the country's political future appeared uncertain, especially after a period of electoral losses and declining popularity for the Liberal Party, the trade conflict has unexpectedly worked in Carney's favor, bolstering his standing both within Canada and on the global stage.

THE RESURGENCE OF THE LIBERAL PARTY

The Liberals, once on the brink of electoral defeat, have seen their fortunes soar in the wake of the trade dispute with the U.S. The Canadian populace, alarmed by Trump's aggressive economic policies, has rallied behind Carney, seeing him as a steady hand capable of steering the nation through the crisis. His response to the trade war has been forceful and clear, with Carney taking a hard-line stance against Trump's trade tariffs and questioning

the reliability of the U.S. as a trading partner.

Carney's ability to project strength and diplomacy has resonated deeply with Canadians. Faced with the threat of devastating tariffs on Canadian exports, including steel, aluminum, and automobiles, many Canadians have come to view Carney not only as a political leader but also as a protector of their economic interests. In times of uncertainty, Carney's calm yet assertive leadership has instilled confidence in the nation's future, giving the Liberal Party a lifeline just when it needed it most.

A CALL FOR A STRONG MANDATE

The trade war has also provided Carney with the political cover needed to call for an early election. On the heels of the escalating trade

tensions with the U.S., Carney announced plans for a five-week campaign, urging Canadians to give him and the Liberal Party a clear mandate to navigate what he has described as "the biggest crisis in our lifetimes." The early election, scheduled for April 28, serves not only as a means to solidify Carney's leadership but also as an opportunity for the Liberal Party to gain a fresh political mandate in the face of international economic volatility.

This call for an early election is positioned as a response to the unprecedented nature of the trade conflict and the potential threats it poses to Canada's economy. Carney's request for a mandate reflects his desire to ensure that Canada has strong and clear leadership at a time when it may need to pivot away from traditional trading relationships and seek new global partnerships. His message is one of resilience and preparedness, encouraging Canadians to rally behind him in a collective effort to navigate the perilous waters of international trade.



THE DECLINE OF U.S. DEPENDENCE: CARNEY'S STRATEGIC SHIFT

One of Carney's most significant statements during the ongoing trade war has been his assertion that the United States is no longer a reliable partner for Canada. In a speech addressing the nation, Carney declared that it was clear the U.S. could no longer be counted on as a stable and predictable economic ally. Given the abrupt nature of Trump's trade measures and his increasingly erratic approach to foreign relations, Carney's remarks struck a chord with many Canadians who had long viewed their southern neighbor as a critical economic partner.

Carney's rhetoric suggests a fundamental shift in Canada's economic strategy. The prime minister has made it clear that Canada must reduce its reliance on the U.S. and explore alternative markets and trade relationships. This pivot is not merely a reaction to the current crisis but a long-term strategy to ensure that Canada's economy remains robust and adaptable, regardless of

the shifting political winds in Washington.

The Prime Minister's comments indicate a desire to diversify Canada's trade portfolio, exploring stronger economic ties with other nations and regional trade partners. While Carney has not outlined specific actions in detail, he has indicated that Canada will not sit idly by if the U.S. presses forward with its threats of new tariffs. Should Trump impose tariffs on Canadian automobiles, Carney has promised a proportional response, though the specifics of Canada's retaliatory measures remain undefined.

THE ECONOMIC STAKES FOR CANADA

The stakes of this trade war are especially high for Canada, whose economy is heavily dependent on its relationship with the United States. The U.S. remains Canada's largest trading partner, accounting for more than 75 percent of Canadian exports. Among these exports, automobiles are particularly critical, representing the second-largest category by value after oil.

More than 90 percent of Canadian oil exports are sent to the U.S., making any disruption in trade between the two nations a matter of immense concern for Canadian economic stability.

The automotive sector is another critical area of concern, as vehicles represent one of Canada's most valuable exports. A significant portion of the cars and trucks manufactured in Canada are sold in the U.S., and any new tariffs imposed on these exports could severely affect the profitability of Canada's auto industry. These industries are particularly sensitive to any disruptions in trade, as they are intricately tied to the supply chains and markets of the U.S.

CARNEY'S APPROACH TO DIPLOMACY

Carney has been adamant that Canada will stand firm against any attempts to undermine its sovereignty, even as he prepares for discussions with President Trump. While he has not engaged directly with Trump since assuming office, Carney revealed that the U.S. president had reached out to arrange a call. Despite

this gesture, Carney remains resolute in his position that the U.S. must respect Canada's autonomy in international trade matters.

Carney's response to the ongoing trade war is characterized by a blend of diplomacy and pragmatism. While he is open to engaging with the U.S. to resolve the dispute, he has made it clear that Canada's national interests will take precedence. By projecting strength and an unwavering commitment to Canada's sovereignty, Carney has positioned himself as a leader who will not buckle under pressure.

CONCLUSION

The US-Canada trade war has, in many ways, strengthened the position of Prime Minister Mark Carney, propelling him to the forefront of Canadian politics during a time of unprecedented economic uncertainty. By taking a strong, independent stance in the face of aggressive trade measures from the U.S., Carney has not only bolstered his own political standing but has also given the Canadian people a renewed sense of confidence in their leadership. As Canada faces the potential fallout from this trade dispute, Carney's leadership will be crucial in determining the nation's future direction. His call for a shift away from dependence on the U.S. and a reorientation toward global markets reflects a long-term strategy aimed at securing Canada's economic future in an increasingly unpredictable world. The coming election, slated for April 28, will serve as a referendum on Carney's vision for Canada's path forward in this turbulent global landscape.

China's shift in economic strategy: Reducing reliance on the United States

TDG NETWORK

In recent years, China has made a concerted effort to adjust its economic strategies in response to rising tensions with the United States. The ongoing trade war, characterized by mounting tariffs and protectionist policies, has prompted China to seek alternatives for growth and strengthen its relationships with countries in the Global South. This shift is not just about diversifying trade relationships but also about ensuring that the country's long-term growth is less vulnerable to the whims of an increasingly unpredictable U.S. government. At the Boao Forum for Asia, a key event held in Hainan province, Chinese Vice-Premier Ding Xuexiang outlined China's plans to stabilize its economy and pivot towards fostering stronger ties with nations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

CHINA'S DIPLOMATIC PIVOT

China has long recognized itself as part of the Global South, identifying with the economic challenges faced by many low- and middle-income nations. Despite being the world's second-largest economy, China's leadership has made it clear that it wants to deepen its partnerships with countries in this group. This was the key theme at the Boao Forum for Asia, where discussions centered on boosting China's role in Asia and strengthening relations with countries in the Global South. The event showcased

China's commitment to supporting these countries, especially as the U.S. has increasingly focused on protectionist policies that affect global trade.

The lineup of speakers at the forum was a clear reflection of this diplomatic pivot. Leaders from countries such as Laos, Russia, Kazakhstan, and Iran were present, further cementing China's strategy to strengthen ties with nations that are often left out of the U.S.-dominated global economic system. With many countries in the Global South facing common developmental challenges, China's outreach represents an opportunity to build more equitable and mutually beneficial trade relationships. The forum underscored China's growing influence in these regions, as it seeks to not only increase trade but also to play a more prominent role in global political and economic affairs.

NEED FOR ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

One of the major factors driving China's shift away from reliance on the United States is the ongoing tariff dispute between the two countries. Since 2018, the U.S. has imposed a range of tariffs on Chinese goods, contributing to significant trade friction. Despite efforts from both sides to de-escalate tensions, tariffs remain a persistent issue. In 2023, exports to the U.S. accounted for only about 13% of China's total exports, marking a significant decline from previous years. This drop has reinforced China's



Chinese Vice-Premier Ding Xuexiang speaks at the opening ceremony of the Boao Forum on Thursday. Agency

resolve to find new markets and diversify its economic relationships.

At the Boao Forum, Ding Xuexiang addressed the growing challenges posed by U.S. protectionism. He called for countries to resist trade and investment barriers, which he identified as major disruptions to the global economic system. The message was clear: China must reduce its dependency on the U.S. and focus on establishing new trade partnerships, particularly with countries in the Global South. Although the tariffs imposed by the U.S. are a significant factor, they also provide an opportunity for China to rethink its strategy and explore ways to for-

tify its economy by deepening trade relations with nations that have historically been overlooked by the West.

China's focus on the Global South also aligns with its broader foreign policy strategy. In recent years, China has signed numerous free trade agreements with countries across Asia, Africa, and Latin America, expanding its network of economic partnerships. These agreements are seen as an essential tool for boosting China's trade volume with these regions and ensuring that its economy is less dependent on the uncertain economic policies of the U.S. and other Western nations. With these efforts, China is attempting

to create a more diversified and resilient trade ecosystem.

BOOSTING DOMESTIC DEMAND

While diversifying trade relationships with the Global South is essential, China is also placing significant emphasis on strengthening its domestic economy. One of the central themes at the Boao Forum was the need to boost domestic consumption, a critical area of focus for China's economic planners. For years, China has relied heavily on exports and investment to fuel its economic growth. However, with external demand becoming more volatile,

particularly due to the trade conflict with the U.S., China must turn inward to sustain growth.

Economists like Huang Yiping, an influential advisor to China's central bank, have stressed the importance of increasing domestic consumption as a key driver of economic growth. At the Boao Forum, Huang explained that China's priority must be to shift the focus from investment-driven growth to consumer-driven growth. This transition will require a concerted effort to increase household consumption, which has traditionally been lower in China compared to other economies. To achieve this, poli-

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cymakers are considering measures to raise the share of consumption in China's GDP, with some experts suggesting that the country should aim for consumption to account for 70% of GDP by 2035.

Boosting domestic demand is seen as a way to reduce China's reliance on external markets and increase resilience to global trade disruptions. However, this shift presents its own set of challenges. Many Chinese consumers have a higher savings rate compared to their counterparts in other countries, which means they may not be as willing to spend. To encourage consumption, the Chinese government is looking to implement policies that stimulate spending, such as increasing wages, enhancing social welfare programs, and providing incentives for purchasing goods and services. While these measures may take time to have a meaningful impact, they are seen as essential for ensuring the long-term sustainability of China's economy.

RESILIENT CHINESE ECONOMY

China's efforts to diversify its trade relationships and boost domestic demand signal a new phase in the country's economic strategy. By focusing on strengthening ties with the Global South, China hopes to reduce its

vulnerability to the political and economic uncertainties surrounding its relationship with the United States. As the country continues to expand its network of free trade agreements and deepen diplomatic ties with developing nations, it is positioning itself as a key player in the Global South.

However, China's economic future will also depend on its ability to transition toward greater domestic consumption. This shift is essential for reducing its reliance on external markets and ensuring sustainable growth in the face of increasing global uncertainty. By investing in both domestic demand and international partnerships, China aims to build a more resilient economy that is less susceptible to external shocks and more capable of navigating the complexities of the 21st-century global economy.

In conclusion, China's current strategy represents a bold move toward economic diversification and resilience. While the shift away from the United States is a response to tariffs and protectionism, it also reflects a broader vision for China's role in the world. By strengthening relationships with the Global South and focusing on domestic demand, China is working to secure its position as a leading economic power for the future.

TRUMP ASKS US SUPREME COURT TO INTERVENE IN DEPORTATIONS FIGHT

Trump calls for impeachment of Judge Boasberg.

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

Donald Trump asked the U.S. Supreme Court on Friday to lift a temporary order blocking him from using a 1798 law to swiftly deport alleged Venezuelan gang members as part of his two-month-old administration's headline approach to immigration.

The Justice Department in a filing asked the court to lift Washington-based U.S. District Judge James Boasberg's March 15 order calling for a temporary halt of the summary removals of the Venezuelans while a legal challenge to Trump's invocation of the Alien Enemies Act to justify the deportations plays out. The 18th century law historically has been used only in wartime.

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The Justice Department said in its filing on Friday

JUDICIAL BATTLE

- Trump seeks Supreme Court approval for swift Venezuelan deportations.
- Judge Boasberg blocks deportations, citing Alien Enemies Act's wartime use.
- 238 Venezuelans deported despite the court order.
- ACLU challenges deportations as exceeding presidential powers.



■ D.C. Circuit Court upholds the temporary block.



■ Chief Justice Roberts rebukes Trump's remarks.

that the case presents the question of who decides how to conduct sensitive national-security-related operations, the president or the judiciary. "The Constitution supplies a clear answer: the President," the department wrote. "The republic cannot afford a different choice."

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit on Wednesday up-

held the judge's temporary block as proceedings continue in the case. The dispute has elicited Trump's grievances toward federal courts, which have issued dozens of rulings impeding parts of Trump's agenda.

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Trump invoked the Alien Enemies Act on March 15 to swiftly deport the alleged members of the Tren de

Aragua gang, attempting to speed up removals with a law best known for its use to intern Japanese, Italian and German immigrants during World War Two.

In a legal challenge handled by the American Civil Liberties Union, a group of Venezuelan men in the custody of U.S. immigration authorities on the same day sued on behalf of themselves and others

similarly situated, seeking to block the deportations. They argued, among other things, that Trump's order exceeded his powers because the Alien Enemies Act authorizes removals only when war has been declared or the United States has been invaded.

The Alien Enemies Act authorizes the president to deport, detain or place restrictions on individuals whose primary allegiance is to a foreign power and who might pose a national security risk in wartime.

Boasberg, an appointee of Democratic President Barack Obama, temporarily blocked the deportations. But Trump's administration allowed two planes already in the air to continue to El Salvador where American officials handed 238 Venezuelan men over to Salvadoran authorities to be placed in the Central American country's "Terrorism Confinement Center."

Ukraine's Zelenskyy not a valid negotiating partner: Putin

AGENCIES
MOSCOW

Challenging the legitimacy of the government, Russian President Vladimir Putin on late Thursday floated the idea that Ukraine should temporarily be placed under UN control to elect a more "competent" government.

Putin added that the Russian forces have a "strategic initiative" on the front line in Ukraine and suggested the idea of establishing a "transitional" government in Kyiv.

On the other hand, Ukraine accused Putin of proposing "crazy" ideas to delay further movement towards a peace deal.

"There are reasons to believe that we will finish them off," said Putin during his visit in the northern city of Murmansk.

"We could, of course, discuss with the United States, even with European countries, and of course with our partners and friends, under the auspices of the UN, the possibility of establishing a transitional administration in Ukraine," he added.

Putin's remark comes as the US is stepping up its mediation efforts to broker



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a peace deal between Russia and Ukraine.

Both the countries agreeing to a Black Sea ceasefire after discussions with the US delegates in Saudi Arabia is seen as the first step towards peace. Putin said that Zelenskyy has stayed in power beyond the end of his term and is therefore not a valid negotiating partner.

Under the present circumstances in Kyiv, with more than five million people displaced overseas, it would be almost impossible to hold

elections in Ukraine.

US President Donald Trump has also earlier questioned the legitimacy of the government and called for elections to replace Zelenskyy. Zelenskyy's chief of staff Andriy Yermak accused Russia of finding ways to stall the peace talks.

Meanwhile, the European leaders and the Ukrainian president met in Paris for the 'council of willing' summit aimed at coordinating policy on the war on Thursday.

Dhaka warms up to China after India snub

AGENCIES
BEIJING

In a significant shift in foreign policy, Bangladesh is pivoting towards China following growing tensions with India. Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus' recent visit to Beijing has highlighted this new direction, with a focus on strengthening economic ties and cooperation.

One of the key outcomes of Yunus' meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping was the announcement that Bangladesh will soon begin exporting its famed mangoes and jackfruit to China. Xi, who had tasted the fruits, praised their quality, marking a significant step in deepening trade relations between the two nations. This announcement comes after Bangladesh's earlier controversy regarding the export of hilsa fish to India, which has been a sensitive issue within the country.

Beyond agriculture, Yunus and Xi discussed more serious matters of state, with China committing to encourage increased Chinese investment in Bangladesh and relocate Chinese manufacturing enterprises to the country. Dhaka has also been pushing for lower interest rates on Chinese loans, seeking a reduction from 3 percent to 1-2 percent.



Bangladesh's Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus and Chinese President Xi Jinping (Right). Agency

The meeting marks Yunus' first foreign visit since assuming office in August 2024. His trip to China comes in the wake of Bangladesh's domestic political

upheaval, with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina ousted after public protests. Hasina's subsequent exile in India has further strained relations between Dhaka and New Delhi.

Bangladesh's growing ties with China come at a time when relations with India have soured, particularly with India's refusal to engage with Yunus diplomatically. As Bangladesh seeks new allies, China's willingness to engage is seen as a crucial counterbalance to India's influence in the region.

Army called out in Kathmandu; 1 killed as pro-monarchy supporters clash with cops

AGENCIES
KATHMANDU

The Army was called out and a curfew was imposed on parts of Kathmandu on Friday after one person was killed and 30 injured as pro-monarchy protesters pelted stones, attacked the office of a political party, set fire to vehicles, and looted shops.

District authorities said the curfew will be in force

barriers. Kathmandu Post reported that pro-monarchists led by businessman Durga Prasai pushed for the restoration of the monarchy at Tinkune, near the airport.

They vandalised a building and set it on fire at Tinkune. Demonstrators also smashed windows of a building along the roadside.

The publication reported that tensions escalated when protesters attempted

District authorities said the curfew will be in force for about five hours, up to 10 pm. Nobody was to be allowed to move about in certain areas.

for about five hours, up to 10 pm. Nobody was to be allowed to move about in certain areas.

About half of the people injured were police personnel, authorities said, as they tried to disperse protesters who pelted stones and tried to break through security

to break through the designated security perimeter and hurled stones at police, prompting security personnel to respond with tear gas.

The protest was led by the Nawaraj Subedi-led joint movement committee, with Durga Prasai mobilising supporters.

Protesters disrupt Mamata Banerjee's speech at Oxford

AGENCIES
LONDON

During a speech at Kellogg College, Oxford University, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee faced an interruption from left-wing student protesters. The protesters attempted to raise several issues regarding the situation in West Bengal, but Mamata managed to keep the situation under control with calmness and assertiveness.

Mamata, addressing the protesters, urged them not to politicize the event, stating, "Please don't do politics here. You can do it with me in my state." She added, "If you want to get a political platform, go to Bengal." The Chief Minister attempted to defuse the situation by calling one of the protesters "brother" and urged them to increase their party's presence in West Bengal if they wished to challenge her. She further suggested that they fight her politically within



SFI UK activists protest against Mamata Banerjee at Kellogg College. ANI

her own state.

In a tense moment, Mamata held up a black-and-white photograph from 1990, showing her injured and bandaged after an alleged attack by Lalu Alam, a CPI(M) youth wing member. Mamata claimed that this assault was an attempt on her life, accusing the protesters' supporters of committing such atrocities. "I was about to die. These are your atrocities," she said, reinforcing her stance against those who opposed her politically.

The Chief Minister firmly rejected the notion that the protest was a form of "drama." She emphasized the importance of respecting institutions, telling the protesters, "Instead of insulting me, you are insulting your institution. Don't disrespect your institution. You can disrespect me, but you cannot disrespect your institution." Mamata's response demonstrated her resilience in handling the disruptive situation while maintaining a strong defense of her political integrity.

ANOTHER BITTER CHAPTER IN INDIA-CANADA RELATIONS DUE TO CANADA'S FALSE ALLEGATIONS ON INDIA

Global affairs keep changing their shape based on the common multilateral objectives of various nations, their national interests and the political will of their leaders. Amid this complex criss-cross of personal political agenda of the leaders, national interests of their respective nations and the bilateral & multilateral developments, this week also emanated with various developments across the world. However, the diplomatic brawl between Canadian and Indian governments again took a centre stage in the global affairs, this week. This week, Canada has again alleged India of interference in its upcoming federal elections. As Canadians gear up to vote on April 28, high-ranking officials have mentioned in their addresses that India, China, Pakistan, and Iran are all likely to attempt to undermine the electoral process through increas-

ingly sophisticated disinformation strategies. The deployment of artificial intelligence tools is expected to play a significant role in efforts to mislead voters and influence diaspora communities.

India is in distress over this situation. It has consistently denounced any accusations originating from Canada. Previously too, Prime Minister Trudeau had accused India of meddling in Canadian elections, but those allegations were ultimately deemed unfounded. The inquiry into allegations of foreign intervention in Canadian elections concluded with the finding last year that there was no evidence of India attempting to interfere in Canadian politics. However, testimony during an official probe revealed that China had interfered in Canada's last two elections. This news had emerged following claims by the Canada Se-

WORLD RECAP

ANSHU JOSHI



curity Intelligence Service (CSIS) that India meddled in the 2019 and 2021 Canadian elections. India had rejected the allegations and reaffirmed its dedication to refraining from involvement in the democratic processes of other countries. The spokesperson of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, Randhir Jaiswal had also stated, "We strongly reject all such baseless allegations of Indian interference in Canadian elections". He also clearly mentioned that "It is not the government of India's policy to interfere in the democratic processes of other countries. In fact, quite on the reverse, it is Canada which has been interfering in our internal affairs."

It will be really interesting to see what unfolds for Canada now. Trudeau could not understand the national priorities of Canada, and faced serious repercussions of his own decisions. He supported extremists and spoil India-Canada relations. The diplomatic brawl between Canadian and Indian government started after Trudeau alleged Indian government for playing a pivotal role in the Khalistani terrorist Nijjar's killing. Due to Trudeau's false allegations, India-Canada relations suffered like never before. After a series of provoking diplomatic actions from Canada and a befitting response from India, the bilateral relations between the two nations

Global affairs keep changing their shape based on the common multilateral objectives of various nations, their national interests and the political will of their leaders.

faced the worst phase. India recalled its High Commissioner from Canada in the month of October last year in response to rising diplomatic tensions. This action was conveyed to Canadian Chargé d'Affaires, who was called in by the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi. During this meeting, it was made clear that the "unfounded targeting" of the Indian High Commissioner and other diplomatic personnel in Canada was wholly intolerable. India has also reiterated its position that the Trudeau administration has deliberately allowed an environment in which violent extremists

and terrorists can target, threaten, and intimidate Indian diplomats and community leaders residing in Canada.

Then, the concerns regarding Trudeau's leadership intensified following the resignation of Chrystia Freeland, the former finance minister, from his Cabinet in December 2024. Freeland had been vocal in her criticism of Trudeau's economic management, particularly in light of the significant tariffs that Trump had threatened. Just prior to Freeland's announcement, the housing minister of the country also stepped down. Finally, Trudeau also resigned

as the Canadian PM post which Canada started gearing up itself for the elections due in the month of April this year.

This week, Vanessa Lloyd, the deputy director of operations for Canada's intelligence agency and chair of the task force addressing security and intelligence threats to elections, stated that many threat actors are still likely to engage in malicious activities. She noted that these individuals have probably refined their methods to better hide their foreign interference efforts, which complicates detection efforts. However, it is interesting that she also reported that between late January and early February, China is suspected of targeting the Liberal leadership campaign of former finance minister Chrystia Freeland. This campaign, conducted on WeChat, reportedly reached an audience of up to three million views, as

stated by the security and intelligence threats to elections task force in a news release.

It is imperative for Canada to acknowledge that India values strategic autonomy and upholds democratic principles, refraining from engaging in any harmful activities. Instead, Canada should concentrate on addressing the interference from other organizations and nations that promote terrorism within its political landscape.

Political, social or economic, the games that are played on the international turf impact bilateral as well as multilateral relations at the end of the day. The leaders need to remember that their influence is not everlasting and hence they need to play for the betterment of humanity, not for power. Hope Canada too understands this!

The author is Professor, School of International Studies, JNU

PICTURE PERFECT



Tripti Dimri poses for her social media. (INSTAGRAM)

HRITHIK TO MAKE DIRECTORIAL DEBUT WITH 'KRRISH 4'

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

HRithik Roshan is set to don the director's hat for the highly anticipated 'Krrish 4', the latest installment in the superhero franchise.

Hrithik, who has starred in the previous three blockbuster films of the franchise, will also act in the movie.

Rakesh Roshan, Hrithik's father and a filmmaker, took to social media to confirm the news, sharing a heartfelt note. "Duggu 25yrs back I launched you as an actor, and today again after 25 years you are being launched as a director by two filmmakers Aditya Chopra & myself to take for-

ward our most ambitious film #Krrish4. Wish you all the success in this new avatar with good wishes and blessings!" he wrote.

Yash Raj Films (YRF) has come on board to produce 'Krrish 4' in association with Rakesh Roshan.

Rakesh Roshan expressed his delight at having Aditya Chopra as the producer,



ly creative combination! I'm sure they will turn Krrish 4 into a theatrical experience that has never been made in India."

The project is set to commence filming early next year, with further details yet to be disclosed.

Earlier in an interview with ANI, Rakesh Roshan talked about 'Krrish 4' and said, "It is almost ready, and I will be announcing it very soon."

The Krrish franchise, launched in 2003 by Rakesh Roshan, has become iconic in Indian cinema. Starting with Koi... Mil Gaya (2003), it introduced Rohit Mehra and his alien friend.

The success continued with Krrish (2006) and Krrish 3 (2013).

'Raid 2' teaser unveiled: Ajay, Riteish clash in high-stakes sequel

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The much-anticipated sequel to the 2018 film 'Raid' is here, and the teaser for 'Raid 2' has dropped on social media.

Starring Ajay Devgn in his iconic role as the determined IRS officer Aamir Khan, 'Raid 2' promises an even more thrilling and high-stakes story than its predecessor.

The teaser reveals that Patnaik is back in action, and this time, he's targeting a much bigger and more dangerous adversary, a powerful political figure named Dadab-



hai, played by Riteish Deshmukh.

Known for his no-nonsense approach, Patnaik has already conducted 74 raids and has been trans-

ferred 74 times, going by his unyielding commitment to fighting corruption.

The teaser opens with a dramatic narration by

Saurabh Shukla, reprising his role as the antagonist from the first film, who wonders whose life Patnaik is making miserable now.

The audience is then introduced to Riteish Deshmukh's character, Dadabhai, who is clearly a force to be reckoned with.

The action-packed montage showcases intense confrontations and high-stakes drama, leading to a thrilling face-off between Ajay Devgn's Patnaik and Riteish's Dadabhai.

The teaser ends with the announcement of the release date, May 1, 2025.

Saif, Jaideep Ahlawat's 'Jewel Thief' to release in April

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Get ready for a thrilling cinematic experience as Saif Ali Khan's highly anticipated film 'Jewel Thief - The Heist Begins' is set to premiere on Netflix on April 25, 2025.

The movie, directed by Siddharth Anand, promises to deliver high-octane action, suspense, and intrigue.

The makers of the film shared a new poster of the upcoming film on social media.



"The bigger the risk, the sweeter the steal. Aa raha hai the incredible- Jewel Thief. Watch Jewel Thief, out 25 April, only on Netflix," the caption read.

The film boasts an ensemble cast, including Jaideep Ahlawat, Kunal Kapoor, and Nikita Dutta, alongside Saif Ali Khan.

The teaser, released in February, offered a glimpse into the movie's plot, showcasing Saif and Jaideep's characters joining forces to steal the coveted African Red Sun diamond.

According to the official synopsis, "A Jewel thief is hired by a powerful crime lord to steal the world's most elusive diamond."

BRAIN PICKING

I'm not a model; hence I don't see the reason to have a six-pack abs

— ABHISHEK BACHCHAN
(Indian Actor)

'Ground Zero' teaser: Emraan Hashmi's war drama

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The teaser for Emraan Hashmi's upcoming film, 'Ground Zero', has been unveiled, promising an intense war thriller inspired by real events.

Directed by Tejas Deokar, the film is set in Kashmir and will hit theaters on April 25.

The makers of the film released the teaser trailer on social media.

"Bravery, sacrifice, and a mission that changed everything. #GroundZero teaser out now! #AbPra-



haarHoga," the caption of the post read.

The teaser begins with a chilling warning from the terror group, followed by a depiction of an attack on Indian soldiers that resulted in the loss of 70

lives.

The clip then introduces Emraan Hashmi as BSF Deputy Commandant Narendra Nath Dubey, a real-life hero who led a high-stakes mission to hunt down the enemy.

Actress reacts to her alleged leaked video

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Tamil actor Shruthi Narayanan, whose alleged casting couch video was leaked yesterday, has reacted to the controversy surrounding her. Calling it a hard situation for her entire family, and a difficult time for her, she requested everyone to not spread it. Sharing a story on Instagram, she wrote, "For you guys, spreading all



these contents on me it's just a joke and fun content. But for me and my close ones this is a very hard situation for us. Especially for me it is a very difficult time and it's a difficult situation to handle it. I'm also a girl and I also

have feeling and my close ones also have feeling and you guys just make it worse and worse (sic)."

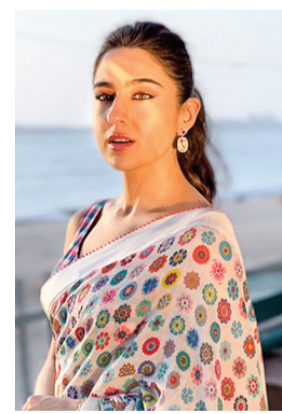
She concluded by writing, "I humbly request you all to not spread everything like wild fire and if in case go see the videos for your mother or sister or girlfriend because they are also girls and they also have the same bodies like me so go and enjoy their videos (sic)."

Sara to add Bollywood tadka to IPL mega celebrations in Guwahati

TDG NETWORK
GUWAHATI

Before the commencement of the Chennai Super Kings' match against the Rajasthan Royals in Guwahati on March 30, the audience will get a chance to witness a dance performance by Bollywood star Sara Ali Khan.

On Thursday, the social media team of IPL shared the particular update, leav-



ing fans excited.

"Crickets meets glamour in Guwahati Sara Ali Khan is ready to set the stage on fire as #TATAIPL celebrates 18 iconic years! Get ready for a night of music, dance & pure adrenaline! #RRvCSK | @saraalikh95," a post read on IPL's Instagram handle.

The 18th edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) kickstarted on March 22, with the opening match be-

tween defending champions, Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), and Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) at Eden Gardens. A star-studded ceremony was organised at the stadium to inaugurate this year's cash-rich league.

Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan added "chaar chand" to the ceremony with his hosting skills. "As today the IPL turns 18, it comes away not as a league but as a

movement, a celebration of sports, a festival of passion, a battleground where heroes are made. We are in the city of joy, Kolkata," he said, evoking a loud cheer from the audience.

The highlight of the event was undoubtedly the moment when SRK called former RCB captain Virat Kohli "GOAT" and shook a leg with him on his blockbuster song 'Jhoomo Jo Pathaan'.

REVIEW: CON MUM *****

CON MUM

PRAVEEN NAGDA

We are living in the age of digital arrests, online frauds, phishing, and various kinds of scams. Well that's a lot to do with the digital illiteracy, but then there are also the scams in real lives done by real people and they are no short of masala movie scripts. In a real-life crime story, Con Mum explores the life of a star chef losing his peace to none other than his long-lost mother.

Graham Hornigold, a celebrity chef living in London with her partner Heather Kaniuk, also a chef. All is well in their lives and they are on the family way as Heather is expecting a baby. Graham had grown up with a family, where his father was an abusive person and he had no mother to nurture his childhood. Having lived with this trauma and missing the mother element all through his life, he receives an email one day from Dionne, who claims to be her missing



biological mother. Initially brushing it off as some scam, Graham still connected with her by making some queries and getting all the right answers about his childhood, which only either he or his mother would know. Missing the love of a mother for 45 years and finding her back when she is in a wheelchair as an 85 years old sick lady

towards the fag end of life can be emotionally heavy for anyone. Graham was told by Dionne that she was an illegitimate child of the ex-Sultan of Brunei, and she wanted to leave all her wealth to him after she died from a terminal cancer, for which doctors had given her only 6 months. What an emotional shock for a son to find her

mother after 45 years only to discover that he is going to lose her in the next 6 months.

Dionne meets him at expensive and fancy hotels, treats him a Michelin-starred restaurants, and flaunts her global multimillion businesses in commodities, fruits, food and many other things as she is busy speaking with lawyers and accountants all through the day. Dionne showers mother's love for Graham and buys expensive cars (Range Rover and BMW) for him and his partner Heather. She asks him to visit Switzerland to meet lawyers and bankers so she can sign the papers and transfer her

wealth to Graham. However, their Switzerland stay keeps extending and Dionne's expensive and lavish lifestyle continues, at the expense of Graham, which he is yet to discover and comprehend.

Dionne kept manipulating and brainwashing Graham, with lies and false promises of wealth for him. Her modus operandi was to exploit Graham emotionally and extort money, which eventually left Graham with debts of ₹300,000. And Graham was not alone, Dionne would borrow money from Graham's friend and tell him not to tell Graham about it. She befriends a filmmaker and his partner, signs a fake

agreement and promises to fund their startup, but no money lands in their account, however, they keep funding her for her lavish lifestyle. When Heather discovers huge monies funneling out of her joint accounts with Graham and sees his credit card debts ballooning she confronts Graham, but to no avail, as Graham is still unable to accept the fact that he was being conned by his own mother. Her research trails led to many more con discoveries of Dionne, where she duped people across continents to support her lavish lifestyle. Her medication and cancer story too turned out to be completely fake. Eventu-

ally, Graham goes for a DNA test that proves Dionne to be his biological mother with 99.9% accuracy. Graham is shocked as to how would any mother do this to her own son. And after getting exposed, Dionne disappears from London only to call him from Malaysia after months.

It's a sordid tale of a protector turning into a predator, a mother scamming her own biological son for maintaining a luxurious lifestyle, and a story of lies, fraud, cheating and deceit uncovering the criminal mind.

Praveen Nagda is Festival Director of KidzCINEMA and CultureCinema Film Festivals

REKHA MODY: A TRAILBLAZER IN WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT, ART, AND SOCIAL REFORM

TDG NETWORK

Born in 1955 into the illustrious Modi family of Modinagar, Uttar Pradesh, Rekha Mody's life journey is a testament to her deep-rooted values of social responsibility and cultural enrichment. Despite her privileged upbringing, Rekha's early exposure to the struggles of the underprivileged shaped her empathetic outlook. Educated in a school attended by the children of laborers in Modinagar and later at a high school in Gwalior alongside tribal girls, she imbibed a sense of social justice early on. Her academic journey culminated in a first-division Bachelor of Arts degree from Meerut University, but her real education came from life experiences that fueled her passion for social change.

Rekha's multifaceted career is an inspiring tapestry of achievements. She is a connoisseur of art, a publisher, a philanthropist, and a tireless advocate for women's rights. Her entrepreneurial spirit led her

to establish a bookshop in Kolkata, which she later transformed into an art gallery housing exquisite artworks. Rekha was instrumental in bringing Sotheby's, the renowned art auction house, to India 28 years ago. Her passion for literature saw her working as a literary agent, promoting the translation of Indian regional literature into English and showcasing these works internationally. She also pioneered Kolkata's first FM radio station, further expanding her creative pursuits.

Driven by her belief that true leadership lies in service, Rekha founded several charitable organizations. In 1984, at the age of 29, she answered an inner calling to launch a cultural revolution with a strong emphasis on social development. She established the *Divya Chaya Trust*, a public charity that, in collaboration with the UK-based *Save A Child*, works to restore hope and opportunities for underprivileged children. Rekha also founded *Garutman Pet Ltd*, a publishing house



promoting quality Indian literature, and the *Habibart Foundation*, dedicated to promoting contemporary art and traditional craft.

However, Rekha's most profound impact has been in the sphere of women's empowerment. She founded *Stree Shakti - The Parallel Force*, a women's networking forum that aims to bring clarity to women's issues and recognize their achievements. In the 1990s, when few platforms existed to honor women, Rekha launched the *Stree Shakti Awards* in 1998 to celebrate women who dared to dream and turned those dreams into reality. One of the most prestigious recognitions under this initiative is the *Dayawati Modi Stree Shakti*

Samman, named after her grandmother, Dayawati Modi—a legendary social reformer and educationalist known for her motto, "*Work is Worship*."

Rekha's commitment to women's rights is unwavering. Recently, she expressed her support for Senior Advocate Shobha Gupta's letter to the Chief Justice of India, challenging a controversial order by the Allahabad High Court in a sexual assault case. Rekha emphasized the need for judicial sensitivity and intervention to uphold women's dignity and safety. Her organization, *She Leads*, has also successfully lobbied for progressive policies, including free transport for women in select states.

With an eye on uniting women leaders across India, Rekha is organizing the *Women Leaders Conclave* from April 7 to 9 in Srinagar, aiming to build a strong coalition for gender equality. Rekha Mody's life is a powerful narrative of art, activism, and advocacy—an inspiration for generations to come.

Wood Be Done: Crafting Luxurious, Art-Inspired Interiors with Precision and Passion

TDG NETWORK

Wood Be Done Founder Trina Roy blends her passion for art, travel, fitness and craftsmanship in creating luxury interiors.

Before entering interior design, Trina and Aniketh enjoyed thriving careers in fitness, where they learned the importance of discipline, precision, and hard work. These values have seamlessly translated into their design philosophy, ensuring each project is executed with the utmost care and attention to detail.

Their love for art and travel gave them the ability to broaden their imaginations and make astonishing interiors that are visually appealing and functional.

They spoke to the Daily Guardian about her passion, inspiration and future prospects

Q. Let's talk more about Wood Be Done. How did you begin your journey?

A. My love for travel and art influences our design vision, but it's the discipline we learned through fitness that enables me to execute each project to perfection. It's about hard work, patience, and mak-



Trina Roy

ing sure every detail aligns with my high standards. To maintain the highest quality standards, we have established our own manufacturing units, allowing us to oversee every aspect of production. This ensures that all materials and

designs meet her exacting standards for craftsmanship and finish. Wood Be Done's portfolio is a testament to our discipline and artistic vision. Our designs not only tell a story but also reflect the hard work and determination that go

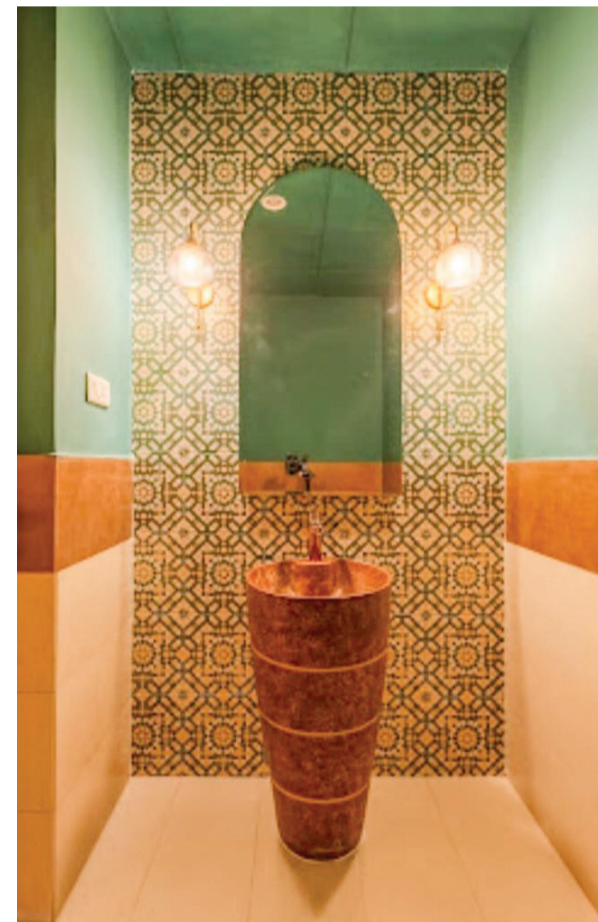


into creating luxury interiors, both residential & commercial projects of the highest calibre.

Q. What Are Your Inspirations in Designing Homes?

A. Their inspiration comes from extensive travels and exposure to different cultures, and a

profound appreciation for art. We believe every home should mirror the personality and lifestyle of the people living in it. Through our love for art and travel and their ability to incorporate personalized design features, we craft spaces that feel



both luxurious and intimate.

Q. What Is Your USP?

A. What sets Wood Be Done apart from other interior firms is our in-house manufacturing units. By overseeing production themselves, we ensure that every detail

of their projects—from material selection to final finishes—meets their high standards. This hands-on approach guarantees exceptional craftsmanship and allows them to provide truly customized solutions for their clients.

Having complete control

over production means we never have to compromise on quality. "Every detail, no matter how small, is carefully crafted to align with our vision."

Q. What's the Future Vision for Your Company?

A. Wood Be Done aims to expand its presence in the luxury interiors market, offering sophisticated, high-quality designs to a wider audience. We are also eager to incorporate sustainable materials and innovative design techniques to redefine modern interior aesthetics while remaining committed to excellence.

Q. Who Is Your Best Client?

A. One of Wood Be Done's most fulfilling projects was for Dr. Deepti Reddy and Dr. Pramod, who reside at Aditya Grandiose in Film Nagar. They had a distinct vision for the aesthetic they desired while allowing us the creative freedom to realize it. In addition to their exceptional taste, they were incredibly warm and respectful—not just to us, but to every worker on-site. Their insights, influenced by their backgrounds as doctors, provided us with a fresh perspective on both design and functionality.

The Digital Edge: Why Women Must Prioritise Tech and Digital Skilling in Today's Workforce

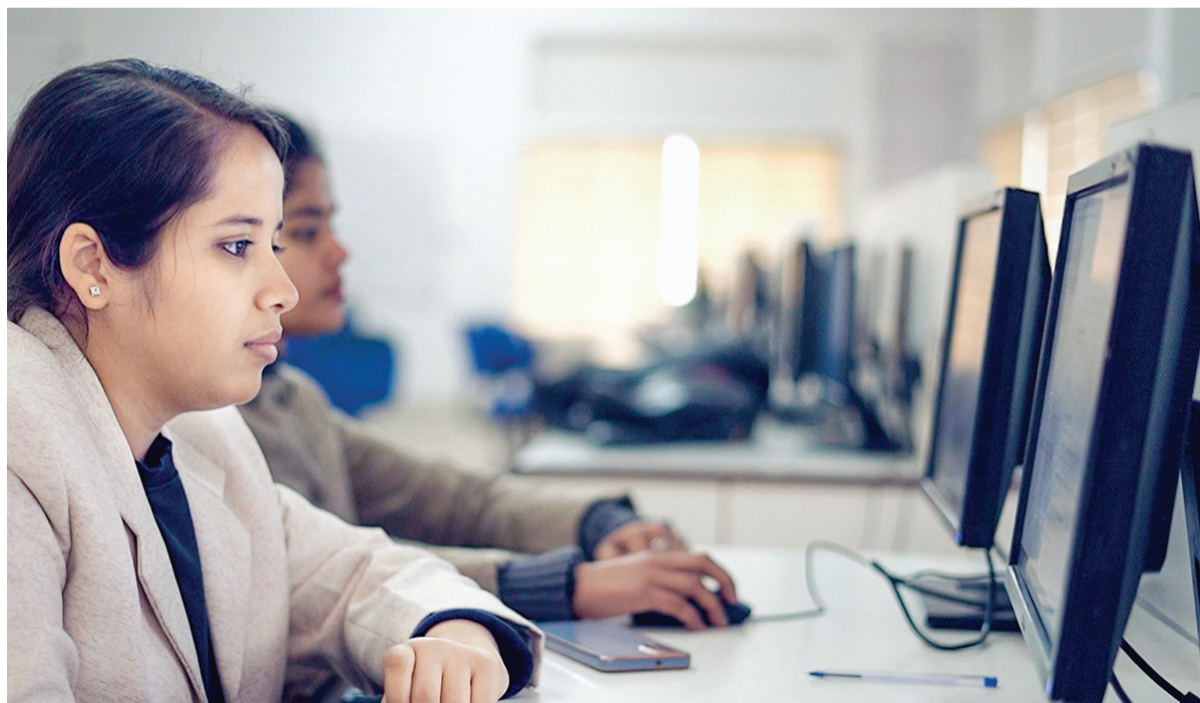


Jyoti Mayal

The way we work is no longer the way we used to. The digital revolution has touched every industry, and travel and tourism are no exceptions. The times when travel businesses relied solely on word-of-mouth and traditional marketing have become a thing of the past. Today, everything from discovering a destination to booking flights, hotels, and experiences happens online—all powered by AI-driven recommendations, AR/VR previews, and real-time data insights. Aviation has evolved, too.

Airlines have evolved from selling seats to selling experiences. From AI-driven pricing algorithms that personalise ticket costs to data-backed loyalty programs that anticipate a traveller's preferences. Hotels and tour operators now depend on digital marketing, online bookings, and virtual reality walkthroughs to attract customers. In these times, digital skills are a necessity & not an add-on.

Yet, women are still underrepresented in tech-driven industries, including travel and aviation. Not because they lack the talent, but because traditional roles have not encouraged them to inculcate technology as a career enabler. The reality is, digital skills today are the passport to better jobs, leadership positions, and financial independence. AI, digital marketing, data analytics, or automation, the opportunities are endless but only if women actively pursue them.



WHY NOW?

Because the digital economy isn't slowing down. India's digital economy is projected to reach \$1 trillion by 2030. The travel and tourism industry alone is undergoing a tech-driven transformation

with VR-powered travel previews, AI-based itinerary planning, and visual renderers of key destinations.

At the same time, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's focus on women-led development and upskilling has

created a strong foundation for change. Through initiatives like Digital India, Skill India, and PMKVY, women now have access to skilling programs that can help them step into high-paying, future-ready jobs.

WHERE SHOULD WOMEN START?

Tech isn't equal to coding. It's about problem-solving, storytelling, and creating better customer experiences. Women in travel, hospitality, and aviation can start

with skills that enhance their current roles—from digital marketing, AI-powered customer engagement, or mastering booking platforms that use predictive analytics. For entrepreneurs, understanding tech means scaling businesses faster, reaching global audiences, and competing with international brands.

The biggest challenge isn't ability. It's the mindset. Many women still hesitate to explore tech roles, believing they require deep technical expertise. But digital skills are about creativity, adaptability, and a willingness to learn. Experiential tourism needs to take the center stage when it comes to local women & it can only be ensured through spreading awareness in the rural areas.

BEYOND INDIVIDUAL EFFORT, THE INDUSTRY & THE SYSTEM MUST STEP UP

Travel businesses, airlines,

and hospitality giants need to invest in structured skilling programs for women. Companies that integrate more women into digital and tech-focused roles see higher innovation, better problem-solving, and stronger customer connections. Moreover, Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship alongside Ministry of Tourism (MoT) can allocate dedicated funds to Tourism & Hospitality Skill Council (THSC) to facilitate technology empowerment for women.

END NOTE

The workforce of the future won't be defined by degrees but by skill sets. Women in travel and tourism must lead it & not merely imbibe it. The future is digital, and those who upskill today will be the game-changers of tomorrow.

Jyoti Mayal, the chairperson of the Tourism and Hospitality Skill Council (THSC)

DEATH, NEAR DEATH, AND LIFE AFTER DEATH



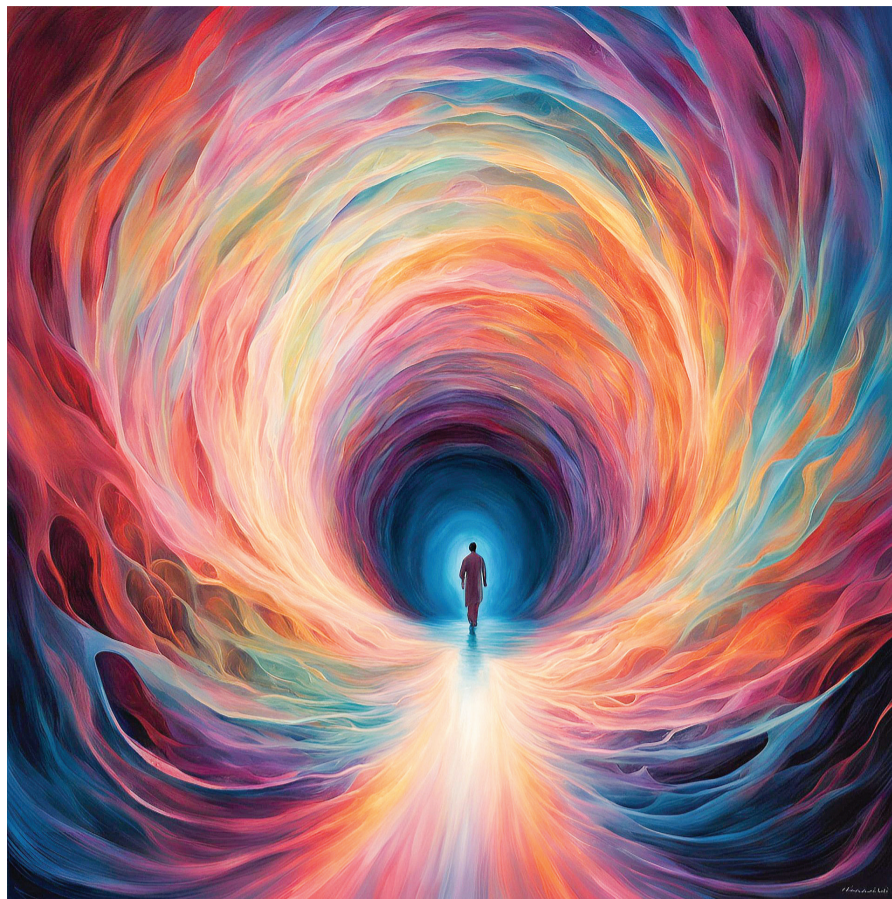
GEOFF BROOKE

Fears and phobias prevent us from living life on our terms. Some of these are deeply engrained, and are termed as primal fears, and do not discriminate because of nationality or religion. Primal fears are deeply rooted in the psyche, and include: fear of darkness, heights, predators, isolation, and death.

Of these, death is one of the biggest fears of human beings. Even if some are not afraid of death itself, they confess to a fear of the dying process, or of the unknown, that is, what happens next? In earlier years, death was a more intimate and often

comforting experience. It took place at home, and friends and family were often gathered together, whereas now, many take their last breath in a clinical hospital environment. However, it is these very hospitals that have inadvertently provided the wherewithal to provide insights into the mysteries of death.

In 1975, Dr Raymond Moody, a professor of Psychology, published a book called 'Life After Life' that became an instant bestseller. It was a book based on the experiences of hundreds of people who had experienced near death, or out of the body experiences, that is, those who had clinically died but were revived and came back to tell of what they had seen and the experiences they had. These experiences had only been possible to recount in such great numbers because of modern medical techniques. These new medical advances made it possible to resuscitate patients who were 'dead.' However, the



Maintaining the awareness that we are immortal souls, and filling the self with spiritual power through meditation, renders death as just the beginning of the next adventure.

medical personnel involved very ones who dismissed physiological phenomena. In the procedure were the testimonials as simply Dr Moody's book has sold

over 13 million copies and was scathingly received by the medical profession.

The experiences of so many, who had up until the interviews been very wary of sharing their experiences because of sceptical reactions, showed what the ancients had long understood; that when leaving the body, most people, after a brief feeling of shock, enter into an overwhelming feeling of deep and often exhilarating peace. The most important factor, especially for those in the west, was that if on leaving the body, one could actually see one's body below on the bed, the question arises: who am I? Clearly not the body. The second factor is that if I am not the body, then I am eternal; I do not, and never will, die. There is no death.

It was this book that drew me to look for the answers that led me to learn meditation. It is in meditation that we can experience this same peace and stability, by letting go of the awareness of the body. The eternal spirit, or

soul, is full of peace; peacefulness is caused by our lives in the physical realm.

One of the other aspects of Raymond Moody's book is that in the west, the idea of reincarnation was strange, and not talked about, whereas in the east it was an underlying truth; the soul goes on into other physical bodies, to other physical experiences. The book paved the way for the belief in reincarnation to become more commonly talked about in the west and for respected research into the subject.

It is important to balance our physical life experiences with spirituality. To maintain the awareness that this role is temporary – there will be others. To remain conscious of being a soul on a spiritual journey is key to alleviating any difficult situations or relationships.

Larry V. Hedges is a researcher in statistical methods for meta-analysis, involved in the advanced training of psychotherapists. He cites seven deadly fears of human beings:

the fear of being alone, of connecting, of being abandoned, of self-assertion, of lack of recognition, of failure and success, and of being fully alive. If I am conscious of being a spiritual entity living a physical experience, then all of these fears have far less of an impact. Practising meditation daily, maintaining an awareness of the eternal qualities of the soul, keeping a connection with the source of all spiritual power, renders death and dying as just the beginning of the next adventure. If along with meditation, I develop spiritual principles that I am able to put into practice in all my encounters with others, then the next adventure will be one filled with love, peace, and joy.

Geoff Brooke is a Graphic Designer, Animator, and Visual Effects artist who currently spends his time helping in projects at the Brahma Kumaris headquarters in Mount Abu as well as one of the retreat centres in Australia.

From darkness to light



B.K. SHEILU

The colour black, and darkness in general, have negative connotations. In common parlance, anything that is sinister, characterized by great unhappiness, or suggestive of evil, is referred to as dark. In European history, there was a period of intellectual decline, barbarity, and frequent wars that is now called the Dark Ages. Similarly, the use of supernatural powers for evil or selfish purposes is referred to as black magic, which is one of the dark arts.

It is in this context that spiritual teachings sometimes refer to individu-

als as dark or fair, with regard to their qualities and level of purity, and not the colour of their skin, which has more to do with genetic and climatic factors.

In the beginning of the cycle of time, in the Golden Age, when souls are in their highest state of purity, they are free from vices and full of virtues. With the passage of time, the souls are gradually depleted of their purity, peace, and truth as they lose touch with their original identity. They begin to identify themselves with their physical bodies and are engrossed in the physical world around them. The influence of the body gives rise to vices and the souls begin to experience unease, anger, fear etc. Unrighteous actions begin, bringing sorrow. While previously they were unblemished, they get stained by character flaws and, gradually, lose their glow of purity. As this decline contin-



Connecting with God in meditation restores the original lustre of souls by filling them with His powers and virtues.

The influence of the body gives rise to vices and the souls begin to experience unease, anger, fear etc. Unrighteous actions begin, bringing sorrow. While previously they were unblemished, they get stained by character flaws and, gradually, lose their glow of purity.

ues, the souls get darker, stained by ever more vices, until they reach the nadir by the end of the Iron Age, when the world is characterised by unrighteousness and evil. This process of degradation affects every soul, and this fact is depicted in bhakti in the

form of Shyam Sundar - Krishna the beautiful one and the dark one. A mythological tale tells us that Shri Krishna, who is extolled as being completely viceless, was bitten by a snake and the poison turned his body black. This story is an allegory for vices entering the human soul and sullying it. Since the soul is invisible, the toxic effect of vices is depicted in the form of a blackened body.

When all souls are darkened by vices, God comes to this world to cleanse them and make them worthy of the Golden Age once again. Everyone is entitled to this rejuvenation, regardless of their religion, race, or gender. For God, all souls are His children and He lovingly restores their original lustre by filling them with His powers and virtues.

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

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

My energy becomes fixed when I have a strong opinion or preference. This rigidity creates a wall against which other energies are experienced as attacks or opposition. When my energy is flexible, I easily flow with situations and people to create solutions that work for all. Today let me soften my own energy and dissolve walls.

Holding on to hope – three keys to staying upbeat



SHANTANU MANDAL

Hope is a self-evident truth – imagine a world without it; no looking forward to tomorrow, no endeavours to better oneself, just a long dragging on of living, one day after the next. Hope is a powerful energy and is based on optimism; that there is something meaningful and important in any situation – we just have to look for it.

We all start any initiative with hope. However, we sometimes forget to factor in that it is in the nature of things for stumbling blocks to come along once in a while. Some of us can come to a standstill when we encounter them. We forget that they are there to test our resolve, to show

us new ways forward, to strengthen our determination. Stumbling blocks are not meant to stop us in our tracks – they are there to move us forward and find new perspectives. Hope needs to continue to burn brightly. It is a law of life that everything changes, nothing stays the same, and how boring it would be if it did.

Dadi Janki, the late Administrative Head of the Brahma Kumaris, once told me that there are three values you must have in order to master the art of meditation:

1. Patience
2. Patience
3. Patience

I have never forgotten this. Patience leads to peace, and peace leads to love. When I am in peace I can reflect on situations and make big things small. Love gives me the ability to respond with grace and not rush in to a knee-jerk reaction.

In my spiritual journey, that is the first value I try to live. We are all on a spiritual journey and I must make sure I have patience with my endeavours. Then



Having the trust that day always follows night, and after darkness there will be light, fills us with hope.

I am able to have patience with others. Challenging people are also on a journey of transformation, it is just taking them time to climb - I must have hope in my own efforts and hope in theirs. Difficult people are not really difficult, they are just at a difficult point in their journey – let me have compassion.

The second thing I do is to make sure I strengthen my mind and spirit. There is no alternative to powering up the soul each day for hope to thrive and for success. If we do not charge up our mobile phones for an hour or so each day, they simply run out of energy and stop working. I need to charge up the spiritual energy of the soul each day so that my energy will be full and able to do what I need to do. Meditation is the way to charge the soul, the being, the self. When people meditate, they have a variety of focus points. In Rajyoga meditation, I, the meditator, connect to the highest form of energy, the Supreme Source, God, Bhagwan, K'buda, or any of the other names that Supreme

Being is known by. When I focus on that source, I start to download pure energy. To give the power of hope, I must be fully charged with that power; and all the other spiritual powers.

The third key for my own spiritual endeavours is trust. Trust in the ancient wisdom and laws of spirituality. The trust that day always follows night. After every dip in the road, there will be a rise, after every period of darkness, however long, there will be light. Degradation of the human spirit will not endure – there will be elevation, growth, and beauty. Faith is powerful, but trust is even more powerful. The wonder of daily meditation, focussed on the Supreme Being, followed by spiritual study of truth, is that the soul is filled with power. This power gives rise to a deep trust in the beauty to come. With that kind of trust, there is nothing but hope in the heart.

Shantanu Mandal has a background in Design and is based at the Brahma Kumaris International Coordinating Office, London, UK.

IPL 2025: PATIDAR POWERS RCB TO 196 WITH FIFTY AGAINST CSK

AGENCIES
CHENNAI

A blistering half-century from skipper Rajat Patidar and explosive cameos by Phil Salt and Tim David pushed Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) to 196/7 in their 20 overs against Chennai Super Kings (CSK) at Chepauk Stadium on Friday.

Nearly every RCB batter got a fine start, but except for Patidar, none of them could make it into something big. Noor Ahmed was the pick of the bowlers for CSK once again with three scalps, who also got the wicket of Virat Kohli.

After CSK won the toss and opted to field first, Phil Salt put RCB to a fine start, striking Ravichandran Ashwin for two fours and a six in the second over. On the



other end, Virat Kohli was trying to connect against pacers and spinners alike but struggled to do so.

At the final ball of the fifth over, CSK got a huge breakthrough as a lightning-fast stumping from MS Dhoni

on a Noor Ahmed delivery removed Salt for a 16-ball 32, with five fours and a six. RCB was 45/1 in five overs.

A fine six by Devdutt Padikkal helped RCB bring up their 50-run mark in 5.5 overs. At the end of six

A blistering fifty from skipper Rajat Patidar, explosive cameos from Phil Salt and Tim David, and a late flourish powered Royal Challengers Bengaluru to a formidable 196/7 against Chennai Super Kings at Chepauk.

overs, RCB was 56/1, with Padikkal (9*) and Virat (11*) unbeaten.

In the next over against Ravindra Jadeja, Padikkal showed some serious intent against spin, hitting him for two fours and a six.

However, a catch from skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad on a Ravichandran Ashwin delivery ended Padikkal's brief cameo of 27 in 14 balls, with two fours and two sixes. RCB was 76/2 in 7.5 overs.

At the end of 10 overs, RCB was 93/2, with skipper Rajat Patidar (11*) joining a struggling Virat (16*).

The start of the 11th over saw one of the innings' highlights as after being hit on his head by a Matheesha Pathirana bouncer, Virat responded back with a six and four, bringing his strike rate into a better position.

Thanks to a four by Patidar, the over went for 16 runs and 100 runs were up in 10.3 overs.

Haryana crowned as champions of National Women's Hockey League

AGENCIES
RANCHI

Hockey Haryana emerged as the champions of the Final Phase of the National Women's Hockey League 2024-2025 as they defeated Hockey Association of Odisha 3-2 in a closely contested encounter here at the Marang Gomke Jaipal Singh Munda Astro Turf in Ranchi, Jharkhand on Friday.

In the much-anticipated final match for the eleven days long competition, Hockey Haryana proved to be the better one after clinching the title against the Hockey Association of Odisha with a 3-2 win, as per a Hockey India press release.

Ahalya Lakra (8') opened the count on the scoreboard for Hockey Association of Odisha but the crowned champions Hockey Haryana had different plans today. Kajal (12', 22') scored a brace for her team, joined by Saavi



(44') who also scored one goal for the winning side. Hockey Haryana's defence restricted the opponent from scoring after the first goal till Dipika Barwa (54') again found the gap for the Hockey Association of Odisha in the final moments of the game but fell short when the final whistle was blown. Hockey Haryana remained in the top position throughout the tournament.

"Our team Hockey Haryana has always been known for playing aggressive hockey and that was the only plan today as well. I asked the team to play freely and

attacking hockey. We have played against Hockey Association of Odisha earlier also, we know how good they are converting penalty corners, our team put a good show in restricting them today and that was the game changer in today's match" said Dilbag Singh who's representing Hockey Haryana as the Head-Coach in this tournament.

In the other match for 3rd/4th position, Hockey Jharkhand edged past Hockey Madhya Pradesh as they won the game 1-0 to end their campaign with a podium finish.

Naga Sports Meet concludes in Dehradun

AGENCIES
DEHRADUN

The 6th Naga Sports Meet, organized by the Naga Students' Union Dehradun (NSUD) under the theme "Bridging the Gap," concluded successfully at Maharana Pratap Sports College, Dehradun.

The meet began on March 22 with the opening ceremony graced by Temjen Imna Along, minister of Tourism and Higher Education, as the special guest. Speaking at the event, Along expressed delight in witnessing the unity and enthusiasm of Nagas residing in Dehradun and adjoining areas. He encouraged the community to stay united and



Members of NSUD and DENSU along with participants in Dehradun. File photo

supportive of one another despite their diverse backgrounds.

Various events, including athletics, football, volleyball, tug of war, indigenous games and cultural competitions were held during the three-day event, with participation from different Naga tribal units and individual players from across Dehradun.

The closing ceremony

held on March 24 was graced by Chumben Murry, advisor for Law and Justice and Land Revenue, Government of Nagaland, as the special guest. Murry in his address lauded the NSUD and DENSU for successfully organizing the event and promoting the spirit of sportsmanship and brotherhood among the Naga community in Dehradun.

Pro Panja League mega matches held at holy banks of Narmada

AGENCIES
BARWANI

The Pro Panja League hosted mega matches in Badwani, Madhya Pradesh, on the holy banks of the River Narmada.

The event was co-organised in association with Manoj Patel of the Barwani District Association, and ArmWrestlers competed across five categories, as per the People's ArmWrestling Federation India (PAFI) press release.

Special guest MLA Rajendra Mandloi inaugurated Thursday's event. Also present were chief guest Shephali Tiwari, Central Jail Superintendent Narsinghpur, Co-Founder of



Pro Panja League Parvinn Dabass, and Preeti Jhangiani, President of the People's ArmWrestling Federation India (PAFI).

Prior to the matches, the organizers performed a tra-

ditional 'puja' ceremony at the sacred site to seek blessings for a successful event.

The tournament began with the 60kg category, in which Sachin Tomar dominated against Shoab

Prior to the matches, the organizers performed a traditional 'puja' ceremony at the sacred site to seek blessings for a successful event.

Akhtar 3-0. In 65+ kg, Asha Kumar edged past Kritika Bamel 3-2, while in 100+ kg, Manish Kumar beat Sunil Anthony 3-2.

In the specially abled category, Devendra Yadav enjoyed a commanding 3-0 win over Manoj Patel. Lastly, multiple-time na-

tional and state champion and player of the Mumbai Muscle franchise of Pro Panja League, Jogendra Yadav, defeated Divakar Jadon 3-0 in the 75kg category.

About the event, Parvinn Dabass stated, as quoted by the Pro Panja League press release, "We're thrilled to bring Pro Panja League to Madhya Pradesh, that too on the sacred banks of the Narmada River. Promoting ArmWrestling as a sport while paying respects to our rich cultural heritage was a wonderful experience. We are taking the sport to exciting locations around the country, through which the audience discovers both the sport and unseen tourist spots of Bharat.

Record-breaking lift: SAI Gandhinagar strikes gold at Khelo India Para Games

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Powerlifting athletes from the Sports Authority of India (SAI) National Centre of Excellence (NCOE) in Gandhinagar put up a strong show in the second Khelo India Para Games, the second edition of which concluded in Delhi on Thursday (Match 27).

The NCOE campers secured 10 medals, including seven golds in the para-powerlifting competition held at the JLN Stadium complex.

Leading the charge were Jhandu Kumar (men's 72kg), Jaspreet Kaur (women's 45kg), Seema Rani (women's 61kg) and Manish Kumar (men's 54kg), all of whom broke national records en-route to their gold medal triumphs. The trio of Jhandu, Jaspreet and Manish smashed their own national records created just a week back at the nationals in Noida.

Reflecting on the remarkable performance, SAI Gandhinagar's head powerlifting coach, Rajinder Singh Rahelu, a bronze medallist at the 2004 Summer Paralympics in the 56 kg category, told SAI Media, "Just before the Khelo India Para Games, we had the national championships where we won 12 medals, including 8 golds and 3 national records.

This time, we secured 10 medals, including 7 gold and 3 silver, along with 4 national records. Broadly, we broke 7 national records within a week. The KIPG provides an international-



The NCOE campers secured 10 medals, including seven golds in the para-powerlifting competition held at the JLN Stadium complex.

level exposure, and now the competition fear is gone for our athletes. They are confident and will keep performing well."

The national record holders were joined on the top podium at the KIPG 2025 by fellow SAI Gandhinagar campers Gulfam Ahmed (59kg), Sandesha BG (80kg) and Paramjeet Kumar (49kg).

The silver medallists from the centre were Shiv Kumar (49kg), Ramubhai Babubhai (72kg), and Rahul Jograjya (88kg).

facility for para powerlifting. Highlighting the centre's steady progress over the years, Rahelu added, "Since 2016, when I joined SAI Gandhinagar, we have been steadily improving. By 2022, young athletes started coming regularly for training. The centre has transformed in the last 4-5 years. Earlier, we had only a modern fitness centre, but now we have a dedicated powerlifting hall equipped with world-class facilities, air conditioning, and Eleiko sets used in international competitions. Our recovery facilities are also among the best."

"It's been a consistent step-by-step development,

and SAI Gandhinagar is India's No.1 para powerlifting centre in terms of facilities and equipment of international standards," Rahelu, also an Arjuna Award winner, explained.

With the success at KIPG 2025, the 51-year-old coach has set bigger goals for his wards, he said, "Our next immediate aim is to win at least 3-4 medals at the World Championships in Egypt this October. Currently, Paramjeet Kumar is the only Indian to have medalled at the World Championships, and he is also from our centre."

"With the Commonwealth and Asian Games coming up next year, we are gearing up with full dedication. We believe future Paralympic medallists will emerge from this centre, and we have the potential to create history. Our athletes are capable, and they will do well," Rahelu told SAI Media.

Reetika Hooda wins silver at Asian Wrestling Championships

AGENCIES
AMMAN

Reetika Hooda, the reigning Under-23 world champion, bagged a silver medal in the women's freestyle 76kg division at the Asian Wrestling Championships 2025 in Amman, Jordan.

Reetika, who clinched the bronze medal at the 2023 edition of the Asian Championships, suffered heartbreak in the final after losing against Aiperi Medet Kyzy of Kyrgyzstan.

The final was defined by narrow margins, and Aiperi, with nerves of steel, secured a slender 7-6 victory to stand at the top of the podium. The U-23 world champion was



cruising in the final with a 6-2 lead, but she slipped up in the final few seconds of the match.

Aiperi's victory in the final was her second against

Reetika in a major tournament.

The Indian grappler tasted defeat against Aiperi in the quarter-finals of the Paris 2024 Olympics on criteria

after the scores were level 1-1.

En route to the final, Reetika ousted Japan's Nodoka Yamamoto by fall to confirm her second senior medal at the Asian Wrestling Championships.

In the quarter-finals, Reetika registered a 10-0 win through technical superiority over Seoeyong Jeong of the Republic of Korea.

Meanwhile, Muskan and Mansi Lather claimed bronze medals in the women's 59kg and 68kg, respectively. Muskan, a 17-year-old wrestler, lost against Japan's Sakura Onishi by a 12-2 scoreline in the quarter-finals.

Govt moves to tackle age fraud in sports

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

For decades, the menace of age fraud has cast a shadow over Indian sports, distorting fair competition and depriving young and budding athletes of opportunities. The government has now taken decisive steps to address this problem.

Age fraud — where athletes manipulate birth records or falsify documents to compete in younger age categories — has long eroded the credibility of competitions. While this is a global issue, its impact in India has been particularly severe, affecting talent development across disciplines such as cricket, football, and badminton. Despite past efforts, enforcement gaps and outdated verification methods

While the objective of both the codes remains the same, the 2025 version aims to reduce the problem by making some key additions and changes.

allowed the problem to persist, eroding trust in the system.

To tackle this, the ministry of youth affairs and sports introduced the Draft National Code Against Age Fraud in Sports (NCAAFS) 2025, a much-needed revision to the 2010 framework. While the objective of both the codes remains the same, the 2025 version aims to reduce the problem by making some key additions and changes.

The revised Code introduces changes in five key areas:

Age verification: In NCAAFS 2010, medical examinations were the primary method for age verification, requiring all athletes participating in age-restricted competitions to undergo medical assessments. However, this process was time-consuming, costly, and led to challenges in enforcement. The 2025 version shifts towards a document-based verification system, where athletes must submit three mandatory documents — birth certificate, Aadhaar/APAAR ID, and school certificate. This ap-

proach streamlines verification, enhances accuracy, and aligns with modern digital governance practices, while allowing medical tests for discrepancies.

Medical examination: The 2010 code relied on traditional medical examination methods such as physical, dental, and radiological tests to determine an athlete's age. NCAAFS 2025 enhances scientific accuracy by introducing the TW3 method for Bone Age determination, with AI-powered BoneXpert technology for initial assessments and MRI-based forensic age verification for appeals.

Identity card system: The 2010 code required identity cards for verified athletes, but the system lacked real-time verification and was vulnerable to tampering.