



4
IS RANYA RAO GETTING PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT AT BENGALURU JAIL?



11
NETANYAHU'S JUDICIAL REFORMS: DEMOCRACY AT RISK OR NEEDS OVERHAUL?



16
PBKS CRUISE TO DOMINANT 8-WICKET WIN OVER LSG

WAQF BILL TO BE TABLED IN LOK SABHA TODAY; GOVT, OPPN TO CROSS SWORDS

Parties issue whip; Rajya Sabha to take up matter on Thursday

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha will take up the contentious Waqf (Amendment) Bill for discussion and passage on Wednesday, setting the stage for a showdown between a government determined to push it through and an Opposition united in condemning the proposed law as unconstitutional.

The bill is likely to come before the Rajya Sabha on Thursday, with the two Houses allocated eight hours each for debating the proposed law.

Telugu Desam Party (TDP), Janata Dal (United), Shiv Sena and LJP (Ram Vilas) -- the four biggest constituents of the NDA after the BJP -- issued whips to their MPs asking them to support the government stand.

The political heat is unlikely to have any bearing on the final outcome as the numbers heavily favour the ruling BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in the



The Church of Bharat extended support to the bill, boosting the government's efforts to dispel bid to portray proposed law as its alleged larger anti-minority agenda.

Lok Sabha. The NDA has 293 MPs in the Lower House with a current strength of 542, and the BJP has often been successful in pulling the support of independent members and parties.

Though BJP allies like the TDP, JD(U) and Chirag Paswan-led LJP (Ram Vilas) had expressed reservations over some aspects of the bill, they have

Opposition MPs walk out during BAC meet

New Delhi: Congress MP and Deputy Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Gaurav Gogoi on Tuesday expressed strong disagreement on the Waqf Amendment Bill, stating the entire nation is watching how the voice of democracy is being crushed in the Lok Sabha.

"We walked out of the House. I don't know what is in their (government's) mind. I hope that the Speaker will take note of all of this. The entire country is seeing how the voice of democracy is being crushed slowly in the Lok Sabha," Gogoi said.

Meanwhile, the opposition party MPs walked out of the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) meeting, Gogoi said, while accusing the gov-



P3

India has 4th largest forex reserves: FM

NEW DELHI: India is the fourth largest country to hold foreign exchange reserves of USD 658.8 billion, enough to meet the country's imports for 11 months, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman told the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday.

Replying to supplementaries during the question hour, she assured members of their concerns on the foreign exchange reserves and the current account deficit.

"I want to assure you that total foreign exchange reserves as of March 25, 2025, is USD 658.8 billion. We are the fourth largest in terms of foreign exchange reserves that any country holds. Which means the amount that we hold in foreign exchange reserve is good enough to take care of 11 months of our imports.



P3

Leaders cutting across party lines slam Yunus

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The recent comments made by Bangladesh Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus on India's northeastern states drew sharp reactions from political leaders across party lines on Tuesday, dubbing his remarks as "shameful" and "provocative".

Congress leader Pawan Khera on

Monday shared a video clip on X of Yunus, in which he claimed that Bangladesh was the sole "guardian of the ocean (Bay of Bengal)," as India's northeastern states were "landlocked". He said this opens up a "huge possibility" and urged China to extend its economic influence to his country.

These comments were purportedly made during his four-day visit to China.

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Priyanka Chaturvedi on Tuesday said this was a "very serious issue" and it concerns the "safety and security" of the nation.

"It's a very shameful comment...he is mentioning regions of our country to move the China agenda. I feel India should take a tough stand on it. It endangers the safety and security of the nation," she told PTI Videos outside the Parliament

P3



Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets Chile President Gabriel Boric, at Hyderabad House in New Delhi on Tuesday. (ANI Photo/Rahul Singh)

Stocks go into tailspin as US rolls out tariffs

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

Stock markets went into a tailspin on Tuesday with benchmark Sensex plunging by 1,390 points due to selling in IT and private bank shares amid heightened uncertainty ahead of the rollout of reciprocal tariffs by the US on April 2.

Starting the new financial year on a losing note, the 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 1,390.41 points or 1.80 per cent to settle at 76,024.51 as 28 of its components ended lower and only two advanced. During the day, the index plummeted 1,502.74 points or 1.94 per cent to 75,912.18.

The NSE Nifty dropped 353.65 points or 1.50 per cent to 23,165.70. The key indices logged their steepest single-day losses in a month.

P3

Centre intensifies battle against illegal trade in fertilizers

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

Concerned over the illegal trading of fertilizers, the Union government has escalated its battle to counter use of fertilizers for purposes other than agriculture.

According to a recent Lok Sabha response by Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilizers, Anupriya Patel, enforcement agencies have registered 3611 cases and

arrested 4302 individuals involved in black marketing and smuggling of fertilizers since 2019.

These efforts underscore the government's commitment to safeguarding farmers and ensuring the availability of subsidized fertilizers for legitimate agricultural use.

As per the minister the Fertilizers, classified as an essential commodity under the Fertilizer Control Order

(FCO) of 1985 and the Fertilizer (Movement Control) Order of 1973, are critical to India's agricultural backbone. However, their subsidized pricing has fueled illegal activities, including black marketing and cross-border smuggling. The Minister highlighted that State Governments, empowered under the Essential Commodities Act of 1955, have been pivotal in curbing these

P3

Double whammy: Diesel costlier, in K'taka, garbage cess in B'luru

TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

The price of diesel in Karnataka is set to rise by Rs 2 per litre as the state government has increased the sales tax on diesel to 21.17 per cent.

The price hike comes into effect immediately.

According to a government notification issued on Tuesday, the Karnataka Sales Tax (KST) on diesel has been increased from 18.44 per cent to 21.17 per cent.

"In the said notification, against Sl. No. (ii), for the words and figures "eighteen point four four percent (18.44%)", the words and



figures "twenty one point one seven percent (21.17%)" shall be substituted," the notification read. "After the approval of the Competent Authority, the Karnataka Sales Tax rate

P3

Pastor sentenced to life in 2018 rape case

TARUNI GANDHI
CHANDIGARH

Pastor Bajinder Singh, popularly known as 'Yeshu-Yeshu Wale Baba' has been sentenced to life imprisonment in a seven-year-old rape case. A Mohali court delivered the verdict on Tuesday, rejecting Bajinder's plea for leniency.

Bajinder, who was convicted three days ago, broke down in court, citing his young children, his ailing wife, and a medical condition, but the court dismissed his arguments. Following the sentencing, he was transferred to Patiala Jail.

The case was registered in 2018 when a woman accused Bajinder of luring her to his Mohali residence under the pretence of helping her settle abroad. There, he allegedly raped her, filmed the act, and threatened to release the video if she resisted.

P3

TWIN TRAGEDIES AND POLITICAL ONE-UPMANSHIP

Blast at 'illegal' firecracker godown kills 18 in Gujarat

Opposition parties accuse government of negligence

AGENCIES
BANASKANTHA (GUJARAT)

Eighteen persons were killed and five others injured after a blast at a firecracker warehouse led to a blaze and collapse of the building in Gujarat's Banaskantha district on Tuesday, officials said.

The explosion at the firecracker godown in Deesa



Rescue operations underway after a portion of a firecracker godown collapsed following an explosion in the Deesa area, in Banaskantha on Tuesday. Reportedly, 18 people died in the incident.

area on Tuesday morning, led to the collapse of the structure, trapping sever-

al workers inside. Rescue operations are ongoing as authori-

P3

Explosion at illegal firecracker factory kills 8 in Bengal

BJP demands NIA probe

SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA

Eight persons, including four children, died after an explosion at a house storing fireworks in Pathar Pratima block in West Bengal's South 24-Parganas district late on



Monday. Locals alleged that two brothers Chandrakanta and Tushar Banik ran a fireworks factory and stored fireworks in their house where the explosion occurred.

Police have launched an investigation into the cause of the explosion which killed Chandrakanta and Tushar's father, Aravinda Banik (65), their

P3

Highway travel in Haryana will pinch you harder as toll rates go up

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

Commuters in Haryana will now have to pay more to travel on national highways and expressways as new toll rates have come into effect from April 1. The National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) has increased toll fees by Rs 5 to Rs 25 at 24 toll pla-



zas across 12 districts. The annual revision has made highway travel more expensive for lakhs of people. To ensure transparency, NHAI has displayed updated toll rate lists at all toll booths.

The most expensive toll plaza in the state is Jat Guwana on National Highway 152D, which connects Narnaul to Ambala. The

toll for a single-side car journey here is now Rs 375, while a round-trip costs Rs 560. For buses and trucks, the one-way toll has been raised to Rs 1,265. Additionally, there is no option for a monthly pass on this highway.

Meanwhile, the cheapest toll plazas are in Rohtak. At Humayupur and Ha-

P3

WHO SAID WHAT
IN PARLIAMENT

RAW SILK OUTPUT
IS 34,042 TONNES
TILL JANUARY

NEW DELHI: The raw silk production in the country stayed at 34,042 tonnes till January 2025, registering an uptick, Pabitra Margherita the Minister of State (MoS) for Textile said in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha. According to the MoS, in last ten years, the raw silk production in the country has witnessed an uptick of 9,743 tonnes. The raw silk production has increased due to interventions by way of Central schemes such as Catalytic Development Programme (CDP), North East Region Textile Promotion Scheme (NERTPS), Integrated Scheme for Development of Silk Industry (ISDSI) etc.

PLI SCHEME
STARTED FOR
TEXTILES

NEW DELHI: The government has started implementing Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Textiles on Pan India basis, Pabitra Margherita the Minister of State (MoS) for Textile said in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha. The MoS, quoted by Ministry of Textiles in a statement, added PLI scheme is aimed at promoting the production of MMF Apparel, MMF fabrics and products of Technical Textiles to achieve size and scale and to become competitive. As per Ministry's Budget Estimate 2025-26, approx. 22 per cent of the budget is dedicated for PLI Scheme for Textiles.

CPI MEMBER
WANTS DISCUSSION
ON 'EMPURAAAN'

NEW DELHI: Communist Party of India MP P Sandosh Kumar on Tuesday moved a suspension of Business Notice in Rajya Sabha under rule 267 to discuss the alleged "malicious" and "targeted" attack on the Malayalam film 'Empuraan' by BJP and RSS. Citing the "curtailing" of freedom of speech, Sandosh Kumar moved the notice in Rajya Sabha. The film is facing the backlash for the apparent references to the 2002 Gujarat riot. Additionally, Congress MP Hibi Eden also moved an adjournment motion in Lok Sabha to discuss the protest against the 'Empuraan' movie.

RAJYA SABHA
PASSES AIRCRAFT
OBJECTS BILL

NEW DELHI: The Rajya Sabha has passed the Protection of Interests in Aircraft Objects Bill, 2025. The bill seeks to give legal effect to the convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment. The Bill also empowers the central government to make rules to implement the provisions of the Convention and the Protocol. The legislation designates the Directorate General of Civil Aviation as the registry authority for the purposes of the convention. The registry authority is responsible for the registration and de-registration of aircraft.

KHARGE URGES GOVT TO CONDUCT DECADAL AND CASTE CENSUSES

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Congress President and Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday raised concern over the delay in conducting the decadal census and urged the government to immediately start both the decadal census as well as the caste census.

Kharge said the country has been conducting a census after every ten years from the year 1881 and despite of wars, emergencies or crisis, the process has always continued. The Congress president quoted Mahatma Gandhi and said that according to him, "just like we need periodic medical checkups to assess our health, a census is the most important checkup for a nation."

"Chairman sir, our country has been conducting a census



Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge speaks in the House during the Budget session of Parliament, in New Delhi on Tuesday. (ANI Photo/Sansad TV)

every 10 years since 1881. No matter what -- wars, emergencies, or crises -- the process has always continued. Back in 1931, we even conducted a caste census along with the regular census. Right before the 1931 Census, Mahatma Gandhi Ji had said that just like we need periodic medical checkups to

assess our health, a census is the most important checkup for a nation", Kharge said while speaking in Rajya Sabha.

Furthermore, Kharge emphasised that census is a "crucial exercise" and "involves a large number of people who collect data not just on population but also on employment,

family structures, socio-economic conditions, and several other key aspects."

He also reiterated Congress' demand for a caste census and that should happen with the general census. He highlighted government's 'unwillingness' to conduct census said that they have allocated only Rs 575 crore to conduct the process.

"The census is a crucial exercise. It involves a large number of people who collect data not just on population but also on employment, family structures, socio-economic conditions, and several other key aspects. Even during major events like World War II and the India-Pakistan war of 1971-72, the census was conducted. But for the first time in history, the government has delayed the census indefinitely.

Along with the general census, there should also be a caste census. After all, the government already collects

data on Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST), so why not include other castes as well? But unfortunately, the government has remained silent on both.

This year's budget has allocated only Rs575 crore for the census, which reflects the Government's unwillingness to conduct it this year as well", Kharge said.

The Rajya Sabha LoP said that delaying the census will have "serious consequences" and without it the politics will become "arbitrary" and "ineffective". He further highlighted that without the accurate census many people are left from the benefits of the welfare schemes.

"Meanwhile, 81 per cent of countries around the world have managed to complete their censuses successfully, despite the challenges posed by COVID-19. Delaying the census has serious consequences.

Centre to move Coastal Shipping Bill today

Shashi Tharoor to present 6th report of Standing Committee on External Affairs



AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal will move the Coastal Shipping Bill, 2024, in Lok Sabha on Tuesday. The bill aims to promote coasting trade and encourage domestic participation.

The bill will be moved to consolidate and amend the law relating to regulation of coastal shipping to encourage the trade and ensure that the country is equipped with a coastal fleet, owned and operated by its citizen for its national security and commercial needs.

Additionally, Congress's Shashi Tharoor and BJP's Mitesh Patel Bakabhai are also set to present sixth report of the Standing Committee on External Affairs on the topic of 'Indian Diaspora Overseas including NRIs, PIOs, OCIs and Migrant Workers'

The report of the Standing Committee, led by Shashi Tharoor, will cover all aspects of Indian diaspora's conditions and welfare, including the status of the Emigration Bill,' according to the list of businesses.

Union Agriculture Minister



Shivraj Singh Chauhan will also make a statement on regarding the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the 2nd Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food Processing on Demands for Grants pertaining to the Department of Agricultural Research and Education, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

Ganesh Singh and Ramvir Singh Bhiduri will also present the multiple report of Committee on Welfare of Other Backward Classes, according to list of businesses. These reports will focus on the measures and schemes implemented by the government for the welfare of OBCs. The seventh report of the committee will focus on formulation and implementation of reservation policy for OBCs and measures taken to secure representation of OBCs in employment and for their welfare in various departments.

Additionally, the meeting of the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) of Lok Sabha will be chaired on Tuesday, according to the sources.

The Waqf Amendment Bill is likely to be listed for discussion on Tuesday, sources said.

Waqf Bill will not solve Kerala's Munambam land issue: IUML

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Indian Union Muslim League's Rajya Sabha MP Harris Beeran on Monday accused BJP of unleashing "propaganda" that if the Waqf Amendment Bill, 2024, becomes law, Kerala's Munambam land issue will be resolved. His reaction came after the Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council (KCBC) extended support to the Bill.

Beeran said that his party's leaders are in touch with KCBC in order to address their concerns regarding the Munambam issue.

"IUML leadership has excellent relationship with Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council (KCBC). Our leaders are in regular touch with the Archbishop and other Bishops of

the Catholic Church. Regarding concerns of the Catholic body, surely we will discuss it out, and we will try to find a way out," Beeran told ANI.

"That's not an issue. Any concerns, I am sure we can iron it out. I believe the Catholic bodies' request has come on one specific point, the Munambam land issue. There is a propaganda, a narrative that the BJP has unleashed over there, saying that if this Amendment Bill comes, the Munambam land issue can be sorted out. This is far from the truth; they are misleading the people there," he added.

Around 610 families of Munambam, a coastal village in Ernakulam district, have been protesting against the claim by the Waqf Board on their land.

Rahul to address Congress Lok Sabha members today

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Congress Lok Sabha MPs will be addressed by the Leader of Opposition (LoP) Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday morning at the Parliament annex.

On March 29, the LoP had strongly opposed the central government's decision to permit offshore mining along the coasts of Kerala, Gujarat, and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, calling it a move that threatens marine ecosystems and the livelihoods of coastal communities.

In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Gandhi criticized the Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2023, which he said had faced strong objections due to concerns over its environmental and socio-economic impact. He



LoP in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra at Parliament premises during the Budget session, in New Delhi on Tuesday. ANI

pointed out that the decision to open offshore mining blocks to private players was made without rigorous environmental assessment or consultation with stakeholders.

"The Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act 2023 was met with strong objections. Opening up offshore mining blocks to Private players without any rigorous assessment of its im-

pact was concerning. Studies point to its adverse impacts, including threats to marine life, damage to coral reefs and the depletion of fish stock.

"Against this backdrop. When the Ministry of Mines invited tenders for the grant of license for 13 offshore blocks, protests erupted against this arbitrary move. Among the 13 blocks are three blocks for mining construction sand in the coast of Kollam - a vital fish breeding habitat, and three blocks for polymetallic nodules off the coast of the Great Nicobar Islands- a marine biodiversity hotspot," Rahul Gandhi said.

"In fact, the ongoing survey of the Marine Monitoring Lab (MML) of the University of Kerala's Department of Aquatic Biology & Fisheries found that offshore mining could have a devastating impact on fish breeding, especially in Kollam," he highlighted.

GLIMPSES FROM THE PARLIAMENT



Samajwadi Party (SP) MPs Akhilesh Yadav, Dharmendra Yadav, Anand Bhadauriya, Mohibbullah Nadvli and others in support of party MP Ramji Lal Suman at Parliament premises during the Budget session, in New Delhi on Tuesday. ANI



Rajya Sabha MPs Sudha Murty, PT Usha and other MPs at Parliament premises during the Budget session, in New Delhi on Tuesday. (ANI Photo/Shrikant Singh)



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, BJP MP Arun Singh, AAP MP Sant Balbir Singh Seechewal and other MPs at Parliament premises during the Budget session, in New Delhi on Tuesday. (ANI Photo/Shrikant Singh)



Opposition MPs protest in the Lok Sabha during the Budget Session of the Parliament, in New Delhi on Tuesday. ANI

272 projects worth Rs 1.41 lakh cr completed under Sagarmala programme

TGG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Under the flagship Sagarmala programme, 272 projects worth approximately Rs1.41 lakh crores have been completed, Sarbananda Sonowal, minister of ports, shipping and waterways said on Monday. Replying to a question by Rajya Sabha member Kartikeya Sharma on progress of made under the Sagarmala Programme as of March 2025, the minister informed Parliament that "under modernisation pillar, 103 completed project have resulted into port capacity addition for more than 528 million tonnes per annum."

Sagarmala programme is a flagship programme of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways to promote port-led development in the country through harnessing India's 7,500 km long coastline, 14,500 km of potentially navigable waterways and strategic location on key international maritime trade routes.

The projects under Sagarmala Programme are categorized into five pillars - port modernization, port connectivity, port-led industrialization, coastal community development and coastal shipping & inland water transport. These projects are implemented by Central Ministries, IWAL, Indian Railways,



Rajya Sabha member Kartikeya Sharma.

FILE PHOTO

State Government and Major Ports etc.

"There are 839 projects worth investment of Rs. 5.79 Lakh crores for implementation under the Sagarmala Programme, out of which, 272 projects worth about Rs. 1.41 lakh crores have been completed," the minister said. Replying a particular question on whether the Government has evaluated the socio-economic benefits of Sagarmala for coastal communities, including job creation and skill development, particularly in States like Odisha and Tamil Nadu, the minister said: "Under the Sagarmala Programme, a comprehensive skill gap study was conducted across 21 coastal districts in 9 states and 3 Union Territories, including Odisha and Tamil Nadu."

The Coastal Community De-

velopment is a dedicated pillar of the Sagarmala Programme. This pillar focuses on improving the living standards of the coastal communities by enhancing their livelihood opportunities, primarily through skill development, capacity building, and increasing access to sustainable economic activities.

The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) and MoPSW have entered a MoU during May 2017 to enable skilling of coastal population under DDU-GKY Sagarmala Convergence Programme.

"Phase I of this convergence was implemented on pilot basis between 2016-2018 in 5 States viz. Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha and Tamil Nadu. 2079 candidates have been trained out of whom 1243 have been placed," he said.

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON TERRORIST ORGANIZATION IN PAKISTAN

20% believe lack of funds to cause conflict between terrorist groups

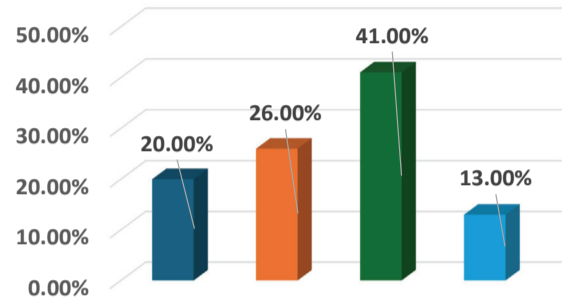
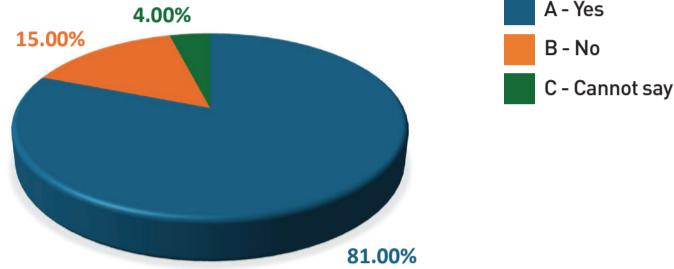
Pakistani state actors are pushing Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorists into India through Jammu and Kashmir, intelligence sources told NDTV. Rising

infiltration attempts and intercepted communications reveal growing rifts between Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba over ideological

differences. Despite efforts by the Pakistani army to mediate, Jaish terrorists are being given safe passage for infiltration, sources said.

Q1.

Has the tension between terrorist organizations Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar increased, creating new problems for Pakistan?



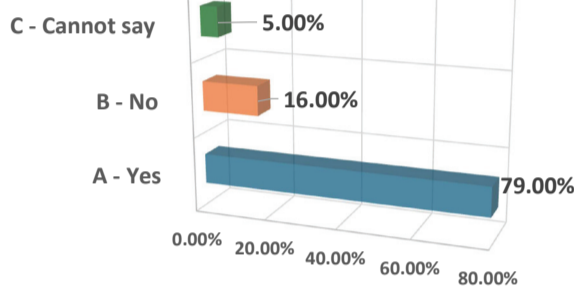
Q2.

What is the reason for the war between terrorist organizations?

A - Lack of funds B - War for dominance
C - Lack of support D - Cannot say

Q3.

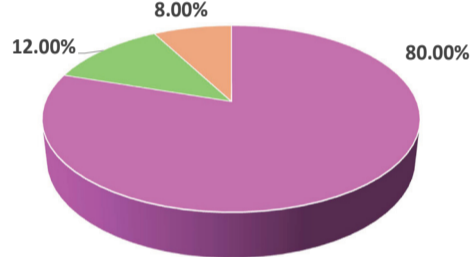
What is the reason for the war between terrorist organizations?



Q4.

Will the conflict between Jaish and Lashkar affect internal politics and security conditions?

A - Yes B - No C - Cannot say



Opposition MPs walk out

CONTINUED FROM P1

ernment of bulldozing its agenda and not listening to the opposition members.

The Congress MP stated that all opposition parties have demanded discussions of various issues, including the EPIC cards issue, Manipur's Presidential Rule resolution, the Waqf Amendment Bill and more under rule 193.

Gogoi stated that opposition MPs had to walk out in compulsion as they were

not left with any other option.

"The opposition parties have walked out in the middle of the BAC meeting in protest because the government is simply bulldozing its agenda and not listening to the views of the opposition parties. We have asked for a comprehensive discussion on the Waqf Amendment Act, our views are being listened to. We asked for a proper time to be allocated for the resolution of Presi-

dent's rule in Manipur but our advice is not being listened to. We have asked for important discussions under rule 193 for voter EPIC cards and decisions to link it with Aadhar. All opposition parties have demanded this. We asked for important ministries to be taken for the discussion during Demands for Grants... that has not been taken. So, this House has completely become subservient to the Government, the whims of

the political masters can be seen in BAC meeting. The space has not been given to opposition leader... We had to walk out because we had no any other option... They do not want to talk on any issues...." Gogoi told reporters.

Expressing dissatisfaction, TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee stated that the government has not allowed any discussion and the Parliament floor is equally important for the opposition.

India has 4th largest forex reserves

CONTINUED FROM P1

"Even though there has been a little fall in the foreign exchange reserve, today the position is that we are the fourth largest in terms of foreign exchange reserves that we hold," the finance minister said.

India is the fourth largest nation in terms of foreign exchange reserves after China, Japan and Switzerland.

Earlier, responding to concerns of members on the depreciating value of the Indian rupee, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary

said the local currency has strengthened in the last few months while several other countries, including South Korea and the United Kingdom, had depreciated more.

On foreign investors pulling out money from the Indian capital markets, the minister said, "Foreign portfolio investors are by nature 'fly-by-night' and FPIs have booked their profits in recent months in the Indian markets and reposes confidence in Indian markets".

In the last 10 years, he said, the confidence of foreign investors in Indian mar-

kets and economy has been reposed. "Even though foreign investors have taken out money from Indian markets since October last, in March this year, USD 3.84 billion has come into the country. This shows that the trend of foreign investors investing in has started. Our financial market has become robust and this is a continuous process," Chaudhary noted.

On the Current Account Deficit, he said in the last two years, it is constantly coming down.

"In 2022-23 due to Covid, the Current Account deficit

was USD 67.1 billion. It has come down to USD 26.1 billion (in 2023-24) and has come down to USD 21.4 billion (in 2024-25). The government is continuously making efforts to promote exports," he said.

Noting that the Indian economy is in a strong position, Chaudhary said, "While the South Korean Won depreciated 10.5 per cent against the US Dollar, Indonesian Rupiah and Malaysian Ringgit depreciated by 8.7 per cent and 6.9 per cent, respectively, during this period".

Highway travel in Haryana will pinch you harder

CONTINUED FROM P1

sangarh toll plazas, the one-way toll for cars and jeeps is Rs 30, and the round-trip charge is Rs 45. In Gurugram's Kherki Daula toll plaza, commuters only need to pay toll for one side of the journey.

The Congress party has come down heavily on the BJP government over the toll rate hike. Rajya Sabha MP and Congress general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala

accused the ruling party of turning highways into "loot points." He claimed that the government was collecting massive revenue through toll fees, amounting to Rs 85,000 crore annually across India, with Rs 1,500 crore coming from Haryana alone.

Surjewala alleged that during the Congress rule, toll charges were Rs 1.17 per km, but under the BJP government, they have risen to Rs 3.50 per km. Calling the hike a "be-

trayal of public trust," he said, "The BJP deceives people with grand promises before elections but later imposes heavy taxes on toll plazas, fuel, and essential goods."

Surjewala also criticized a recent government decision on toll collection. He said, "On February 6, the BJP government admitted in Parliament that even after the concession periods expire, toll collection will continue indefinitely.

Waqf Bill in Lok Sabha today

CONTINUED FROM P1

become more agreeable after the parliamentary committee adopted a few of their suggestions, official sources have said.

The Opposition I.N.D.I.A bloc also presented a united face on Wednesday as its parties discussed their joint strategy to oppose the bill at a meeting in the Parliament House. "All the Opposition parties are united and shall work together on the floor of the Parliament to defeat the unconstitutional and divisive agenda of the Modi Govt on the Waqf Amendment Bill,"

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said in a post on X.

Minorities and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju told reporters that the Lok Sabha's business advisory committee (BAC), which includes leaders from all major parties, chaired by Speaker Om Birla agreed on an eight-hour debate, which could be extended after taking the sense of the House.

Sources said senior BJP leaders, including Home Minister Amit Shah, are likely to participate in the discussion on the bill in Parliament.

The early signs of a likely raucous debate between the treasury and opposition benches over the bill were visible during the BAC meeting as the Congress and several other opposition INDIA bloc members walked out in protest, accusing the government of stifling their voice.

Congress' deputy leader in the Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi alleged that their voices were being ignored and said the opposition parties wanted more time to debate and the House to take up more issues, including the situation in Manipur and the row over electors' photo identity card.

Leaders slam Yunus

CONTINUED FROM P1

building. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma described Yunus's remarks as "offensive and strongly condemnable" and called for prioritisation of exploring alternative routes connecting the Northeast to the rest of India, bypassing the 'Chicken's Neck'.

"The statement made by Md Yunus of Bangladesh, the so-called interim Government referring to the seven sister states of Northeast India as landlocked and positioning Bangladesh as their guardian of ocean access, is offensive and strongly condemnable," Sarma posted on X.

"Such provocative statements by Md Yunus must not be taken lightly, as they reflect deeper strategic considerations and

longstanding agendas," he added.

Khera, who is party's head of media and publicity department, alleged that "Bangladesh is inviting China to encircle India."

"This attitude of the Bangladesh government is very dangerous for the security of our North East region. The government is not taking care of Manipur and China has already settled villages in Arunachal," Khera wrote in Hindi on X.

Last week, Bangladesh's chief adviser met Chinese President Xi Jinping and sought stepped-up investments from China to revive Bangladesh's flagging economy, hit by a political and economic crisis.

"It's very important that we see China as our good friend," Yunus said, projecting Beijing as a balancing factor against New Delhi.

Pastor sentenced to life

CONTINUED FROM P1

The victim's lawyer confirmed that Bajinder will remain behind bars for life. The sentencing comes amid other criminal cases against the pastor, including sexual harassment and assault allegations.

A rape, assault, and criminal intimidation case was

filed against Bajinder Singh at Zirakpur police station, Mohali. The victim alleged that he took her to his home, raped her, and recorded the act to use as blackmail.

Following the case registration, Bajinder was arrested from Delhi Airport in 2018 but was later granted bail. On March 3, 2024, the court issued non-

ailable warrants against him and five others.

On March 28, a Mohali court convicted Bajinder Singh while acquitting five co-accused—Pastor Jatinder Kumar, Akbar Bhatti, Rajesh Chaudhary, Sitar Ali, and Sandeep Pehlwan. Another accused, Sucha Singh, passed away during the trial.

Stocks go into tailspin

CONTINUED FROM P1

US President Donald Trump plans to roll out a set of reciprocal tariffs on April 2, which he says will be "Liberation Day" for the US.

From the Sensex pack, HCL Tech, Bajaj Finserv, HDFC Bank, Bajaj Finance, Infosys, Titan, ICICI Bank, Sun Pharma, Reliance Industries, Larsen & Toubro, Tech Mahindra and NTPC were among the biggest laggards.

Among gainers, IndusInd Bank jumped over 5 per cent while Zomato ended marginally higher.

"Amid heightened global volatility ahead of the anticipated US reciprocal tariff announcement tomorrow, the domestic market witnessed a significant sell-off today.

"The IT sector was among the hardest hit due to its substantial exposure to the US market, and real estate stocks fell following Maharashtra's upward revision of ready reckoner rates, which affect property valuations," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

Among other Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong

settled in the positive territory. Markets in Europe were also trading higher. US markets ended mostly higher on Monday.

Additionally, rising oil prices further dampened market sentiment, he added. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 4,352.82 crore on a net basis on Friday, according to exchange data.

Stock markets were closed on Monday for Eid-ul-Fitr.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.12 per cent to USD 74.86 a barrel.

Double whammy in K'taka

CONTINUED FROM P1

April 1. The BBMP has decided to increase door to door waste collection and disposal charges, imposing a monthly 'garbage cess' on various properties.

The new tax will be levied on residential buildings, shops, and hotels, with charges varying based on property size.

As per BBMP, hotels which were previously charged Rs 5 per kg of garbage, will now pay Rs 12 per kg. Similarly, for residential buildings charges are based on area.

8 killed in firecracker factory blast in Bengal

CONTINUED FROM P1

grandmother, Prabhavati Banik (80), Chandrakanta's wife, Santwana Banik (28), and his two children, Arnab Banik (9) and Asmita Banik (8 months). Tushar's wife, Rupa Banik, and their two children, Anushka Banik (6) and Ankit Banik (6 months), also lost their lives in the blast. "It was an accidental fire. This fire broke out at 8.30 last night. There was an explosion causing the death of seven persons, including four kids, two ladies and a gentleman," said Supratim Sarkar, Additional Director General, (South Bengal). Sarkar said that another

lady was admitted to a State-run facility where she succumbed to her injuries.

BJP State president Sukanta Majumdar said that the entire State was sitting on a pile of gunpowder and he would seek an investigation by the National Investigation Agency (NIA). Leader of the Opposition Suwendu Adhikari alleged that the building where the incident happened was a "crude bomb manufacturing unit". "How many more tragedies will take place before serious action is taken? The DGP @ WBPolice must answer why the State of West Bengal is sitting on a pile of crude bombs?" he posted on X.

Blast in firecracker godown kills 18 in Guj

CONTINUED FROM P1

ties continue to assess the situation.

Banaskantha Superintendent of Police Akshayraj Makwana said that a case has been registered in connection with the incident.

"As soon as we received information about the incident, we initiated relief work. So far, 18 people have died due to the collapse of a slab. An FIR is being filed under Section 304 (causing death by negligence), and strict action will be taken against those responsible," SP Makwana said.

Banaskantha police have formed five teams to identify and nab those responsible for the incident, the SP added.

The explosion, which occurred at approximately 9:45 AM, flattened the godown in an industrial area near Deesa town, around 30 km from the Banaskantha district headquarters.

"All the deceased persons were originally from Haliya village in Harta district of Madhya Pradesh," said district collector Mihir Patel.

The blast was so intense that it sent body parts of workers flying 200-300 metres away. The impact brought down the RCC slab of the structure. Even family members of workers staying on the same premises were crushed to death after blocks of slabs fell on them, he said.

Minister Rushikesh Patel told reporters that seven fire teams, eight ambulances, a State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) team and four bulldozers were rushed to the site for rescue operations.

"As many as 18 persons died in the incident and five others were injured after the slab of the godown

collapsed following a blast," said Superintendent of Police Akshayraj Makwana.

He said forensic teams are trying to ascertain the cause of the explosion.

Makwana said the structure- Deepak Traders- was owned by father-son duo Deepak Mohani and Khubchand Mohani.

"Prima facie, they were stocking firecrackers illegally. Police have registered an FIR, and formed five teams for investigation. A special investigation team (SIT) headed by a Dy SP-level officer has also been formed," he said, adding that some persons have been rounded up for questioning.

Deesa Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Neha Panchal said the godown had initially obtained a licence for storing firecrackers but it was not renewed after it expired on December 31, 2024, due to lapses.

"They had applied for renewal of the license after it expired. After authorities found that the unit lacked proper facilities, the renewal process was put on hold," Panchal said.

Panchal stressed that the licence was only meant to store firecrackers. "However, it seems they were prima facie illegally manufacturing firecrackers. Strong action will be taken for operating without permission," she said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief and announced an ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh to the next of kin of the deceased.

"Deeply saddened by the loss of lives in the explosion at a firecracker factory in Banaskantha, Gujarat. Condolences to those who lost their loved ones. May the injured recover soon.

IS RANYA RAO GETTING PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT AT BENGALURU JAIL?

According to sources from prison, Ranya is hardly staying at the barracks meant for women undertrials and convicts.

BELLIE THOMAS
NEW DELHI

Harshvardhini Ranya Rao (33), Kannada actress and step-daughter of an IPS officer, who was caught redhanded smuggling 17 bars of gold weighing 14.2 kilos worth Rs 12.56 Cr at the Bengaluru International Airport, is in judicial custody - lodged at the Parappana Agrahara Central Prisons since March 3rd. Ranya's two bail petitions were rejected - initially by the Special Court of Economic Offences and later by a Sessions Court in Bengaluru recently, with the DRI officials objecting to her bail, stating it was a case comprising National Security.

According to sources from prison, Ranya is hardly staying at the barracks meant for women undertrials and

convicts. She has been a frequent visitor to the jail hospital after she refused to eat jail food multiple times. According to jail sources, she spends most of her time at the jail hospital complaining of depression since her arrest in the gold smuggling case. However, sources also quipped that Ranya was unable to bear the heat of the summer at the women's barracks, and she along with a few high-profile undertrials, have complained of health issues and are cooling their heels at the jail hospital.

GOLD SMUGGLING CASE PROBE SO FAR

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) officials, at present, are interrogating the third arrested accused, Sahil Sakariya Jain, a gold jeweller based in Ballari, for his alleged involvement in

disposing of the gold bars that Ranya Rao had smuggled from Dubai to Bengaluru. The DRI officials have evidence at hand - by way of transactional statements and Whatsapp communications between Ranya Rao and Sahil Jain for an alleged gold smuggling bid that was carried out on January 11th this year. According to sources, Ranya had smuggled 14.5 kilograms of gold that time and had handed over the gold bars to Sahil for disposal. DRI sources said that this was a different case altogether and not to be confused with the gold smuggling bid on March 3rd that was thwarted by DRI. DRI sources also state that they have evidence with them in connection with two more instances of gold smuggling involving Ranya Rao and Sahil on earlier occasions.



The second arrested accused Tarun Raju Kondaru has also been questioned by the DRI officials who had taken him to custody for five days and at present he has been remanded to judicial custody. Tarun also had moved his bail petition with the Special Court of Economic Offences, which was dismissed and later his advocates moved his bail petition with the Sessions Court in Bengaluru.

DRI sources confirmed that Tarun Raju has been in constant touch with Ranya Rao and had even travelled with her to Dubai and back on several occasions. Tarun Raju has a US citizenship and is also holding a passport of the United States. DRI officials are also probing on his involvement into the gold smuggling racket where he is said to have procured the gold bars and declared the gold bars to be taken to

Geneva from Dubai to the Dubai Airport authorities, and he had also purchased air-tickets to travel to Geneva, but instead travelled to Hyderabad from Dubai, while Ranya who had concealed the gold on her body parts flew down to Bengaluru where she was nabbed redhanded on March 3rd.

Tarun Raju Kondaru and Ranya has been business partners earlier who jointly started the Vira Gold & Diamonds outlet in Bengaluru.

Tarun Raju, grandson of a business tycoon from Andhra Pradesh, had a short stint into movie acting as well where he played a lead role in one of the Telugu movies in 2018.

It was at that time, the two actors came in contact with each other as Ranya Rao too had acted with a few big-ticket artistes from Kannada

and Tamil film industry.

Ranya Rao, the prime accused in the gold smuggling case was arrested and interrogated by the DRI initially once after she was nabbed redhanded with gold bars in her possession at the Bengaluru International Airport on March 3rd. During that time, Ranya was accompanied with protocol officers while she had disembarked the Emirates flight that had landed in Bengaluru airport. DRI officials have told the court that Ranya was not physically frisked and that she did not go through the Door Frame Metal Detector (DFMD) at the Airport Customs boasting that she had protocol and that she was a daughter of an IPS officer in Karnataka. DRI also apprised the court that with this modus operandi, the agency suspect that Ranya

would have hoodwinked the airport authorities including Customs and could have smuggled large amounts of gold during previous occasions.

According to the DRI officials, Ranya had travelled around 27 times to Dubai and back in less than a year and she always had protocol officers accompanying her and she would also use government (police) vehicles that would be waiting for her at the airport to pick her up and drop off her.

Soon after her arrest on March 3rd, DRI officials recorded her three statements, after which she was once again taken into custody and her further statements recorded after the DRI officials learnt about her links with both the co-accused Tarun Raju and Sahil Jain.

Is The Doon on the cusp of a change?

The leadership of all-boys boarding school is examining the possibility of embracing co-ed model, but a large number of alumni are strident in their opposition to changing the legacy of their alma mater

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Doon School, arguably India's most prestigious all-boys boarding school, has long been known for its commitment to producing leaders with integrity, intellect, and a strong sense of camaraderie. For nearly a century, the school has followed a single-gender model which many believe has played a vital role in shaping its unique educational ethos. Of late, an idea of transforming the institution into a co-educational model has been floated, sparking an intense debate among alumni, faculty and students. The idea is being explored in detail by the school's leadership.

RATIONALE BEHIND THE PROPOSAL

In this age of transformation in education and societal changes in the backdrop of rapid advancements in technology, many leading institutions are moving towards co-education to provide students with an environment that mirrors the real world. At The Doon School, the proposal of a transition to co-education was brought forth by the School's Senior Management Team (SMT), led by the Headmaster Dr. Jagpreet Singh. The idea was rooted in the belief that the world was evolving, and that co-education could provide a more balanced, inclusive, and diverse learning environment.

The SMT, after thorough discussions, arrived at the conclusion that co-education could offer several benefits, such as fostering gender equality, improving social dynamics and better preparing students for the professional world where both genders work together. According to Singh, the leadership believed that co-education would help address the issue of "toxic masculinity," a topic that has been widely discussed in educational circles as a result of an all-boys environment. The leadership suggested that mixing genders could promote more balanced emotional growth and better interpersonal dynamics among students.

Seeking inputs from members of Indian Public School Society, Headmaster Jagpreet Singh, who is also the Honorary Secretary IPSS, in a letter circulated among members said: The only constant in life is

change. And we are witnessing the world changing rapidly around us. At Doon, we are not only receptive to change but responsive, too. True to this belief, we have been exploring the idea of making The Doon School a co-educational institution. At the very outset, we were asked as to what our views are on this idea; the response was a unanimous assent to the idea of going Co-Ed! Only after this endorsement the exercise of studying in-depth the Co-Ed initiative was commenced."

He further added that the idea is in discussion state no decision taken. "There is considerable concern around "toxic masculinity" these days. Bullying behaviour is not accepted as something that must be tolerated as the price of comradeship and trust-building among a close-knit community. While a co-ed environment may not necessarily prevent such excesses, single-gender environments may be more prone to fostering such boorish behaviour, in the absence of the moderating effect of the opposite gender," said the letter.

WHY CO-EDUCATION

Proponents of the co-education model argue that it reflects the changing societal norms and ensures that students are better prepared for the modern, diverse world.

In a co-ed environment, students get to interact with the opposite sex on a daily basis. This interaction, many believe, fosters respect and understanding between genders which is critical in today's society. Proponents argue that such an environment better prepares students for the professional world where men and women work side by side.

One of the key arguments for co-education is that it leads to more balanced emotional development. It is argued that in a co-ed school, students learn how to manage relationships with both boys and girls, which can enhance their emotional maturity. It also allows students to develop empathy and teamwork skills, essential qualities in the modern workplace.

Co-education can play a crucial role in breaking down rigid gender stereotypes. In a single-gender institution, students may be more susceptible to stereotypical gender roles. By

integrating boys and girls in the same learning space, co-education allows both sexes to see each other as equals and helps challenge ingrained stereotypes about gender roles.

Many argue that having both genders in the classroom promotes collaboration and a more balanced approach to academics. Co-ed environments allow students to learn from each other's perspectives and experiences, which can lead to more creative and comprehensive solutions to academic challenges.

Around the world, many of the top schools have em-

braced the co-education model, with some even citing it as one of the key drivers of their success. For nearly a century, the school has produced leaders in various fields, and the all-boys environment has been central to its ability to nurture leadership, discipline, and camaraderie. The proposal for co-education threatens to fundamentally change the school's identity and alter the ethos that has made it so successful.

"By all means have a 'Doon School for Girls' separately. The HM narrative quotes School's in the UK based on which The Doon School has been 'modelled' on - look closer to home - Mayo College with over 300 acres of campus space has a separate 'Mayo Girls School,' he said.

The Doon School has a long and illustrious history of being an all-boys institu-



tion, and many alumni and current stakeholders believe that this tradition is crucial to its continued success. For nearly a century, the school has produced leaders in various fields, and the all-boys environment has been central to its ability to nurture leadership, discipline, and camaraderie. The proposal for co-education threatens to fundamentally change the school's identity and alter the ethos that has made it so successful.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST CO-EDUCATION

The proposal has, however, met with strong resistance from different quarters. Despite the compelling reasons presented by the school's leadership for adopting co-education, many alumni, faculty members, and current students have voiced strong opposition to the proposal. The resistance stems from a deep-rooted belief that The Doon School's identity and educational philosophy are inextricably linked to its all-boys tradition.

"The fraternity through the Class Reps too are not in favour of The Doon School going co-ed," Mahesh I. Mansukhani, Class Rep Class of 74, said, adding

analysis—not on trends or unverified assumptions," said an alumni who wished to remain anonymous.

Proponents of the current model argue that boys have unique developmental needs that are best addressed in a single-gender environment. Research has shown that boys and girls learn differently, and a school specifically designed for boys can tailor its teaching methods and pastoral care to meet their unique needs. By transitioning to co-education, the school may lose its ability to focus on these specialized needs.

Class of 63 said single sex schools allow for tailored teaching methods that cater to the learning styles and development needs of boys. There is as much data and research supporting good single sex education outcomes as there is for co-ed. Claiming that co-ed only provides better outcomes is false, it said, citing the example of Welhams Girls School, a single sex institution, the has been consistently outperforming all co-ed schools. "An all-boys

school allows students to grow without gender related distractions, fostering confidence and camaraderie. Changing to coeducation would alter social dynamics and shift the School's cultural environment in unpredictable ways," the Class of 63 said in their inputs.

Another major concern is the school's infrastructure. The Doon School's campus is relatively small compared to other prestigious institutions, and some argue that it simply does not have the space to accommodate the needs of a co-educational environment. Adding facilities for girls,

infrastructure, faculty and financials.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING CO-EDUCATION

If the decision is made to move forward with the proposal to become co-educational, The Doon School would face a range of challenges in implementing this change successfully. These challenges are significant and must be carefully considered before any final decision is made. Some of the key challenges include:

As mentioned earlier, The Doon School's campus is relatively small, and adding the necessary infrastructure to accommodate female students would require substantial modifications. This includes the construction of additional dormitories, classrooms, and recreational facilities. Such changes would be costly and may take years to implement.

PROTECTING DOON'S UNIQUE LEGACY

The Doon School has a unique legacy and a proud tradition that has stood the test of time. While the world around us is changing, it is important that the school's leadership carefully considers the implications of such a significant change. The proposal to move to a co-educational model presents both opportunities and challenges, but any decision should be made with careful thought, due diligence, and the input of all stakeholders.

"The immediate task for any Chairman of the Board must be to stem the decline in performance (Grades, College Admissions, Reduced applicant pool for Doon admissions, Faculty attrition) ... and there is little indication that this is happening. Doon has great hardware (Campus, Classrooms, CDH Food) but broken software," said Pavan Vaish of 1986 batch

Ultimately, the decision to make The Doon School co-educational should not be driven by trends or external pressure, but by a genuine desire to enhance the educational experience for future generations of students. The school's legacy and mission are built on a solid foundation, and it is important to preserve these qualities while adapting to the changing needs of the world.

The transition to co-education, if pursued, should be done with great caution.

FINDING A MIDDLE GROUND

Given the strong arguments

FIRE OUTBREAK



Firefighters douse the fire that broke out at a building near Jhandewalan Metro Station, in New Delhi. ANI

Massive fire at commercial complex in Jhandewalan

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A massive blaze broke out at a commercial complex building in central Delhi's Jhandewalan extension on Tuesday afternoon, prompting the fire department to deploy 18 fire brigades, officials said. Huge flames and plumes of thick black smoke could be seen billowing into the sky from a distance as the fire engulfed the entire building, which houses a private bank, multiple offices and a pizza outlet.

Prompt action by locals and passersby helped in the immediate evacuation of people who were present inside the Anarkali Complex in Block E 3, the officials said. Nobody got injured in the incident that happened around 2 pm, they said.

However, several vehicles caught fire as parts of the burning hoardings fell on them. Initially, eight fire brigades were pressed into service but as the flames were spreading fast due to high winds, more tenders were deployed to contain the fire, a Delhi Fire Services official said.

The firefighters are spraying water on the top floors of the building using a crane. So far, nobody has been found

trapped inside, he said.

DCP (Central) M Harsha Vardhan said the fire had spread to a DDA shopping complex nearby. Firefighters and police personnel are at the spot.

According to the police, the area has been cordoned off. Some renovation work was underway on the second and third floors of the building.

The fire also spread to a private bank inside the building but nobody got injured as the bank was not operational today, they said. Meanwhile, Krishan Singh, an eyewitness said, "It was around 2 pm, when people saw thick black smoke coming out of the building."

"At first we thought that the workers engaged in renovation work may have burnt something. But later we saw flames and immediately rushed there and raised an alarm," he said.

Another eyewitness, Ajay, who works as a branch manager at a private bank nearby, informed that his car was gutted by the fire.

"I was least bothered about my car. I was more worried about the workers inside the pizza outlet. I immediately rushed to the spot and helped them to come out," he added.

2020 riots: Police to file FIR against BJP's Kapil Mishra

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

In a major setback to Delhi law minister Kapil Mishra, a court on Tuesday ordered an FIR to probe his alleged role in the 2020 riots in the national capital. Additional chief judicial magistrate Vaibhav Chaurasia found a "prime facie" cognisable offence, saying Mishra's presence at the place of the incident couldn't be ruled out and the matter required a probe against him and others.

"It is clear that Mishra was in the area at the time of alleged offence further probe required," the judge said.

The court directed Delhi Police to file a "compliance report" in the matter by April 16, the next date of hearing.

"Let the further investigation be initiated with respect to Mishra and his associates with respect to first incident (on February 23, 2020) only and cognisable offence has been disclosed by the



complainant. Put up for the compliance of the order from DCP North-East on or before April 16, 2025," the order said.

The court directed the police to examine the complainant, and then Delhi Police's DCP Ved Prakash Surya who was reportedly wandering at the site during the alleged incident, saying "If you don't stop the protest, then the consequence will happen here that you all will be killed."

The order said once it was established prima facie, Surya was to be interrogated over the presence of Mishra, and what had transpired between them.

"He (Surya) is the best per-

son to explain as what transpired on the day between him and Mishra coupled with ultimatum and warning by DCP Ved Prakash Surya subsequent thereof as alleged by the complainant and this requires serious investigation. This is being based by only relying upon the material supplied by the prosecution itself," the court said.

The order went on, "His (Surya) personal interrogation is necessary. The series of events reveals that perhaps, if allegations of complainant are found to be true, then DCP Ved Prakash Surya knows something which this Judiciary does not."

The judge went "through theory propounded by prosecution regarding the riots" where Mishra was exonerated for not being part of the larger conspiracy.

"If one goes through it in detail in the prosecution submission, one will fail to find what was the immediate cause for rioting," the judge said.

CAG REPORT FLAGS LAPSES IN POLLUTION CONTROL MEASURES

Over 1.08 lakh vehicles were issued PUC certificates despite exceeding emission limits.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi's worsening air pollution has been exacerbated by lapses in its pollution control mechanisms, including irregularities in the issuance of PUC certificates, unreliable air quality monitoring systems, and poor enforcement of pollution control measures, according to a CAG report tabled in the Assembly on Tuesday. The report on "Vehicular Air Pollution in Delhi", tabled by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, highlighted major policy gaps and weak enforcement and poor coordination among agencies as key reasons behind the worsening pollution scenario in the national capital.

More than 1.08 lakh vehicles were issued pollution under control (PUC) certificates de-

POLLUTION LAPSES

- Air quality data from monitoring stations is unreliable, hindering effective action.
- The transport department lacks sufficient staff and equipment to monitor pollution effectively.
- Only 2.98 lakh out of 47.51 lakh required end-of-life vehicles were deregistered.
- The government failed to build two new ISBTs, as ordered by the Supreme Court.
- Multiple policies exist but lack strict enforcement and coor-



spite them emitting carbon monoxide (CO) and hydrocarbons (HC) beyond permissible limits, the reports said.

In many cases, multiple vehicles were issued certificates

at the same time, sometimes within a minute of each other, it said.

Between 2015 and 2020, nearly 4,000 diesel vehicles that exceeded pollution limits

were still certified as compliant, allowing them to remain on the road despite their high emission levels, the report said.

Out of the 14 CAG reports

CM promises pothole-free roads before monsoon

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said the Delhi government will ensure pothole-free roads in the national capital before the monsoon arrives in the city.

Following a midnight inspection of road repair work on the Outer Ring Road stretch from Madhuban Chowk to Mukarba Chowk on Sunday, Gupta directed the officials to prioritise public convenience and ensure there is no negligence in execution.

"She expressed her commitment to make Delhi's Roads pothole-free before the monsoon and has issued necessary instructions to all concerned agencies," a government statement said.

"Our government is making every possible effort to strengthen and improve Delhi's roads. Today, construc-



tion of a 4 km road stretch from Madhuban Chowk to Mukarba Chowk, to ensure high-quality execution and timely completion," it said.

The project, being executed by PWD

Northern Zone, involves strengthening both sides of the Outer Ring Road alongside the elevated corridor.

The road work is being carried out using cold milling and hot recycling techniques for long-lasting durability.

The chief minister asserted the road strengthening project being carried out at Rs 12.85 crore, includes a two-layer reinforcement process. The first layer utilises dense bitumen macadam (DBM) while the second layer comprises dense bitumen concrete (DBC).

Additionally, existing road layers are being removed through cold milling to maintain proper levelling. Thermoplastic paint, glow studs, and median markers are being installed to enhance night-time visibility, while a 50 mm thick stone matrix asphalt (SMA) layer is being laid near the elevated flyover, she said.

Assembly form 3 financial panels

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta on Tuesday announced unopposed election of members to three financial panels of the House including Public Accounts Committee (PAC), which will examine the CAG reports presented recently in the House. The other two panels are Committee on Government Undertakings and Committee on Estimates.

The three nine-member committees have six ruling BJP MLAs and three from the opposition Aam Aadmi Party.

Pollution emanating from Kejrival's loot: Sirsa on CAG report

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta on Tuesday announced unopposed election of members to three financial panels of the House including Public Accounts Committee (PAC), which will examine the CAG reports presented recently in the House. The other two panels are Committee on Government Undertakings and Committee on Estimates.

The three nine-member committees have six ruling BJP MLAs and three from the opposition Aam Aadmi Party.



The PAC members will be BJP MLAs Ajay Mahawar, Arvinder Singh Lovely, Kailash Gahlot, Raj Kumar Chauhan, Satish Upadhyay and Shikha Rai. AAP MLAs including Leader of Opposition Atishi, Kuldeep Kumar and Virendra Singh Kadiyan

will also be members of the panel.

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) reports on DTC, health, air pollution, and excise tabled in the House during the ongoing budget session, have been referred to the PAC for probe and commendations.

The Committee on Government Undertakings has BJP MLAs Deepak Chaudhary, Gajendra Dral, Anil Goyal, Kuldeep Solanki, Raj Karan Khatri and Tilak Ram Khatri as its members, while Sanjiv Jha, Prem Chauhan and Ajay Dutt will be members of the panel from AAP.

Anti-eve teasing drive: 94 held, counselled in Rohini, Shahdara

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A total of 94 people were arrested, detained and counselled in Delhi's Rohini and Shahdara areas between March 24 and 27 by police's newly deployed 'Shishtachar' squads, the anti-eve teasing teams, an official said on Tuesday.

These squads, consisting of male and female officers,

were formed last month on the lines of Uttar Pradesh's 'Anti-Romeo squad' to check incidents of harassment and ensure the safety of women in public spaces.

In Rohini, 89 people were caught by the squads patrolling in various areas, including Prashant Vihar, KNK Marg, Aman Vihar and Budh Vihar. While some were arrested and detained, others were let go

after counselling, the official said.

The squads patrolled areas around PVR Cinema in Prashant Vihar, schools in Budh Vihar, Saheed Sukhdev Sing College of Business Studies in KNK Marg and Maharaja Agrasen College in Aman Vihar, among others.

The official further said that two bikes were also impounded.

Fire at parking lot in Shastrri Park



TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A car and some rickshaws were burnt after a fire broke out at a parking lot in north-

east Delhi's Shastrri Park area on Tuesday. No one was injured in the incident, a fire official said. The fire broke out at a scrap store near the parking lot, and a call about the inci-

dent was received around 2.30 pm, the fire official said.

Eight fire tenders were rushed to the spot to douse the fire. "It took us one hour to bring the fire under control. A car and some rickshaws were gutted in the incident," Manoj Tyagi, a fire official, said.

Earlier, the fire official reported that several cars were burnt in the incident. However, when the flames were doused and the smoke cleared, they said that only a car and some rickshaws had caught fire.

Fire in Noida Sec 18 market

TDG NETWORK
NOIDA

A fire erupted Tuesday in a shopping complex in the busy Sector 18 market here, creating panic among people as the blaze threatened to engulf the whole building, officials said. Videos showed people rushing out of the building, with a stranded man attempting to jump from a window.

"The fire department and a police team reached the spot within four minutes

and controlled the fire in 10 minutes. The cause of the fire seems to be a short circuit," Additional Commissioner of Police (Law and Order) Noida Shivhari Meena told reporters.

"People who were stranded in the building were rescued through a hydraulic platform and a ladder. Those who were not feeling well have been admitted to a hospital and according to the doctors, they are in good condition," he added.

CHILE GRANTS MULTIPLE ENTRY PERMIT FOR INDIAN BUSINESSPERSONS

Talks focused on renewing the India-Chile agreement on geology and mineral resources.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Chilean President Gabriel Boric Font has announced a Multiple Entry Permit for Indian businesspersons, simplifying the visa process to facilitate trade and investment. Prime Minister Narendra Modi welcomed this decision, emphasising its significance in strengthening bilateral relations between India and Chile.

PM Modi held talks with President Boric at Hyderabad House in Delhi on Tuesday, describing Chile as an "important friend" of India in Latin America.

In a post on X, PM Modi stated, "India welcomes a special friend! It is a delight to host President Gabriel Boric Font in Delhi. Chile is an important friend of ours in Latin America. Our talks today will add significant impetus to the India-Chile bilateral friendship." Following the meeting, a joint statement highlighted that Boric conveyed that India is a priority partner for Chile in the global economy and stressed the need to explore strategies



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President of Chile, Gabriel Boric Font witness an exchange of MoU during the joint press statement, at Hyderabad House in New Delhi on Tuesday. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and others are also seen. ANI

for enhanced and diversified trade between the two countries. Gabriel Boric Font and PM acknowledged the signing of the mutually agreed Terms of Reference and welcomed the launch of Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) negotiations for a balanced, ambitious, comprehensive, and mutually beneficial agreement to achieve a deeper economic integration. "The CEPA will aim at un-

locking the full potential of the trade and commercial relationship between India and Chile, boosting employment, bilateral trade, and economic growth," the joint statement read. "To further promote trade relations as well as people-to-people interactions, President Boric announced Chile's decision to grant a Multiple Entry Permit for Indian businesspersons which will streamline the visa pro-

cess." "Prime Minister Modi welcomed and valued this measure, as it reflects the willingness of both parties to facilitate trade and investment and the shared commitment to deepening bilateral relations between Chile and India. Acknowledging the people-to-people linkages as an important pillar to promote bilateral ties and to facilitate business, tourism, student

and academic exchanges, Indian side has already put in place a flexible visa regime, including by extending e-visa facility for Chilean travellers to India," it added.

As per the joint statement, the two recognised the strategic importance of critical minerals for emerging technologies, advanced manufacturing, and clean energy transitions and agreed to accelerate collaboration in exploration, mining and processing along with research and development to promote investment across the entire critical mineral value chain for mutual benefit. PM Modi and Gabriel Boric stressed on the need for building trusted and resilient supply chains including for critical minerals and advanced materials. The two sides agreed to work together on initiatives to strengthen supply chains and local value chains by fostering mutually beneficial partnerships and understandings in mining and minerals, including the possibility of a long-term supply of minerals and materials from Chile to India.

Akhilesh takes a dig at renaming in Uttarakhand

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday took a jibe at Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami over the announcement of renaming 11 places in four districts of the state.

"Uttarakhand ka naam bhi Uttar Pradesh-2 kar dijiye (Should rename Uttarakhand as Uttar Pradesh-2) former UP CM Akhilesh Yadav said.

On Monday, Uttarakhand CM Dhami announced the renaming of various places in the Haridwar, Dehradun, Nainital, and Udham Singh Nagar districts of the state.

While making the announcement, he said that the renaming is being done in accordance with public sentiment and Indian culture and heritage. This initiative aims to inspire people by honoring great personalities who have contributed to the preservation of Indian culture, according to an official statement.

In the Haridwar district, Aurangzebpur will be renamed Shivaji Nagar, Gajiwali to Arya Nagar,



Chandpur to Jyotiba Phule Nagar, Mohammadpur Jat to Mohanpur Jat, Khanpur Kursli to Ambedkar Nagar, Indrshpur to Nandpur, Khanpur to Shri Krishna Pur, and Akbarpur Fazalpur to Vijayanagar, as per CM Pushkar Singh Dhami's announcement.

In the Dehradun district, Miyanwala will be renamed Ramji Wala, Pirwala to Kesari Nagar, Chandpur Khurd to Prithviraj Nagar, and Abdullah Nagar to Daksh Nagar, the announcement further added.

In Nainital district, Nawabi Road will be renamed Atal Marg, and the road from Panchakki to ITI will be named Guru Golwalkar Marg, the announcement said.

Punjab, Haryana HC raises alarm over gangster culture rise

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has warned that the growing gangster culture is a big problem and asserted that the judiciary must ensure that those glorifying hooliganism face the action.

The Punjab and Haryana High Court observed that gangster culture won't be allowed, and the law will hit back hard.

Showing violence as normal and pulling young people into gangs is increasing crime and making people lose faith in the law. The court wants strong action to stop this.

Justice Harpreet Singh Brar said criminals must face tough punishment. He warned that songs and movies making gangsters look cool are giving young people the wrong ideas, making them feel powerful and untouchable. This is dangerous for society. "Gangs cause more crime and hurt the economy. We need to act fast," the judge said.

The warning came while the court rejected a plea from a man who feared the police would kill him in a fake encounter.

Birla calls for smooth wheat procurement, MSP boost

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla chaired a review meeting on wheat procurement at Minimum Support Price (MSP) in New Delhi on Tuesday, emphasizing the government's priority to ensure farmers receive a fair price for their crops. He instructed officials to maximize wheat purchases at the support price and ensure farmers face no inconvenience at procurement centers.

Birla stressed that farmers should not be unnecessarily harassed during quality checks and insisted that wheat initially rejected as black wheat should be re-tested. The Speaker advocated for practical relaxations in purchase parameters to provide relief to farmers. He also highlighted the importance of timely weighing, goods lifting, and providing necessary facilities like shade, water, toilets, and rest at the centers. Additionally, Birla urged ensuring high-speed internet and electronic procurement equipment to avoid farmer inconvenience. He further recommended spreading awareness about the MSP scheme to encourage more farmers to visit procurement centers. Birla called for prioritizing small and marginal farmers in slot booking and ensuring timely payments after wheat procurement.

Bengal BJP accuses Mamata of insulting Hindus during Eid

SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA

The Bengal unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party has criticised Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for her comments at an Eid congregation on Sunday. It has accused the Chief Minister of insulting Hindu religion during the celebrations.

Bharatiya Janata Party leaders from the State accused Mamata Banerjee of insulting the Hindu religion by referring to a phrase made during her speech at the annual Eid-ul-Fitr prayers at Kolkata.

Addressing a gathering at Red Road, the Chief Minister said: "I don't support the Ganda Dharm - (dirty religion) which this Jumla party had created".

Banerjee has often referred to the BJP as the Jumla party. During her speech at the Eid gathering, the Chief Minister claimed that "Ram and Baam (BJP and Left)" were trying to incite the riots. She cautioned Muslims not to fall into the trap laid by the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition Suwendu Adhikari asked which religion the Chief Minister was referring to when she said 'Ganda Dharm'.

"Which religion were you specifically referring to? Sanatan Hindu Dharma? What kind of provocative speech did you deliver at the



Red Road on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr?" the BJP leader questioned.

Accusing the Chief Minister of weaponising religion, the BJP leader asked if it was a religious event or a political programme. "Why were you deliberately mongering hate with the deliberate intention of creating animosity between communities?" Adhikari charged.

State BJP president Sukanta Majumdar also raised questions on the usage of "Ganda Dharm" phrase by the Chief Minister. "Is Sanatan Dharma a 'Ganda Dharm' for West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee? Despite numerous anti-Hindu riots under her watch, she has the audacity to mock Hindus and deride their faith," Majumdar said.

The BJP leadership had made similar allegations of insulting Hindu religion when the Chief Minister had dubbed Maha Kumbh as a "Mrityur Kumbh (Kumbh of death)".

Bengal BJP moves Cal HC for permission to visit riot-hit Mothabari

SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA

A day after a BJP delegation under the leadership of state president and Union Minister Sukanta Majumdar was stopped from visiting Mothabari in the Malda district, Leader of Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly Suwendu Adhikari moved the Calcutta High Court after police denied him permission to visit Mothabari and to hold a protest rally at Kanthi concerning the recent communal clashes and violence.

Adhikari's counsel, Mayukh Mukherjee, mentioned the matters to a bench of Justice Tirthankar Ghosh. Both pleas will be heard on Thursday.

The counsel prayed for Adhikari to be allowed to visit Mothabari along with another MLA and security

personnel.

Furthermore, Mukherjee submitted that the police did not grant permission to Adhikari to hold a protest rally at Kanthi on Tuesday. "Yesterday night, the police cancelled the rally, even though (a new date of April 3) was provided, the police are not cooperating," he said.

On Sunday, citing prohibitory orders, police stopped a BJP delegation under the leadership of state party President and Union Minister Sukanta Majumdar three kilometres from Mothabari in West Bengal's Malda district, which witnessed a communal clash on March 27. A bamboo barricade was erected to prevent his progress. In response, Majumdar sat on the road in protest. "If you have to go to jail, go to jail, but keep fighting," Ma-

jumdar shouted through a loudspeaker as he addressed his party workers.

Trouble began on Thursday after a religious procession passed by a place of worship in Mothabari on Wednesday evening, according to residents. Violence, including arson, vandalism and physical attacks on people, took place. Internet services were suspended, and prohibitory orders were issued in Mothabari and surrounding areas.

Majumdar had asked party workers and leaders to "keep vigil" in the strife-affected areas and said that Hindus in Malda cannot be persecuted because they are "minorities".

On Tuesday, National Commission for women's member and Bengal BJP leader Archana Majumdar, said that a NCW team would visit

Malda on April 4. "NCW has received multiple complaints from Mothabari, Malda. We are actively processing them, and a team is set to visit the spot on April 4 (tentative) for further assessment. Ensuring justice and support remains our priority," she wrote on X handle.

Senior police officials said that following the clashes between the two communities on Thursday, a large contingent of police personnel was posted in the area, and 34 people were arrested.

Suwendu Adhikari accused the police of bias and alleged that most of the people arrested were members of the Hindu community while the actual perpetrators were "roaming about freely".

Accusing the Mamata Banerjee Government of pandering to communal forces

with an eye to electoral gains, Sukanta Majumdar said that his party members would continue to protest against the ruling Trinamool Congress in a "democratic manner". He also expressed strong dissatisfaction with the police and the State Government's handling of the situation.

"If there is any obstacle, we will protest in a democratic manner. All the people of the Hindu community will fight against the Trinamool police," Majumdar declared.

He went on to raise concerns about the presence of TMC supporters and MLAs in the area, despite the imposition of Section 144, which prohibits large gatherings. "How are Trinamool people and MLAs roaming around in the area with such force despite Section 144?" he questioned.

Waqf Bill: Government's major political move

AJIT MAINDOLA
NEW DELHI

The NDA government is prepared to set up the opposition on Wednesday. The NDA government will play a major political move with the presentation of the Waqf Bill in the Lok Sabha. The bill is expected to trap the opposition in a controversy centered around Muslim appeasement, potentially benefiting the NDA alliance. The government has ensured full support from its allies, including TDP, JDU, and Andhra's Jansena, NCP, and Rashtriya Lok Dal, all of whom have

not opposed the bill. With the backing of 294 members in the Lok Sabha, the government is confident there will be no hurdles in passing the bill. This move comes after the government consulted its allies and has carefully planned the timing of the bill's introduction, making it a significant point in the ongoing political narrative.

The government is set to present the Waqf Bill in the Lok Sabha at 12 o'clock on Wednesday, allotting 8 hours for discussion. However, the opposition is demanding an extension of this time. This

bill is likely to create a significant political crisis for the Congress, especially as parties like TMC, RJD, and SP, part of the All India Alliance, are focused on regional politics. In contrast, the Congress will bear the brunt of the fallout, as this issue has national political implications. While regional parties may not be as affected by opposing the bill, the Congress is poised to suffer losses in several states.

In the Rajya Sabha, the government is confident it will easily pass the bill with the support of its allies. The opposition will likely have little

power to block the legislation in the Upper House. Looking at the opposition's stance so far, it appears they will oppose the bill, but this may result in a situation similar to the one during the decisions to build the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya and abrogate Article 370 in Kashmir. This bill has the potential to be a major turning point in national politics.

The BJP's strategy with the Waqf Bill is a calculated gamble that will have far-reaching consequences, especially in states like Bihar, where elections are due

next year. The issue of the Waqf Board will dominate the Bihar elections, and the opposition is expected to engage in Muslim appeasement politics. However, this will likely play into the hands of the NDA alliance. The bill strengthens the BJP's Hindutva agenda and its stance on religious polarization, which could undermine the opposition's focus on backward class politics, particularly that of Congress. If this polarization spreads to a state like Bihar, it could have disastrous consequences for the opposition.

'Pancake' collapse in quake-hit Myanmar tests rescuers; NDRF retrieves 16 bodies

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A 'pancake' collapse of multiple buildings and houses leading to floors falling one over the other has become a challenge for rescue workers in quake-hit Myanmar with India's NDRF retrieving 16 bodies so far from the rubble, officials said Tuesday.

The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) specialists have spread across 13 buildings as part of the 'Sector D' disaster rescue plan in Mandalay city and they are still

"looking for lives" despite all odds, the officials monitoring the rescue operations from here told PTI.

The teams are conducting search and rescue operations in Mandalay in coordination with fire services of Myanmar, focusing on sites, where victims have been reported missing due to building collapse, the NDRF said in a statement.

"As of April 1, 2025, 16 dead bodies have been retrieved and rescue operation is ongoing," it added.

Officials said the rescuers were still hopeful to find signs of life.

Miracles do happen as during the Turkiye quake rescue operation in 2023 a life was found on the 17th day after the tremor struck.

Majority of buildings have collapsed like a 'pancake' and it is making the task difficult for the rescuers as they have to cut through heavy slabs for hours and lift mounds of rubble through earth movers to look for people who could be alive, the officials said.

Had it been a tilted collapse, the ray of hope is much brighter and the 'golden hours' for rescu-



National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel conduct a search and rescue operation at earthquake sites in Myanmar. Agencies

Authorities in Myanmar have held a minute of silence to honour the victims of a catastrophic earthquake that killed more than 2,700 people, including 50 children at one preschool near the city of Mandalay.

ers to save lives is more, according to quake rescue experts.

The NDRF is also using its four canines who could sniff vital signs of a fainted or unconscious human being, the officials said.

The federal disaster contingency force has also been directed to assist local authorities in distrib-

uting relief items to the victims.

India has dispatched a team of 80 NDRF rescuers to its neighbouring country following the massive 7.7 Richter quake that struck on March 28.

Press reports emerging from the disaster-hit country quoted the head of Myanmar's military

government, Senior Gen Min Aung Hlaing, saying 2,719 people have been found dead and 441 were missing till now. About 4,500 others have been injured. India launched 'Operation Brahma' soon after the quake rattled large parts of Myanmar including capital Naypyitaw and the second largest city of Mandalay with medicines, ration, food and tents being airlifted and shipped to the country through its military aircraft and ships. The neighbours share a 1,643-km-long international front.

GST COLLECTIONS FOR MARCH 2025 SURGE 9.9% TO REACH RS 1.96 LAKH CR

As per the data, Rs 12,300 crore were collected from compensation cess.

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The Gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections for March 2025 stayed at Rs 19,56,034 crore (Rs 1.96 lakh crore), surging 9.9 per cent, according to the government data released on Tuesday.

The data revealed that the collections in the month of March were 6.8 per cent higher than Rs 1.84 lakh crore recorded in the previous month.

The GST collections for the month of February rose by 9.1 per cent to Rs 183,646 crore.

According to the data, the Gross GST revenue in last month included Rs 38,100 crore from Central GST, whereas the State GST stood at Rs 49,900 crore while Rs 95,900 crore came from Integrated GST.

As per the data, Rs 12,300 crore were collected from compensation cess.

KEY POINTS

- March GST collections rose to Rs 1.96 lakh crore, up 9.9% YoY and 6.8% over February.
- Revenue split: CGST Rs 38,100 cr, SGST Rs 49,900 cr, IGST Rs 95,900 cr, Cess Rs 12,300 cr.
- Surge reflects strong demand and import growth, boosting fiscal momentum.
- GST Council slashed rates on key items, easing tax burden on daily essentials and gadgets.



The data shows that the February, in comparison, witnessed Central GST collections standing at Rs 35,204 crore while State GST stood at Rs 43,704 crore.

The integrated GST at Rs 90,870 crore, and compensation cess stood at Rs 13,868 crore.

The recent GST collections reflects a positive

trajectory for India's economy, underscoring robust domestic consumption and buoyant import activity. The figures bode well for the country's fiscal health and economic recovery efforts, signalling resilience amidst global uncertainties.

The Goods and Services Tax was introduced in the country with effect from

July 1, 2017, and states were assured compensation for loss of any revenue arising on account of the implementation of GST.

The GST Council, a federal body comprising the Union Finance Minister as its Chairman and Finance Ministers of all States as members, has played its part in the forum. The latest meeting of the GST

The data shows that the February, in comparison, witnessed Central GST collections standing at Rs 35,204 crore while State GST stood at Rs 43,704 crore.

Council was held on December 21 at Jaisalmer, Rajasthan.

Hair oil, toothpaste, soap; detergents and washing powder, wheat; rice; curd, lassi, buttermilk; wrist-watches, TV up to 32 inches; refrigerators; washing machines, mobile phones, are among key items on which GST rates have been slashed substantially, or for some kept at zero, benefiting people. From time to time, the list is being revised with the approval of the Council.

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Sanjay Malhotra has articulated a comprehensive strategy to achieve optimal economic conditions—often referred to as 'Goldilocks conditions'—by balancing inflation and growth through coordinated monetary and fiscal policies. In an opinion piece published in the Times of India on April 1, 2025, Malhotra emphasized the RBI's commitment to collaborating with the government to refine the flexible inflation targeting (FIT) framework, which was first adopted in 2016. This framework mandates the RBI to maintain inflation at a target of 4%, with a permissible range of +/-2%. The upcoming review of this target in 2026 presents an opportunity to enhance its effectiveness in fostering economic stability.

Malhotra underscored the importance of price stability, acknowledging that while inflation erodes purchasing power, especially among the poor, a

moderate level is conducive to economic growth. He stated, "Not all inflation is bad. Experts believe that a moderate level of inflation is healthy for economic growth." This perspective aligns with the RBI's dual mandate to control inflation while supporting growth.

Addressing exchange rate management, Malhotra noted that the RBI would continue to manage excessive volatility without targeting any specific exchange rate level or band. This approach aims to maintain market stability while allowing flexibility in response to external economic pressures. Furthermore, he highlighted the RBI's dedication to enhancing transparency, consultation, and accountability within its operations. "We'll continue to be

proactive, agile and flexible in our attempt to support economic growth," Malhotra affirmed.

In addition to these measures, the RBI plans to advance the internationalization of the rupee and globalize India's payment systems. These initiatives are designed to integrate India's financial system more deeply into the global economy, facilitating trade and investment.

Malhotra also emphasized the RBI's commitment to financial inclusion, highlighting that over 551 million bank accounts have been opened under the financial inclusion program. The RBI's Financial Inclusion Index, which measures access, quality, and usage of financial services, rose to 64.2 in March 2024, up from 60.1 in March 2023.



India-US trade deal deal may reshape agri, auto, pharma: Jefferies

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The possible trade agreement between India and the United States could include key sectors such as agriculture, automobiles, and pharmaceuticals, says a report by Jefferies.

These sectors are considered politically and economically sensitive for India due to high tariff rates.

The report said "A trade agreement with the US would likely include the high tariff items, which could be politically / economically sensitive for India. These include agri commodities"

The report highlighted that India has maintained



high import duties on many goods, including automobiles and electronics, to protect domestic industries from competition, particularly from China. However, in trade negotiations with the U.S. India may have to reconsider its tariff policies.

Additionally, India must ensure that any concessions offered to the US should align with similar trade agreements that are being discussed with the

European Union and the United Kingdom.

Pharmaceuticals could be a major sector for discussions, particularly regarding intellectual property rights (IPR). The US may push for stricter patent regulations, which could impact India's generic drug industry.

To balance the trade deficit, the agreement with the U.S. may also involve increased defence and oil or gas imports.

The report says, while the deal could provide certain advantages to India, it may also pose challenges for specific industries such as automobiles, pharmaceuticals, textiles, and alcohol.

'Centre implementing PLI scheme for textiles on pan-India basis'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The government has started implementing Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Textiles on Pan India basis, Pabitra Margherita the Minister of State (MoS) for Textile said in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha.

The MoS, quoted by Ministry of Textiles in a statement, added PLI scheme is aimed at promoting the production of MMF Apparel, MMF fabrics and products of Technical Textiles to achieve size and scale and to become competitive.

As per Ministry's Budget Estimate 2025-26, approx.

22 per cent of the budget is dedicated for PLI Scheme for Textiles.

Out of the 74 applicants selected under the scheme, 24 are MSMEs. Turnover of Rs. 2,16,760 crore including exports is projected for the scheme period, the MoS added.

In addition, he added that the government is implementing Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies (RoSCTL) scheme for Apparel/Garments and Made-ups in order to enhance competitiveness by adopting principle of zero rated exports.

Further, textiles products not covered under the RoSCTL scheme are covered

under Remissions of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) along with other products.

The government provides financial support to various Export Promotion Councils and Trade Bodies under Market Access Initiative Scheme implemented by Department of Commerce for organizing and participating in trade fairs, exhibitions, buyer-seller meets etc. at national and international levels.

Budget announced an outlay of Rs 5272 crores (Budget Estimates) for the Ministry of Textiles for 2025-26. This is an increase of 19 per cent over budget estimates of 2024-25 (Rs 4417.03 crore).

Air passenger traffic to grow at a CAGR of 9%: Report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Air passenger traffic is expected to grow at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 9 per cent over FY25- FY27, reaching approximately 485 million by FY27 says a report by CareEdge Ratings.

International air traffic growth is expected to outpace domestic traffic growth during the same period, supported by the addition of wide-body aircraft fleets for the domestic carriers from FY26 onwards.

The report is based on the financial performance of 11 major private airports of India, considering their past and

future passenger traffic and capex for the next five years.

Between FY21 and the first nine months of FY25, India's airport operators, including the Airports Authority of India (AAI), have invested approximately Rs 80,000 crore in capex. Notably, 42 per cent of this investment was allocated to the development of greenfield airports across four locations.

Led by brown field expansions, a capex outlay of Rs 1.1 lakh crore is expected over FY26 and FY30.

Driven by tariff hikes and additional capacities, aero revenue is expected to grow at 42 per cent CAGR over FY24- FY27.

EPFO ties up with 15 banks to boost access, efficiency

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) entered into agreements with 15 additional public and private sector banks in the presence of Dr Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister for Labour & Employment, Youth Affairs & Sports in New Delhi on Tuesday.

The newly empanelled 15 banks will enable direct payment of nearly Rs 12,000 Crore in annual collections and enable direct access to employers who maintain their accounts with these banks. For enabling employers covered under the Act to pay their monthly contributions, EPFO has already empanelled 17 banks, taking the



Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya in a group picture during the signing of banking agreement between EPFO and Public & Private Sector Banks expanding EPFO's Multi Banking Centralised Collection System, in New Delhi on Tuesday. ANI

total to 32.

Union Minister of Labour & Employment and Youth & Sports, Dr Mansukh Mandaviya, in his address, stated that the country's progress towards a "Naya Bharat" is being significantly supported by institutions like the EPFO,

which plays a crucial role in shaping the nation's future. With nearly 8 crore active members and more than 78 lakh pensioners, EPFO provides benefits that ensure social security for millions, he added.

He emphasised how EPFO

VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said, "It appears that they are likely to turn out consistent buyers only when the market corrects further and valuations become attractive."

continues to evolve and adapt, with the recent implementation of EPFO 2.0, a robust IT system that has significantly improved claim settlements. He said in the Financial Year 2024-25, EPFO settled record over 6 crore claims, a 35 per cent increase compared to the 4.45 crore claims settled in the previous year (2023-24).

Dr Mandaviya pointed out that customer satisfaction has risen significantly, and

EPFO is actively working on evolving towards EPFO 3.0 to make it as accessible and efficient as banks.

He said that a significant milestone was also marked with the introduction of the Centralized Pension Payment System.

"This system will benefit over 78 lakh pensioners, enabling them to receive their pensions in any bank account across the country.

India Inc. positioned to navigate global uncertainties: ICRA

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India Inc. has emerged in a strong financial position as it braces for potential global uncertainties, with its balance sheets showing resilience despite challenging economic conditions.

According to ICRA, FY2025 marked the fourth consecutive year of credit profile improvements, with the credit ratings of 301 entities being upgraded compared to 150 downgrades, maintaining a healthy credit ratio of 2.0x.

This trend highlights the growing financial strength of Indian corporates, which have benefitted from an ex-

tended period of deleveraging and consistent profit growth.

Commenting on the overall developments, K. Ravichandran, Executive Vice President & Chief Rating Officer, ICRA, said, "India Inc. has experienced an extended period of credit profile improvement, much of it due to strengthening balance sheets. Over the past decade, the aggregate operating profits of around 6,000 listed and unlisted entities analysed by us have grown at a CAGR of 12 per cent, while their total debt has increased by only 4 per cent."

Despite global challenges, including commodity price fluctuations, inflation, and

interest rate volatility, India's corporate sector has been able to navigate these pressures with greater financial stability, the credit rating agency added.

"From a credit perspective, this enhanced the ability of corporate India to bear the cyclical challenges of recent periods posed by commodity price inflation, rising interest rates, and subdued demand.

Apart from this general trend, a notable trend in the power, road, and realty sectors has been the increase in the proportion of upgrades due to reduced project risk, sometimes alongside debt refinancing at lower borrowing costs," Ravichandran added.

Cultural values won't allow India to accept US demand: GTRI

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The United States Trade Representative (USTR) has highlighted several trade and regulatory challenges in Monday's National Trade Estimate (NTE) Report, raising concerns over India's tariffs, non-tariff barriers, intellectual property policies, digital trade, and transparency.

The report released by US on Monday stated that a major concern for the U.S. is

India's high import duties, particularly on agricultural products.

It says, India imposes a 150 per cent tariff on alcoholic beverages and a 100 per cent tariff on walnuts and raisins imports from US, making it difficult for U.S. goods to compete.

Another key issue is India's strict import restrictions on certain dairy products. The U.S. sees India's requirement that dairy products come from animals not fed meat, blood, or internal organs as

The U.S. sees India's requirement that dairy products come from animals not fed meat, blood, or internal organs as a major barrier.

However, the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) defended these rules, arguing that such restrictions align with India's domestic needs. GTRI stated that India may never allow dairy products from cows fed animal remains, emphasizing food safety and cultural

factors. Ajay Srivastava, Founder of the Global Trade Research Initiative said "While the U.S. continues to pressure India to amend its trade policies to serve American commercial interests, India must firmly assess each demand through the lens of its own national priorities, development goals,

and cultural values".

He further added "imagine eating butter made from the milk of a cow that was fed meat and blood from another cow. India may never allow that".

Furthermore, India mandates non-GM and GM-free certificates for 24 products, even for crops that are not commercially modified. The U.S. calls this an unjustified restriction, but India argues it ensures traceability and consumer confidence.

The US report also stated

India's non-tariff barriers, such as licensing requirements and import bans on certain goods. For instance, animal-based oils are restricted, and some medicines require special approval before import. The U.S. wants these restrictions eased, but India argues that they are necessary to protect health, safety, and the environment.

Another point of contention is India's import licensing for remanufactured goods and medical devices. In 2024, India stopped issu-

ing licenses for refurbished U.S. medical devices, impacting exports. While the U.S. views this as excessive regulation, India believes that relaxing these rules could lead to a flood of low-quality second hand products that might harm consumers and domestic industries.

GTRI says "In 2024, India stopped issuing licenses for refurbished U.S. medical devices, affecting exports. While the U.S. sees this as unnecessary red tape, India

worries that relaxing the rules could lead to a flood of second-hand or low-quality products"

The USTR's annual report outlines key trade policies that impact U.S. exports and investments worldwide, with India being one of the focus areas due to its restrictive trade practices. While the U.S. continues to push for fewer trade barriers, India maintains that its policies are necessary for protecting domestic interests and consumer safety.

SHATTERED VOWS: WHEN LOVE LEADS TO VIOLENCE

OPINION

INDIRA VASHISHTA CARENA



In a shocking turn of events, the quiet city of Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, has been rocked by the gruesome murder of Saurabh Rajput, allegedly at the hands of his wife, Muskan Rastogi, and her lover. This tragic incident not only highlights a crime of passion but also raises questions about the complexities of modern relationships and the dark undercurrents that can exist within seemingly perfect marriages. The love, betrayal, and violence narrative unfolds against changing social norms, making it a case worth ex-

ploring in detail.

Reports indicate that Saurabh and Muskan had been experiencing significant marital strife, which may have escalated in recent months. This incident invites a deeper examination of fast-shifting modern day marriage dynamics, particularly in a society grappling with the interplay of traditional values and contemporary expectations. The pressures of maintaining relationships amidst societal expectations, financial stress, and personal aspirations can have severe consequences.

Muskan and Saurabh's once-celebrated relationship may have been burdened by complexities that many couples face today. Issues such as infidelity, lack of communication, and unresolved conflicts can escalate into catastrophic situations. The alleged involvement of a lover in this case highlights how external influences can compli-

cate a marriage, pushing individuals toward desperate actions. In many ways, the story of Saurabh and Muskan reflects broader societal changes, where the institution of marriage is increasingly viewed through the spectacles of skepticism. Couples today often grapple with the expectation that their partners should meet all emotional and psychological needs, leading to disappointment and frustration when those expectations are not lived up to. As romantic ideals clash with reality, some individuals may resort to extreme measures to resolve feelings of betrayal or inadequacy.

Communication is one of the most critical factors in any relationship. In the case of Saurabh and Muskan and many such cases of similar horrid nature, happening with painful frequency, a communication breakdown may have contributed to their tragic ends. Open and honest dialogue is essential for addressing grievances and working through challenges that couples inevitably face through the course of their married life. The inability to express feelings or concerns can lead to misunderstandings and resentments, creating a toxic environment where individuals feel trapped.

Mental health also plays a crucial role in relationships. The pressures of modern life can take a toll on mental well-being, leading to the brutal feelings of isolation and desperation. In this case, it is possible that both Saurabh and Muskan were struggling with their mental health, which may have influenced their actions. The importance of seeking help and support cannot be overstated, as unresolved emotional issues can manifest in several destructive ways.

The chilling nature of this crime serves as a stark reminder of the darker aspects of human relationships. It triggers discussions about mental health, the importance of open communication in marriages, and the need for support systems that help couples navigate the roughs and tumbles of married life. As society evolves, so must our understanding of relationships, encouraging dialogues promoting emotional well-being and conflict resolution.

This incident also raises questions about the role of community and family in supporting couples. In many cultures, family is expected to play a significant role in mediating conflicts and providing guidance. However, as individuals become more independent

and pursue personal aspirations, the traditional support systems may weaken, leading to isolation. Families and communities must engage in open discussions about marriage, relationships, and the emotional challenges accompanying them and not consider divorce as it is still considered a social stigma India which is associated with a legal rigmarole.

In the wake of Saurabh Rajput's murder, the community has been left to confront with the implications of this tragedy. Friends and family are mourning a life cut short while also questioning how such a horrific event could occur in what seemed to be a loving family environment. This event's psychological and emotional toll will undoubtedly ripple through the community, prompting reflection on the nature of love and marital bond.

As society processes this crime, addressing the underlying issues that may have contributed to this tragedy becomes essential. Educational initiatives focused on relationship counselling, communication skills and mental health awareness could provide valuable tools for couples dealing with the complexities of modern love.

Encouraging discussions surrounding the emotional aspects of relationships can help foster healthier dynamics and reduce the risk of violence.

The tragic murder of Saurabh Rajput is also underscores the potential for violence lurking beneath the surface of domestic life.

In the quest for love and companionship, it is crucial to foster relationships built on respect, understanding, and communication to prevent such tragedies from occurring in the future. The lessons learned from this tragedy must catalyse change, encouraging individuals to prioritise healthy communication and emotional well-being in their relationships. By doing so, we can hope to create a society where love is celebrated and the dark shadows of betrayal and violence no longer overshadow the bonds we cherish.

Ultimately, the story of Saurabh and Muskan poignantly reminds us that behind closed doors, the realities of love can be far more complex than they appear. Thus, it is high-time the society reflected over and resolved the issue.

Captain Indira Vashishta Carena is an ex-airline pilot, a motivational speaker and a columnist.

PERSPECTIVE

TAKEAWAYS FROM THE DRAMA-SERIES 'ADOLESCENCE'

The drama mini-series *Adolescence* is a must watch for both parents and children. In fact for all of us navigating the virtual world of alternate reality. Actually even if you are not in it the chances are that your neighbours, their kids or even someone within your own household is eye-locked to the virtual screen and living in a reality that is governed by some totally different rules of engagement than those that apply in the 'normal' world. The catch is that these alternate realists apply these rules while navigating the actual world. And that is scary.



Since by now the series has been much talked about so I hope there are no spoiler alerts here, and even so the story line is just a small part of the talking point. It's the atmospheric and the larger message that it sends, the impact of a young school-boy stabbing a classmate just because he asked her out and she said no. What also comes across is the alternate world of morality here, because the boy thought he was doing the girl a favour by asking her out at a time when she was the most vulnerable. Yet again, toxic masculinity is too easy a label to affix because there is a backstory that has the perpetrator as the victim who was socially targeted by his peers, including the said girl. The series also brings to light that kind of hazing, nay, the bullying that goes on within the school-walls (young kids can be brutal, some without knowing and others, just for the fun of it).

What is also interesting is that some of the hazing is going on in the full glare of public attention. Only adults don't see it for what it is because we are not fluent in Instagram-speak. How many of us know what Incel means? What about cyberbullying? We take a heart emoji for what it is, a warm reachout from a friend. A sign of approval. However, as we learn during the movie each emoji, each colour has a much darker, threatening meaning disguised in seemingly warm happy optics. If Wren & Martin were looking for an example to explain 'A wolf in sheep's clothing', then this is it.

The parents of Jamie Miller will find a resonance in parents the world over, who think their child is safe at home in his room without realising the toxic and misogynist content that he is accessing through his smartphone. This is a world where influencers such as Andrew Tate and his brother Tristram rule over unchecked and have emerged as role models for unsuspecting, awkward teens who feel ill at ease in the real world.

(The Tates are hugely popular social media influencers known for promoting misogynist views and were banned from TikTok, YouTube and Facebook for hate speech including that women should bear responsibility for getting raped.) In fact Andrew is currently facing a lawsuit from his girlfriend on charges of assault and battery during an abusive relationship. The Tate brothers are also accused of some serious crimes like human trafficking. The crimes apart there is also the optics of a dangerous manosphere that is being promoted here where women are clearly treated as pawns and commodities. This is not a world view we want to bring to our home, to our sons - and daughters. There is an interesting conversation in the series between the therapist and the child where she asks him about the way his father behaves at home, for let's not forget, kids look to parents as role models. This applies to both fathers and mothers.

Given the kind of response that this series has received, schools in the UK have decided to make it a part of their curriculum to teach anti-misogyny lessons. In February this year, schools in Denmark banned the use of smartphones in schools and after-school clubs. This followed after recommendations from a youth wellbeing commission which pointed out that as soon as a phone enters a child's bedroom, it takes up all the space. The study talks about the negative impact of smartphones (via social media) on the self-esteem of the child. Most social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and SnapChat don't allow kids below thirteen years to sign up. Some parents have raised this bar to eighteen years. But kids know how to evade these rules and set up accounts by lying about their age. Will banning smartphones solve the problem, or is there a need for a larger systemic approach? Should these conversations be part of the school curriculum? These are conversations to be had as preventive measures and not left to therapists post facto.

PRIYA SAHGAL

Mutual need doctrine: Why India holds the cards with China and the US

OPINION

ABHINANDAN MISHRA

India stands at a crucial point in its economic journey, poised to leverage its vast market and strategic heft to fuel growth.

The most important point in strengthening India's economy is that India, as the one of the world's largest markets, is more crucial to both China and the U.S. than they are to India.

Among the many pathways forward, Chinese investment is a contentious yet promising avenue, something which has become an untouchable topic post Galwan 2020. However, the time has come, to take lessons learnt from and after Galwan, and move ahead and allow Chinese money into the Indian market.

Chinese capital could bolster the Indian economy, invigorate its markets, and enrich its consumers is not mere optimism—it's grounded in economic logic.

Indian policy makers need to adopt a brave view, and move beyond the blanket ban which is driven by geopolitical mistrust and fears of dependency.

India needs Chinese investors, just as it needs American technology and a regulated approach with smart restrictions can unlock significant benefits.

Crucially, Delhi needs to self realise that it's not a one-way street—China and the U.S. need India's market and geopolitical weight just as badly, creating a symbiotic dynamic that India should use to its advantage.

The case for Chinese investment in India is compelling. First, it promises an infusion of capital that could turbocharge economic growth and give jobs. Lack of jobs is the pandemic that is waiting to happen.

With a trade deficit hovering around \$85 billion with China, inviting Chinese firms to invest directly—rather than just export—could shift the balance. Companies like Xiaomi and Oppo have already demonstrated that they can set up manufacturing units that create jobs and produce goods locally, reducing import reliance.

Second, Chinese investment brings new products to Indian consumers, enhancing choice and quality of life. From affordable smartphones to cutting-edge appliances, these innovations can reshape daily living.

More importantly, this influx will push Indian manufacturers to innovate. Competition from

foreign players has historical precedent—global automakers forced Tata and Mahindra to elevate their game. Chinese firms, with their prowess in scale and efficiency, could similarly spur domestic industries to match or exceed them, bolstering initiatives like "Make in India."

India's Economic Survey has highlighted the value of plugging into global supply chains, and Chinese investment could make India a manufacturing hub for exports to Europe or the U.S., not just a domestic player.

This isn't blind dependence; it's strategic leverage, that we somehow are not ready to engage with.

Despite these upsides, calls for a blanket ban on Chinese investment persist, fuelled by the 2020 Galwan clash and lingering security concerns. While understandable, such a move is a blunt instrument that risks more harm than good. Shutting the door entirely ignores the economic reality; A total cutoff will stall growth in tech, manufacturing, and infrastructure, sectors where Chinese expertise excels.

Moreover, a ban overlooks the past's lessons. Geopolitical tensions ebb and flow—India and China have moved beyond 1962 and other flashpoints. A lot of water has passed under the bridge since 2020, and economic pragmatism should outweigh reflexive hostility.

The answer to "Chinese fear" isn't stopping their complete access to the Indian market but smart reg-

ulation. India can welcome Chinese investment while safeguarding its interests with tailored restrictions. This could be—

1. Local production mandates: Require Chinese firms to manufacture 50-70% of their products in India. This mirrors Apple's success with Foxconn assembling iPhones locally, creating jobs and cutting imports. It ensures India isn't just a sales hub but a production powerhouse.

2. Market share caps: Limit Chinese dominance in key sectors (e.g., electronics, where they hold 72% of the smartphone market) to, say, 30%. Beyond that, mandate partnerships with Indian firms, fostering technology transfer and protecting smaller players from being priced out.

3. Geopolitical safeguard: Expand the post-2020 FDI approval process, vetting Chinese investments in sensitive areas like telecom or infrastructure. A "national interest clause" could allow intervention if ties sour, balancing openness with security.

4. Incentives for innovation: Offer tax breaks or subsidies to Indian firms that innovate against Chinese competition. South Korea's rise against Japan in the '80s shows how state support can turn rivalry into strength—India could replicate this in EVs or AI.

5. Profit reinvestment rules: Mandate that 25% of profits from Chinese ventures stay in India, funding factories, startups, or skills. This keeps capital circulating locally, building

resilience against external shocks.

These measures avoid the pitfalls of a ban—lost jobs, stalled growth—while addressing risks like dependency or industrial erosion.

Enforcement is key; robust auditing can prevent shell company loopholes. More improvement, by setting a specialized agency, that will keep an eye on the shell company route, can be explored.

India already uses similar tools, like the 26% local sourcing norm for retail FDI, proving this isn't uncharted territory.

The regulated approach doesn't just manage Chinese investment—it guards against overdependence on any single power, including the U.S. Experts have been flagging India's \$77.5 billion export reliance on the U.S. (18% of total exports in FY23) as a vulnerability. A U.S. recession or tariff hike could sting.

Similarly, unchecked Chinese FDI could tilt the other way, deepening the import skew with China.

The restrictions above—localizing production, capping dominance—double as shields, building a self-reliant base that can pivot to ASEAN or the EU if needed. India isn't just a taker—it's a prize. China and the U.S. need India as desperately as India needs their tech and cash. For China, India's 1.4 billion consumers are a lifeline. With over 300 million users, it's the biggest overseas market for Vivo and Oppo. As China's GDP growth slows (4.7%

PRICE OF PROSPERITY: HOW TRADE BUILT— AND DIVIDED— THE WORLD

On a quiet morning in 2025, a tweet from President Trump sent global markets into chaos. Within minutes, auto stocks crashed, EU leaders threatened retaliation, and a new chapter in economic warfare began...



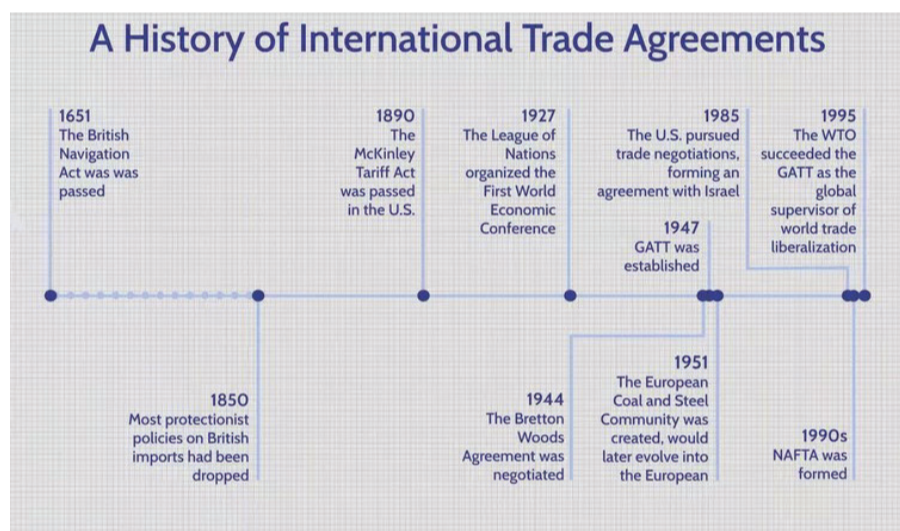
The Silk Road thrived through the Middle Ages and remained in use into the 19th century, showing its enduring usefulness and ability to adapt to changing times. heymissaworld.weebly.com

International trade has long been a transformative force, reshaping economies, societies, and political landscapes across the globe. From ancient barter systems to today's intricate global supply chains, the exchange of goods and services across borders has been instrumental in driving prosperity, fostering cultural exchange, and, at times, inciting conflict. As of April 1, 2025, the implementation of new tariffs by President Donald Trump underscores the enduring significance of trade policies in influencing international relations and the global economic order.

ANCIENT TRADE ROUTES

In 140 BCE, a Chinese diplomat named Zhang Qian was captured by nomads. Thirteen years later, he returned not just with tales of distant lands—but with the seeds of what would become the Silk Road, forever changing global commerce.

The foundations of international trade trace back to ancient civilizations engaging in the exchange of goods such as spices, textiles, and precious metals. The Silk Road, established around 130 BCE, is among the most renowned trade routes, connecting the East and West. This network facilitated commerce and the exchange of ideas, technologies, and cultures. Goods



like silk from China were traded for wool, silver, and gold from Europe. The Silk Road's significance lies in its role in fostering economic interdependence and cultural diffusion among distant societies.

COLONIAL EXPANSION

Between the 16th and 18th centuries, mercantilism dominated European economic thought. Nations sought to accumulate wealth by maximizing exports and minimizing imports, leading to the establishment of colonies to secure resources and markets. This era saw intense competition among European powers, resulting in colonial conquests and conflicts driven by the pursuit of economic dominance. The mercantilist system of

period saw a shift towards free trade principles. A pivotal moment was the signing of the Cobden-Chevalier Treaty in 1860 between Britain and France, which reduced tariffs and marked a move towards more open markets. This treaty set off a "golden age of free trade" in Europe, lasting until the late 1870s.

Economist David Ricardo's idea of comparative advantage gained traction: let each nation specialize, and everyone wins. Or so the theory went.

THE ADVENT OF FREE TRADE

The Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries brought significant changes to production and trade. Technological innovations enabled mass production, while advancements in transportation, such as the steam engine, revolutionized the movement of goods. This



President Donald Trump, accompanied by White House Senior Advisor, Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk speaks next to a Tesla Model S on the South Lawn of the White House on March 11, 2025 in Washington, D.C. Getty Images



Abraham Lincoln, whose cotton blockade of the southern states hit Lancashire's mills. Photograph: Library of Congress

Economist David Ricardo's idea of comparative advantage gained traction: let each nation specialize, and everyone wins. Or so the theory went.

United States raised import duties to protect domestic industries but resulted in retaliatory measures from other countries, exacerbating the Great Depression.

The global response? Retaliation. World trade shrank by two-thirds. Economists like Milton Friedman later argued that these policies deepened the Great Depression and fueled extremism—including Hitler's rise to power. The lesson? Walls in trade often lead to fires in politics.

This era highlighted the dangers of isolationist trade policies and underscored the need for international economic cooperation.

POST-WORLD WAR II: ESTABLISHING A NEW ECONOMIC ORDER

In response to the economic devastation of the interwar years, the 1944 Bretton Woods Conference established a new international monetary system. The creation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank aimed to promote financial stability and reconstruction.

The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), initiated in 1947, sought to reduce trade barriers and foster multilateral cooperation, laying the groundwork for the modern global trading system.

FROM CONTAINER SHIPS TO CODE: GLOBALIZATION AND THE WTO

The late 20th century witnessed a trade boom, powered by jet engines, containerization, and the internet. The WTO replaced GATT in 1995, formalizing trade rules for over 160 nations. Emerging economies like China, India, and Brazil rose rapidly, reshaping the global order. For many, globalization brought cheaper goods and access to vast markets. For others, it meant job losses and identity crises. "When China wakes, it will shake the world," Napoleon once warned. By the 2000s, it had.

THE 21ST CENTURY: SHIFTS TOWARDS PROTECTIONISM

Despite the benefits of glo-

balization, concerns over trade imbalances, job displacement, and national security have led to a resurgence of protectionist sentiments. The 2018 U.S.-China trade war marked a significant departure from decades of trade liberalization, with both nations imposing tariffs on each other's goods, disrupting global supply chains, and creating economic uncertainty.

"Trade wars are good, and easy to win," Donald Trump famously declared. The reality? Billions lost, global uncertainty heightened, and the world teetering on the edge of a new economic cold war.

THE 2025 TRUMP TARIFFS: A NEW CHAPTER IN TRADE POLICY

As of April 1, 2025, President Donald Trump has implemented a series of tariffs aimed at addressing perceived trade inequities. These measures include a 25% tariff on all foreign-made cars, impacting approximately half of the vehicles sold in the U.S., with the administration asserting that this will encourage domestic manufacturing and generate significant revenue. Additionally, reciprocal tariffs have been imposed on imports from countries that maintain tariffs on U.S. goods, affecting major trading partners such as Canada, Mexico, the European Union,

China, and India.

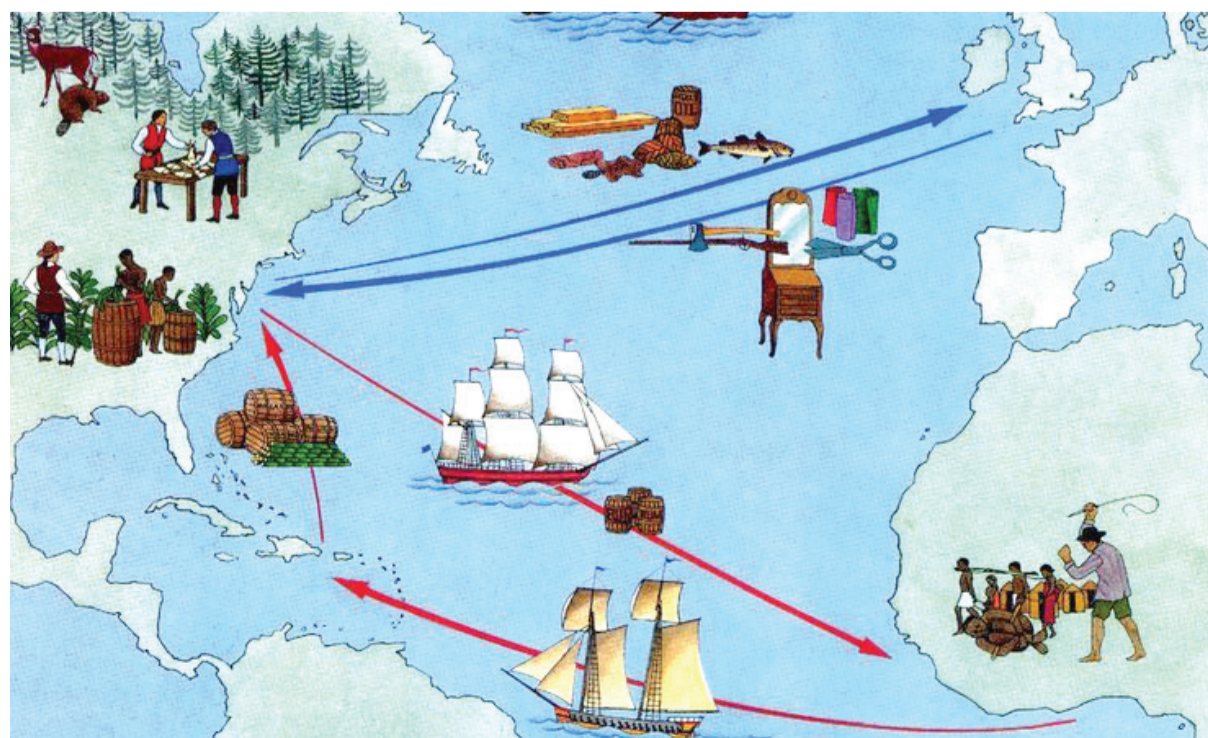
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE GLOBAL ORDER

The resurgence of protectionist policies, exemplified by the 2025 Trump tariffs, poses significant implications for the global order. Increased trade barriers can lead to reduced economic growth, strained international relations, and the potential unraveling of multilateral trade agreements. The shift towards bilateral negotiations and reciprocal tariffs challenges the principles of free trade that have underpinned global economic cooperation since World War II. Moreover, these developments may prompt other nations to reevaluate their trade strategies, potentially leading to a fragmentation of the global trading system into regional blocs. Such a shift could undermine the effectiveness of international institutions like the WTO and hinder collective efforts to address global challenges.

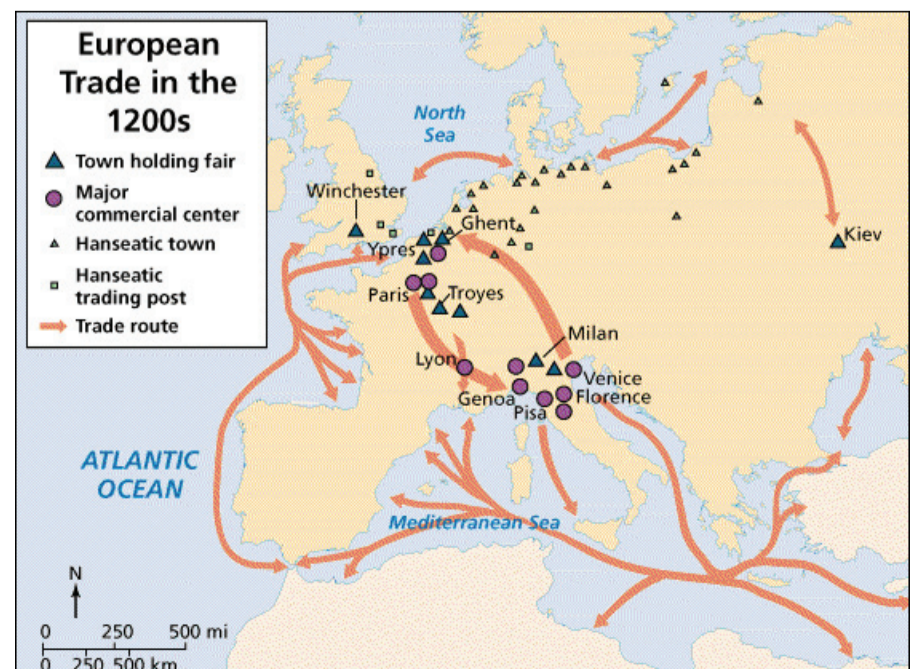
Throughout history, international trade has been a driving force for economic development and cultural exchange. Understanding its evolution, the challenges faced, and the lessons learned is crucial for navigating the complexities of today's global economy.

ROAD AHEAD

International trade has been a dynamic force in shaping the world order, driving economic development, cultural exchange, and geopolitical shifts. The historical trajectory from mercantilism to globalization reflects a complex interplay of policies and ideologies influencing global interactions. The implementation of the 2025 Trump tariffs marks a significant moment in this continuum, highlighting the persistent tension between protectionism and free trade. As nations navigate this evolving landscape, the future of international trade will depend on balancing national interests with the collective benefits of economic cooperation.



The Trade of Colonial America. Both the Mercantilist System and the Triangular Trade are illustrated fully. Pinterest



Mediterranean Sea Trade. heymissaworld.weebly.com

FROM MYTHS TO MAJESTY: A TRAVELER'S EXPLORATION OF KAILADEVI TEMPLE



PRAKASH CHANDRA SHARMA

Kailadevi Temple, also known as Kaliya Mata, is a popular religious site in Rajasthan, drawing millions of devotees every year. It is located in the picturesque region near Karauli and holds great significance in Hindu mythology and history. This article explores the fascinating history, beliefs, and attractions associated with Kailadevi Temple and its annual fair.

HISTORY OF KAILADEVI TEMPLE

Kailadevi Temple has a rich history, with many interesting stories tied to its origins. According to popular belief, the temple was built by King Bhompal in 1600 AD. The area surrounding the temple, particularly around Trikuta Mountain, was once a dense forest inhabited by a tyrannical demon named Narakasur. Narakasur terrorized the people in the surrounding areas, causing them immense suffering.

To protect themselves from this demon, the people prayed to Maa Durga for help. In response to their

prayers, Maa Kailadevi is said to have descended to this place and killed Narakasur, thereby freeing the devotees from fear and suffering. This event led to the belief that Kailadevi is an incarnation of Maa Durga, and people have been worshipping her ever since.

Another belief surrounding the temple comes from religious texts, which state that wherever the body parts of Sati fell, a Shak-tipeeth was formed. Kailadevi is considered one of these Shaktipeeths. In ancient times, Baba Kedargiri, a great saint, performed severe penance on the banks of the Kali Sindh river. During this time, a demon residing in the nearby caves troubled the sanyasis and common people. After Baba Kedargiri's penance, Maa Kailadevi appeared and killed the demon, and this place is still known as Danavdaah, meaning "the demon's destruction." The footprints of the demon can still be seen on a large stone here.

Additionally, it is believed that the goddess Yogmaya, who was targeted by Kansa in an attempt to harm Lord Krishna, is also worshiped at this temple in the form of Yogmaya Kailadevi.

THE TEMPLE STRUCTURE

The Kailadevi Temple is an architectural marvel made of white marble and red stones, giving it a strikingly beautiful and attractive appearance. The temple is located in a serene and peaceful environment, sur-



rounded by nature, making it a perfect spot for meditation and spiritual growth.

Apart from being a religious center, the temple serves as an important cultural landmark in the region.

ANNUAL KAILADEVI FAIR

One of the biggest events at the temple is the Kailadevi Fair, held annually during the Navratri festival in the Chaitra month. This fair attracts lakhs of devotees from across India, especially from neighboring states like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan. The fair began on March 26 this year and continues until April 11, drawing over 40 lakh visitors.

The fair is not just a religious event but also a cultural celebration. Devotees from various regions travel on foot to reach the temple, singing praises of Maa Kailadevi along the way. The fair is marked by spiritual rituals, cultural performances, and vibrant festivities, providing a unique experience for pilgrims.



FACILITIES FOR DEVOTEES

To accommodate the large number of pilgrims, the local community and the government have made extensive arrangements. Dozens of bhandaras (free food stalls) have been set up in Hindaun City and Karauli, where pilgrims can enjoy free meals, snacks, fruits, and beverages. There are also provisions for rest, stay, and medical treatment, ensuring that the pilgrims' needs are met during their visit. The authorities have taken strong measures to ensure the safety and comfort of the visitors. Over 1,000 police personnel, including six additional



MEDICAL AND OTHER ARRANGEMENTS

For the convenience of pilgrims, several medical teams, including doctors, are available 24/7 to provide immediate assistance. Temporary medical centers have been set up at various points, and the Medical Department ensures that all food stalls are inspected regularly for hygiene and safety. The Electricity Department has also ensured uninterrupted power supply, and arrangements for clean drinking water have been made with the installation of water tanks and distribution points.

The road leading to Kailadevi has been repaired, and special arrangements for public toilets have been set up at various locations, especially around the bus stand and fairgrounds. To ease the movement of pilgrims, one-way traffic is being maintained, and anti-encroachment squads are working to ensure that the paths are clear.

THE PILGRIMAGE EXPERIENCE

The pilgrimage to Kailadevi

is unique, with many devotees taking part in rituals to fulfill their wishes. Women, especially newlywed brides, often visit the temple wearing green bangles, a symbol of marital well-being, and pray for the health and prosperity of their husbands. Devotees also participate in folk dances and songs to celebrate the goddess.

Many parents bring their children to the temple for the Mundan (hair-shaving) ceremony, seeking blessings for their children's health and well-being. The fair also offers entertainment for children, with swings and other fun activities available. The dances performed by child artists, showcasing traditional folk dance forms, captivate the audience and add to the fair's festive spirit.

OTHER ATTRACTIONS IN KARALI

While Kailadevi Temple is the main attraction, Karauli and its surrounding areas offer several other interesting sightseeing spots for visitors:

Palace of Karauli: A beautiful heritage site, the Karauli Palace is a former residence of the Yaduvanshi rulers and showcases excellent Rajput architecture. Located in the heart of the city, it is a must-visit for history and architecture enthusiasts.

Madan Mohan Ji Temple: Situated within the City Palace complex, this temple is a popular pilgrimage destination. The evening aarti at this temple is a major highlight, with elaborate rituals and devotion.

Shri Mahavir Ji Temple: A

significant site for followers of Jainism, this temple is located near Hindaun City. It is known for the idol of Lord Mahavir, which was excavated over 200 years ago, and serves as a spiritual retreat for Jain devotees.

Timangarh Fort: Located 42 km from Karauli, Timangarh Fort is a historical landmark worth visiting for those interested in Rajasthan's rich history. The fort offers stunning views of the surrounding landscape and is a great spot for history lovers. Keladevi Wildlife Sanctuary: A part of the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve buffer zone, the Keladevi Wildlife Sanctuary is a great destination for wildlife enthusiasts and adventure seekers. The sanctuary is home to a variety of flora and fauna, including tigers, leopards, and several bird species.

The Kailadevi Temple is not just a religious site; it is a place that holds deep historical, cultural, and spiritual significance. The temple's rich history, coupled with its beautiful architecture and serene surroundings, makes it a must-visit destination for devotees and tourists alike. The Kailadevi Fair, with its vibrant celebrations and strong community support, adds to the temple's appeal, attracting millions of visitors every year.

Whether you're seeking spiritual solace, cultural enrichment, or simply a historical exploration, Kailadevi Temple and the surrounding areas offer something for everyone.

The author is a senior freelance journalist

Bhartiya Lok Kala Mandal: A glimpse of Rajasthan's culture

TDG NETWORK
JAIPUR

The Bhartiya Lok Kala Mandal is a renowned institution in the vibrant city of Udaipur in Rajasthan, dedicated to preserving and promoting the rich cultural heritage of India. Established in 1952, this museum and cultural center have become a major hub for those interested in the traditional art, craft, and folk culture of Rajasthan. The museum is a fascinating blend of artistry, history, and traditions, offering visitors a deep insight into the diverse cultural fabric of India, particularly Rajasthan.

Udaipur, often referred to as the "City of Lakes," is known for its majestic palaces, temples, and vibrant culture. Bhartiya Lok Kala Mandal stands as an important symbol of Udaipur's cultural significance, showcasing an extraordinary array of art, crafts, and folk traditions that are an integral part of Rajasthan's cultural heritage.

HISTORY OF BHARTIYA LOK KALA MANDAL

The Bhartiya Lok Kala Mandal was founded by Dr. Manohar Lal Soni, a passionate artist, art historian, and cultural conservationist. He established the institution with the aim of preserving and promoting the folk art and culture of India, especially that of Rajasthan. The museum was officially inaugurated in 1952, and since then, it has played a crucial role in safeguarding and popularizing the folk traditions and arts of the region.

THE MUSEUM AND ITS COLLECTIONS

Bhartiya Lok Kala Mandal

houses an extensive collection of folk art, crafts, textiles, and other cultural artifacts. The museum is a treasure trove of Rajasthani folk traditions, showcasing an impressive variety of items such as puppets, masks, traditional musical instruments, paintings, textiles, and tribal art. The collection also includes traditional costumes, jewelry, dolls, and other folk handicrafts that represent the daily life and customs of the people of Rajasthan.

PUPPETRY (KATHPUTLI)

One of the key attractions of Bhartiya Lok Kala Mandal is its remarkable collection of puppets, particularly the famous Kathputli (puppetry), which is a traditional form of Rajasthani folk theater. Kathputli is an ancient art form in which puppets are used to tell stories and enact various scenes from Indian mythology, history, and folk tales. The museum showcases an extensive collection of puppets in different sizes and forms, each crafted meticulously by skilled artisans.

The puppet shows conducted at the museum give visitors a chance to witness this captivating art form live. The colorful puppets are made of wood, cloth, and other materials, and each puppet represents characters from folklore and mythology. The museum's collection allows visitors to appreciate the intricate craftsmanship and the cultural importance of puppetry in Rajasthani traditions.

FOLK MUSIC AND INSTRUMENTS

Bhartiya Lok Kala Mandal is also home to a wide variety

of traditional musical instruments that are integral to the folk music of Rajasthan. Instruments like the sitar, sarangi, dholak, dhol, and morchang (a traditional jaw harp) can be seen displayed at the museum. These instruments are used in various folk performances, such as Ghoomar, Kalbeliya, and other tra-



ditional dance forms. The museum not only displays these instruments but also organizes performances and workshops to engage visitors with Rajasthani music. The folk music of Rajasthan is known for its lively rhythms, emotional depth, and use of vibrant instruments. It plays a significant role in the festivals, weddings, and other celebrations in the region.

TRIBAL ART AND CRAFT

The museum also showcases the rich tribal art and craft of Rajasthan. The tribal communities of Rajasthan, such as the Bhils, Meenas, Gonds, and Saharias, have a distinct cultural identity that is reflected in their art forms, craft, and daily life. Tribal jewelry, hand-painted wooden artifacts, embroidered textiles, and traditional weapons are some of the items displayed in the

museum.

These tribal arts have been passed down through generations and reflect the unique customs and rituals of these communities. The museum provides an opportunity to understand the cultural significance of these crafts and the role they play in the lives of the tribal people.



FOLK PAINTINGS

Rajasthan has a rich tradition of painting, and the museum displays a collection of Madhubani, Pichwai, Phad, and Warli paintings. These styles of paintings are known for their vibrant colors, intricate patterns, and religious themes. Pichwai paintings, for example, are associated with the temples of Nathdwara and often depict scenes from the life of Lord Krishna.

The museum also showcases traditional jewelry, including kundan, meenakari, and thewaja jewelry, which are known for their intricate designs and the use of precious stones.

The costumes and jewelry reflect the rich cultural diversity of Rajasthan and are often worn during festivals, weddings, and other cultural events. The museum's collection of these items gives visitors an insight into the fashion and beauty practices of Rajasthani women and men.

The museum's collection of these items gives visitors an insight into the fashion and beauty practices of Rajasthani women and men.

TRADITIONAL COSTUMES AND JEWELRY

Rajasthan is known for its unique and colorful traditional costumes. The museum houses a vast collection of traditional dresses worn by the people of Rajasthan. These costumes are made of vibrant fabrics such as bandhej (tie-dye), leheriya, and block prints. The museum

also showcases traditional jewelry, including kundan, meenakari, and thewaja jewelry, which are known for their intricate designs and the use of precious stones.

The costumes and jewelry reflect the rich cultural diversity of Rajasthan and are often worn during festivals, weddings, and other cultural

events. The museum's collection of these items gives visitors an insight into the fashion and beauty practices of Rajasthani women and men.

The museum's collection of these items gives visitors an insight into the fashion and beauty practices of Rajasthani women and men.

CULTURAL PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

In addition to the museum's extensive collection, Bhartiya Lok Kala Mandal regularly organizes cultural programs, folk performances, and workshops. These programs

include puppet shows, folk music and dance performances, art exhibitions, and craft workshops. These activities allow visitors to engage directly with the folk culture of Rajasthan and provide an immersive experience. The museum is also involved in educational outreach programs, helping

to raise awareness about the importance of preserving India's folk art and culture. By organizing workshops and collaborations with schools, colleges, and other institutions, the Bhartiya Lok Kala Mandal plays an important role in educating young generations about their cultural heritage.

to raise awareness about the importance of preserving India's folk art and culture. By organizing workshops and collaborations with schools, colleges, and other institutions, the Bhartiya Lok Kala Mandal plays an important role in educating young generations about their cultural heritage.

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN AND LOCATION

Bhartiya Lok Kala Mandal is located in the heart of Udaipur, a city renowned for its rich cultural heritage. The building itself is an architectural marvel, with elements of traditional Rajasthani design blended with modern influences. The structure is constructed using local materials and features intricate carvings, wooden windows, and open courtyards that allow visitors to experience the essence of Rajasthani archi-

itecture.

The museum's location in Udaipur, surrounded by stunning lakes and palaces, adds to its appeal as a cultural destination. The serene environment and historical backdrop of the city make it a perfect setting for a museum dedicated to the folk arts of Rajasthan.

IMPACT ON LOCAL CULTURE AND TOURISM
Bhartiya Lok Kala Mandal plays a significant role in preserving and promoting the folk culture of Rajasthan, and it has become an important tourist destination in Udaipur. The museum attracts thousands of domestic and international tourists every year, many of whom visit to experience the region's rich cultural traditions.

The museum has also contributed to the local economy by promoting cultural tourism, providing employment to artisans, performers, and museum staff. It has helped to raise the profile of Rajasthan's folk culture, ensuring that the traditional arts and crafts of the region continue to thrive. Bhartiya Lok Kala Mandal in Udaipur is not just a museum; it is a living testament to the cultural richness and diversity of Rajasthan. From its collection of folk art and crafts to its vibrant cultural programs, the institution has played a vital role in preserving and promoting the traditional arts of the region. It offers visitors an opportunity to connect with the soul of Rajasthan and experience its folk culture firsthand. Whether it's the intricate puppetry, vibrant folk music, or the rich tribal art, Bhartiya Lok Kala Mandal remains a significant cultural treasure in India.

NETANYAHU'S JUDICIAL REFORMS: DEMOCRACY AT RISK OR NEEDS OVERHAUL?

Netanyahu's judicial reforms threaten democracy, shifting power to politicians. Massive protests erupt, global leaders express concern, Israel's democracy faces crisis.

TDG NETWORK

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's controversial push to reform the country's judicial system has sparked intense debate both domestically and internationally. Critics argue that the reforms threaten the very foundations of Israeli democracy, while supporters claim they are necessary to correct an overreach by the judiciary. This article explores the complexities of Netanyahu's judicial reforms, the motivations behind them, and their potential impact on Israel's democratic future.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

they perceive as judicial overreach, claiming that the courts have been too activist, often striking down laws passed by the Knesset (Israel's parliament) and interfering with government decisions.

JUDICIAL REFORMS

At the heart of Netanyahu's judicial overhaul is a plan to significantly alter the process by which Israel's Supreme Court judges are appointed. Under the newly passed legislation, the Judicial Selection Committee—traditionally composed of judges, legal experts, and politicians—will now have an increased political influence. The law allows government officials to appoint judges who align with their political agenda, potentially undermining the judiciary's independence.

Previously, Israel's judicial system was celebrated for its impartiality and its role as a robust check on governmental power. However, the new law effectively shifts the balance, enabling elected officials to exert more control over judicial appointments, thereby reducing the separation of powers that is crucial in any democracy.

Netanyahu's government argues that the reforms are necessary to correct what

THE MOTIVATION

Critics of the reforms, including legal scholars, opposition leaders, and civil society groups, argue that Netanyahu's motivations are deeply personal. Netanyahu is currently facing a high-profile corruption trial involving charges of bribery, fraud, and breach of trust. Many believe that the reforms are an attempt to weaken the judicial system's ability to hold him accountable, potentially shielding him from legal consequences.

Netanyahu's rhetoric has increasingly mirrored that of populist leaders worldwide. He frequently refers to the judiciary as part of a "leftist deep state" that undermines the will of the people, a narrative commonly used by leaders seeking to consolidate power. This language not only delegitimizes the judiciary but also polarizes the public, framing the judiciary as an enemy of democracy rather than a protector of it.

Furthermore, Netanyahu's alliance with far-right figures like Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir adds another layer of complexity. These allies have expressed openly nationalist and controversial views, raising concerns that the judicial reforms could pave the way for more extreme policies under the guise of legal reform.

THE BATTLE

The debate over judicial reforms is not just a legal matter; it is a fundamental struggle for the future of Israeli democracy. The Israeli Supreme Court has historically acted as a guardian of democratic principles, protecting minority rights, upholding the rule of law, and ensuring that government actions comply with constitutional norms.

Proponents of the reforms argue that the judiciary has become too powerful, blocking laws that reflect the will of the people as expressed through their elected representatives. They claim that the courts have imposed liberal values that do not necessarily reflect the broader Israeli society, particularly in areas like security, religious affairs, and civil rights.



Israel's Supreme Court in Jerusalem.

However, opponents contend that these reforms are part of a broader effort to dismantle Israel's democratic institutions. They fear that once judicial independence is compromised, it will be easier for the government to suppress dissent, limit freedoms, and undermine the rights of minority groups.

The fear is not unfounded. Across the world, democratic backsliding often begins with the erosion of judicial independence. When the judiciary becomes politicized, it loses its role as a neutral arbiter, and laws can be selectively enforced based on political considerations rather than principles of justice.

PUBLIC OUTCRY

Netanyahu's judicial reforms have triggered massive protests across Israel, with demonstrations that have been described as some of the largest in the country's history. Lawyers, academics, civil society organizations, high-tech professionals, and ordinary citizens have taken to the streets, expressing their

outrage at what they see as an assault on democracy.

The protests are not limited to opposition parties; even individuals within Netanyahu's own coalition have expressed concerns about the reforms. The widespread public dissent reflects a deep fear that Israel is on the brink of a constitutional crisis.

Internationally, the reforms have also attracted criticism. The United States, under President Joe Biden, has expressed concern about Israel's declining democratic norms. The U.S. has long been an ally of Israel, but the current administration has made it clear that it values democratic principles in its foreign policy. European leaders and international human rights organizations have also condemned the reforms, warning that they could undermine Israel's reputation as a democracy in the Middle East.

THE SUPREME COURT

To understand the gravity of the reforms, it's essential to consider the Supreme Court's role in Israeli de-

mocracy. Unlike many other democracies, Israel does not have a formal written constitution. Instead, it relies on a series of "Basic Laws" that serve as constitutional principles. The Supreme Court has the authority to interpret these laws and has often been the final arbiter in disputes involving civil liberties, government accountability, and human rights.

The court has played a pivotal role in protecting minority rights in Israel, including the rights of Palestinians living in the occupied territories, Arab citizens of Israel, and other marginalized groups. It has also been instrumental in upholding the rule of law, even when doing so has put it at odds with popular opinion or government policies.

If Netanyahu's reforms succeed, the court's ability to serve as an independent check on government power could be severely compromised. This could lead to a situation where the government has unchecked authority to pass laws and implement policies without fear of judicial review.

TDG EXPLAINER

THE POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES

If Netanyahu's judicial reforms are fully implemented, Israel could face significant consequences:

Erosion of Democratic Norms: The weakening of judicial independence could set a precedent for future governments to undermine other democratic institutions, such as the media, civil society, and political opposition.

Increased Political Polarization: The reforms have already deepened political divisions in Israel, with both sides accusing each other of undermining democracy. This polarization could destabilize the political landscape, making it harder to form stable governments.

Impact on Minority Rights: Without an independent judiciary, the rights of minorities, including Palestinians, Arab citizens of Israel, and LGBTQ+ communities, could be at greater risk. The court has historically been a bastion for protecting these rights, and its weakening could lead to increased discrimination and inequality.

International Isolation: Israel's democratic backsliding could strain its relations with Western allies, particularly the United States and the European Union, which have long supported Israel as a beacon of democracy in the Middle East.

Legal Uncertainty: A politicized judiciary could

create legal uncertainty, as decisions may be based more on political considerations than on established legal principles. This could undermine investor confidence and affect Israel's economic stability.

CRITICAL JUNCTURE

Israel is at a critical crossroads. The outcome of Netanyahu's judicial reforms will have far-reaching implications for the country's democracy, legal system, and society as a whole.

For many Israelis, this fight is not just about law but about the future of their democracy. The protests, legal battles, and political confrontations are a testament to the deep commitment of Israeli citizens to protect their democratic values.

However, the outcome remains uncertain. Netanyahu's government has shown resilience in the face of public opposition, and his coalition remains supportive of the reforms. The question is whether Israel's democratic institutions—its judiciary, civil society, and parliament—can withstand the pressure and preserve the principles that have defined the country since its founding.

As the situation unfolds, one thing is clear: Israel's democracy is being tested like never before. The world is watching, and the choices made in the coming months will shape Israel's political future for generations to come.

'Liberation Day' Tariffs: How Trump's trade policy could impact India

TDG NETWORK

On April 2, 2025, U.S. President Donald Trump designated what he calls "Liberation Day," a day he uses to justify imposing reciprocal tariffs on imports from all nations with which the United States has a trade deficit. According to Trump, the U.S. has been unfairly treated in global trade, with other countries imposing higher duties on American goods while the U.S. maintains lower tariffs, creating an alarming \$1 trillion trade deficit.

Trump claims these new tariffs will be "nicer" than those charged by other nations, though the specific details remain unclear. The White House has confirmed that an official announcement will be made on April 2, 2025, but it's uncertain whether the tariffs will target specific products, industries, or apply broadly across all imports.

INDIA-U.S. TRADE RELATIONS

Since 2021, the United States has remained India's top trading partner. In the fiscal year 2023-24, bilateral trade between the two nations reached \$119.71 billion, with India exporting \$77.51 billion worth of goods to the U.S. while importing \$42.19 billion from America. This resulted in a trade surplus of \$35.31 billion for India—a key factor that makes India

TDG EXPLAINER



particularly vulnerable to changes in U.S. trade policy.

Considering these figures, any significant tariff hike could disrupt the delicate trade balance, raising costs for American buyers and potentially weakening demand for Indian goods.

SECTORS MOST AT RISK

While the specifics of Trump's tariff policy remain uncertain, trade analysts predict that certain sectors will be more vulnerable than others. The impact will largely depend on whether the tariffs are broad-based or targeted at specific industries.

UNCERTAINTY OVER ELECTRONICS

India's mobile phone exports

to the U.S. stand at \$11.1 billion, making it the largest export in the electronics sector. Currently, there is already a 9% tariff differential on electronic goods. Any further hikes could reduce the competitiveness of Indian electronics, especially as the U.S. market is flooded with alternatives from countries like China and South Korea.

GEMS & JEWELLERY AT RISK

The U.S. is the largest market for India's gems and jewelry, accounting for around 30% of total exports in this sector. If tariffs increase, demand could shrink, negatively affecting sales of gold, diamonds, and gemstones. This could lead to a substantial revenue loss, particularly as



US President Donald Trump speaks at a reception in Washington.

the luxury market is sensitive to price changes.

AGRICULTURE, FOOD MAY SUFFER

India exports approximately \$2.58 billion worth of seafood, fish, and meat to the U.S. These products already face a hefty 27.83% tariff differential, which could be raised further. Additionally, processed foods, sugar, and cocoa (valued at \$1.03 billion) could become less competitive if tariffs increase by 24.99%, making Indian agricultural products more expensive for American consumers.

TEXTILES & APPAREL COULD SLOW DOWN

India's cotton garments and apparel exports to the U.S. total around \$2.8 billion annually. A hike in tariffs would

erode India's competitive advantage in the U.S. fashion industry, where cost plays a crucial role. This could force Indian manufacturers to look for alternative markets or absorb the cost, both of which could hurt profitability.

AUTO INDUSTRY - A LIMITED IMPACT

India's auto exports to the U.S. are relatively low, around \$10 million, minimizing the direct risk from tariffs. However, higher duties on auto components from major suppliers like Mexico, Canada, and China could create opportunities for Indian manufacturers.

If U.S. companies seek alternatives to these suppliers, India might be able to fill the gap, especially in the auto components sector.

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT

Trade analysts estimate that India could lose up to \$7 billion annually if Trump's tariffs are aggressively implemented. The sectors most at risk—electronics, gems & jewelry, agriculture, and textiles—are not only key drivers of exports but also major employers in India.

Moreover, India's GDP growth could slow down by 5-10 basis points, reducing the projected growth rate from 6.6%. The impact would be particularly severe in the gems, jewelry, electronics, and agricultural sectors, with job losses and reduced industrial output potentially following.

INDIA'S RESPONSE

With the announcement of

Major Exports from India to the U.S.

- Electronics (Mobile Phones): \$11.1 billion
- Pharmaceuticals: \$8.1 billion
- Telecom Instruments: \$6.5 billion
- Gems & Jewellery: \$3.2 billion
- Textiles (Cotton Garments): \$2.8 billion

Iron & Steel Products: \$2.7 billion

- India's Imports from the U.S.:
- Crude Oil: \$4.5 billion
- Petroleum Products: \$3.6 billion
- Coal & Coke: \$3.4 billion
- Cut & Polished Diamonds: \$2.6 billion
- Electric Machinery: \$1.4 billion
- Aircraft & Spacecraft Parts: \$1.3 billion

these tariffs looming, India's government has been cautious in its response. High-level diplomatic discussions are already underway. Recently, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau met with India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri to explore ways to reduce trade barriers and address potential disruptions.

While President Trump claims that India has agreed to substantially lower tariffs on American goods, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs has not officially confirmed this.

'LIBERATION DAY' OR A TRADE WAR?

The true impact of Trump's "Liberation Day" tariffs depends heavily on how they are implemented.

If the tariffs are targeted or sector-specific, India may have time to adjust its trade

strategies and negotiate better terms.

However, if the tariffs are broad-based, they could disrupt the \$77.51 billion export market, leading to economic disruptions not only in India but globally.

A full-scale trade war between the U.S. and India could have far-reaching consequences, affecting global supply chains, increasing costs for American consumers, and potentially triggering a recession in both economies.

As India waits for clarity, one thing is certain: "Liberation Day" may redefine U.S.-India trade relations. Whether it will lead to greater economic independence for the U.S. or spark a global economic crisis remains to be seen. India's next moves will be critical in navigating this complex and potentially volatile situation.

INDIA WILL BE DROPPING ITS TARIFFS VERY SUBSTANTIALLY: TRUMP

"I think I heard that India just a little while ago is going to be dropping its tariffs very substantially and I said why didn't somebody do this a long time ago," he said.

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump on Tuesday said that he has heard that India was dropping its tariffs on American goods substantially.

"I think I heard that India just a little while ago is going to be dropping its tariffs very substantially and I said why didn't somebody do this a long time ago," he said.

Trump was asked if his tariffs - which are to be effective from Wednesday - may push countries to side with China, to which he promptly said that the tariffs would actually help the countries do better.

He did not explain how that would be.

"No, I'm not worried about it. I think they have

TRADE SHIFT

- **Remarks:** Questions why it wasn't done earlier.
- **Tariffs Impact:** Believes they help countries, not harm.
- **EU Example:** Dropped US car tariffs to 2.5%.
- **Upcoming Plan:** "Liberation Day" on April 2.
- **Cabinet:** Full attendance at Rose Garden event.
- **Focus:** Ending unfair trade practices for American workers.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump at the White House. File Photo

a chance of doing better actually with the tariffs. It can actually help them in a certain way and I think a lot of them will drop their tariffs because they've been unfairly tariffing the United States for years,"

he said. Trump said that the European Union had dropped its tariffs on US made cars to 2.5 per cent.

"If you look at the European Union - on cars, the European Union already dropped their tariff down

to 2.5 per cent. It was announced a couple of days ago, which is a very small tariff the United States charged," he said.

Trump will unveil a new tariff plan on April 2, which he has dubbed "Lib-

eration Day," in his first Rose Garden press conference of his second term, CNN reported.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt confirmed Monday that the full cabinet will be present for the event, but specifics of the plan remain uncertain as Trump and his administration have floated multiple, sometimes conflicting, proposals in recent weeks.

"Wednesday, it will be Liberation Day in America, as President Trump has so proudly dubbed it," Leavitt said. "The President will be announcing a tariff plan that will roll back the unfair trade practices that have been ripping off our country for decades. He's doing this in the best interest of the American worker."

France: Protests called against Le Pen ban

AGENCIES
PARIS

France's far-right National Rally (RN) party is calling for nationwide demonstrations against a court decision to ban Marine Le Pen from public office for five years, seemingly wrecking her hopes of becoming president in 2027.

Jordan Bardella, the RN president, said French people "must be outraged" after what he called a "disproportionate, political and partisan" judgment that would rob them of a voice in the election.

Speaking after Le Pen's conviction for embezzling European parliament funds, Bardella called for "peaceful, democratic protests" across France and said the party would be launching a leafletting campaign this weekend as part of a "people's mobilisation".

Le Pen has said she will appeal against the ruling,



Jordan Bardella (right), the RN president, declared his 'total loyalty' after a court found Le Pen guilty of embezzlement. File Photo

which if successful would lead to a new trial that she hopes would overturn the conviction and public office ban in time to campaign for the presidency.

At a press conference on Tuesday at the Assemblée nationale, Le Pen said the RN would "not allow itself to be taken for a ride". The party would "defend the French people who have the right to vote for whosoever they wish and defend the country, which is teetering on the brink of collapse",

she said.

Bardella, who is seen as the RN's plan B if Le Pen fails, said he refused to consider stepping into her shoes as a presidential candidate and pledged his loyalty to her.

"Marine Le Pen has given me everything in politics," he said. "It is she who has given me the opportunity to be before you today. The least I can do is to fight with her to the end. We work together, hand in hand and in total confidence."

Bangkok gears up to host BIMSTEC summit this week

AGENCIES
BANGKOK

The capital city of Thailand is geared up to host the 6th BIMSTEC or Bay of Bengal initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation in Bangkok with the preparations underway in full swing.

Thailand is decked up with the flags of the seven member states with billboards and hoardings placed across various locations in the city.

BIMSTEC was established on June 6, 1997, with the signing of the Bangkok Declaration, of which Thailand is one of the founding members. Currently, BIMSTEC comprises seven Member

States, namely Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, all of which share common economy and culture as well as close ties with one another through trade, culture, and relations among people for centuries.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Thailand to participate in the 6th BIMSTEC Summit and for an official visit to Thailand from April 3-4. This will be Prime Minister's third visit to Thailand. The theme of this Summit is 'BIMSTEC-Prosperous, Resilient and Open'. The Summit on April 4 is to be preceded by the BIMSTEC Ministerial Conference and

also by the Senior Officials' Meeting.

In November 2019, he had attended the ASEAN and East Asia Summit that was hosted by Thailand and earlier, he had been to Bangkok enroute to Tokyo in November 2016, when he had gone to pay homage to the late King Rama IX.

PM Modi is expected to be in Bangkok on April 3 where he will hold bilateral meetings with the Prime Minister of Thailand, Paetongtarn Shinawatra. This will be his second meeting with the Thai Prime Minister. He had earlier met her on the margins of the ASEAN Summit in Vientiane on October 11 last year.

Kuala Lumpur gas pipeline explosion: Over 100 injured

AGENCIES
KUALA LUMPUR

More than 100 people were injured in a fire that broke out following a gas pipeline leak on the outskirts of Myanmar's capital, Kuala Lumpur, on Tuesday, Al Jazeera reported.

The fire erupted after an explosion and fireball at 8:10 am (local time) on Tuesday in the suburb of Putra Heights, central Selangor state. The gas pipeline belonging to Malaysia's state-run energy firm Petronas.

Selangor's Chief Minister said that the blaze quickly spread, threatening nearby villages during a public holiday for Eid celebration, Al Jazeera reported, citing state news agency Bernama.

Tesla faces ire amid Musk's right-wing ties

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

Tesla has become the target of widespread vandalism across the globe, with incidents reported in the United States, Europe, and Oceania. These attacks are linked to CEO Elon Musk's controversial right-wing affiliations, including his support for former President Donald Trump and ties to far-right groups in Europe.

In the United States, several high-profile acts have shaken Tesla locations. In Colorado, Lucy Grace Nelson, 42, was charged with arson and malicious destruction after allegedly firebombing a dealership in Loveland. In Oregon, Adam Matthew Lansky,



A drone view shows charred Tesla vehicles following a fire at a Tesla dealership that destroyed vehicles, in Rome, Italy, March 31, 2025. File Photo

41, faced similar charges for hurling Molotov cocktails at a Portland Tesla showroom. Meanwhile, Daniel Clarke-Pounder, 24, was arrested for targeting charging stations in South Carolina with incendiary devices. In Las Vegas, five Teslas were destroyed in a fire, with the suspect now

under investigation for domestic terrorism.

Europe has also seen coordinated attacks. In Italy, a fire at a Rome dealership destroyed 17 vehicles, suspected to be arson with possible anarchist involvement. Musk referred to the attack as "terrorism" on social media. In Sweden,

Musk referred to the attack as "terrorism" on social media. Germany witnessed similar acts, with environmental group Neue Generation vandalizing a Berlin showroom and setting seven Teslas ablaze in Verden.

activists from the Restore Wetlands group sprayed orange paint on Tesla dealerships in Stockholm and Malmö. Germany witnessed similar acts, with environmental group Neue Generation vandalizing a Berlin showroom and setting seven Teslas ablaze in Verden.

Israeli airstrike in Beirut kills Hezbollah official, strains ceasefire



A woman walks past damaged vehicles in the aftermath of an Israeli airstrike, in Beirut, Lebanon April 1, 2025. Agency

AGENCIES
BEIRUT

An Israeli airstrike early Tuesday targeted Beirut's southern suburbs, killing four people, including a senior Hezbollah official, Hassan Bdeir. The strike also wounded seven others, further straining an already fragile ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah. Bdeir, identified by the Israeli military as a key figure in Hezbollah's operations and affiliated with Iran's Quds Force, was reportedly involved in planning an imminent

Hamas attack against Israeli civilians.

This incident marks Israel's second airstrike in the Hezbollah-controlled area within five days, highlighting escalating tensions. The U.S.-brokered ceasefire, which ended last year's devastating conflict, is now under severe pressure. The airstrike damaged the upper floors of a residential building, with ambulances responding to the scene as families fled.

Hezbollah condemned the attack, calling it a "severe aggression" and urging the Lebanese government to

The U.S.-brokered ceasefire, which ended last year's devastating conflict, is now under severe pressure.

escalate diplomatic efforts. Lebanese President Joseph Aoun labeled the strike a "dangerous warning" and criticized it as a premeditated act against Lebanon. Prime Minister Nawaf Salam also condemned the strike, asserting it violated United Nations Security Council resolutions and the ceasefire terms.

Israel's Foreign Minister Gideon Saar defended the attack, stating that Bdeir posed a "real and immediate threat" and urging Lebanon to act against terrorist groups operating within its borders.

Russia can't accept US proposals on Ukraine 'in current form'

AGENCIES
MOSCOW

Russia has rejected U.S. proposals to end the ongoing war in Ukraine, citing that the suggestions do not address the root causes of the conflict. This stance, expressed by Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov, indicates that diplomatic discussions between Moscow and Washington have hit an impasse. The remarks suggest that despite efforts from both sides, there remains a significant gap in negotiations, with Moscow demanding more substantial changes to the proposals.

Ryabkov's comments reflect the broader frustrations within the Russian government over the current diplomatic process. He emphasized that while Russia takes the U.S. proposals seriously, they cannot accept them in their existing form. "We take the models and solutions proposed by the Americans very seriously, but



Russia's President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump talk during a bilateral meeting at the G20 leaders summit in Osaka, Japan, June 28, 2019. File Photo

we can't accept it all in its current form," Ryabkov stated in an interview with the Russian magazine International Affairs. He further highlighted that the proposals lack key elements needed to address the conflict's underlying issues, which Moscow views as crucial for any lasting resolution.

The core of Russia's demands revolves around security concerns and territorial claims. Russian President Vladimir Putin has repeat-

edly insisted that Ukraine should abandon its aspirations to join NATO, which Moscow views as a direct threat to its strategic interests. Additionally, Putin demands that Russia retain control over four Ukrainian regions it has claimed since the onset of the conflict, and he seeks restrictions on the size and capabilities of Ukraine's military forces. Kyiv, however, rejects these demands, considering them unacceptable and

tantamount to capitulation.

Meanwhile, U.S. President Donald Trump has shown signs of growing impatience with Moscow's approach. In recent days, Trump has expressed frustration with Russia, reportedly saying he is "pissed off" with Putin. He has even hinted at imposing sanctions on countries that continue to purchase Russian oil if Russia remains obstructive in negotiations. This tough stance marks a shift from Trump's earlier, more conciliatory efforts to broker peace, which had raised concerns among Western allies about his willingness to engage with Russia without stringent conditions.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov responded to Trump's remarks, acknowledging that discussions with the U.S. are ongoing but emphasizing the complexity of the situation. "The subject is very complex."

Trump may visit Saudi Arabia, Qatar in May

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Monday he plans to visit Saudi Arabia as early as May to sign an investment agreement in what will be the first foreign trip of his second term, with stops also planned in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

"It could be next month, maybe a little later," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office.

Four sources briefed on the matter said mid-May was being looked at as the timing for the trip. Trump made Saudi Arabia and Israel the initial stops on his inaugural foreign trip during his first term in 2017. Trump, reiterating remarks he made in early March, said his trip to Saudi Arabia would be to seal an agreement to invest upwards of \$1 trillion in the U.S. economy, including purchases of military equipment.

Young Turks drive protests against Erdogan as new generation seeks change

AGENCIES
ANKARA

A new generation of young Turks is at the forefront of mass protests against President Tayyip Erdogan's government, demanding change in a country they see as increasingly authoritarian.

Demonstrations erupted after Istanbul Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu, a popular op-

position figure, was jailed pending trial on corruption charges. Unlike older generations who remember the heavy crackdown on the 2013 anti-government Gezi Park protests, today's young protesters say they are undeterred by the risks.

"I think growing up under just one regime makes us a generation looking for change, looking for proof we live in a democracy," said



Yezan Atesyan, a 20-year-old student at Middle East Technical University (METU).

"The idea of a power that lasts forever scares us." Hundreds of thousands of Turks nationwide have heeded opposition calls to protest since Imamoglu was detained last week.

Protests have been mostly peaceful, but more than 2,000 people have been de-

tained.

The main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), other opposition parties, rights groups and some Western powers have all said the case against Imamoglu is a politicised effort to eliminate a potential electoral threat to Erdogan.

The government denies any influence over the judiciary and says the courts are independent.

Students from across Turkey have mobilized, facing police blockades and water cannon trucks. Drone footage from METU captured clashes between protesters and state security forces.

Atesyan said all were targeted in the crackdown: "Not just minorities, not just women, not just the LGBT community — it is against all of us."

A GENERATION ON

EDGE

Beyond political frustration, economic hardship has fueled the unrest. High inflation and unemployment have made young people feel their future is slipping away.

"I graduated in 2024, but I can't find a job, and my family struggles financially," said 25-year-old protester Duygu at an opposition rally in Istanbul.

ON RAM NAVAMI, BIG B TO NARRATE STORIES FROM RAM KATHA

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

This Ram Navami, megastar Amitabh Bachchan is all set to give the audience a devotional experience with his special narration of evocative stories of the Ram Katha.

The stories will be narrated over a live stream of an event from Ayodhya on April 6 from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm on JioHotstar.

Big B will also host an interactive session with kids, showcasing select stories in an engaging and relatable manner. From a special pooja performed at Ayodhya and sacred rituals across temples to soul-stirring live aartis from Bhadrachalam, Panchvati, Chitrakoot, and Ayodhya, devotional bhajans, and mesmerizing cultural performances by revered artists including Kailash Kher and Malini Awasthi, the live stream will evoke a collective sense of devotion and togetherness, as per a press note. Speaking about the initiative, Bachchan said, "To be part of such a sacred occasion is an honor of a lifetime. Ram Navami is more than a festival—it is a



moment of deep reflection, a time to embrace the ideals of dharma, devotion, and righteousness that Lord Ram personified. Through JioHotstar, we are blessed with the power of technology to transcend distances, uniting hearts across the nation in an unprecedented celebration of faith, culture, and spirituality."

A JioHotstar spokesperson stated, "Our live streaming capabilities have enabled us to bring culturally significant experiences to viewers across India. The overwhelming success of events from live sports to Coldplay - Live from Ahmedabad to the 14-hour livestream of the recent Mahashivratri: The Divine Night has inspired us to push boundaries and offer unparalleled experiences to Indian consumers. Ram Navami is a deeply revered occasion in our country, and we're honored to bring its sacred celebrations to millions in every corner of the country. With the legend himself, Amitabh Bachchan narrating Lord Ram's journey, this experience promises to evoke profound emotions on this auspicious occasion."

streaming capabilities have enabled us to bring culturally significant experiences to viewers across India. The overwhelming success of events from live sports to Coldplay - Live from Ahmedabad to the 14-hour livestream of the recent Mahashivratri: The Divine Night has inspired us to push boundaries and offer unparalleled experiences to Indian consumers. Ram Navami is a deeply revered occasion in our country, and we're honored to bring its sacred celebrations to millions in every corner of the country. With the legend himself, Amitabh Bachchan narrating Lord Ram's journey, this experience promises to evoke profound emotions on this auspicious occasion."

'Andaz Apna Apna' to re-release in theatres on April 25

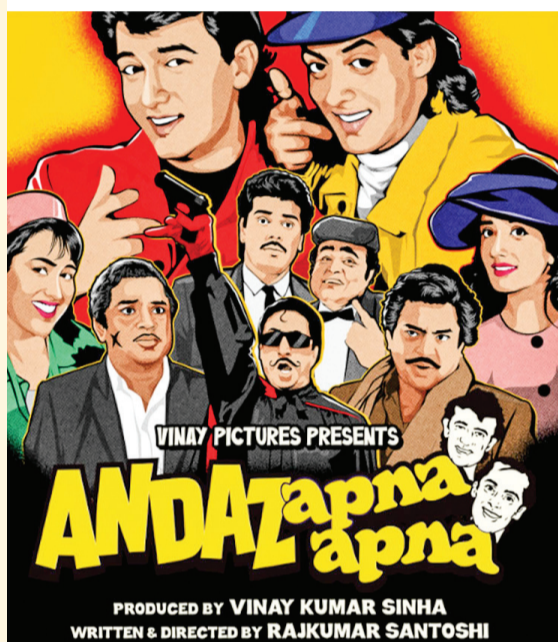
TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

'Andaz Apna Apna', one of Bollywood's most beloved cult comedies, is set to make a spectacular return to theatres 31 years after its original release.

The film, starring Aamir Khan and Salman Khan, will be re-released on April 25 in a brand-new 4K remastered version, complete with enhanced Dolby 5.1 sound for an upgraded cinematic experience.

The exciting news was confirmed by the film's makers on social media, generating a wave of nostalgia among fans.

"Get ready to relive the



madness! Andaz Apna Apna Re-releasing in cinemas on 25th April 2025! Experience the cult classic on the big screen! Restored & Remastered in 4K & Dolby 5.1. Trailer out soon!" the caption read. The remastered version of the 1994 comedy will be screened across India, offering fans a fresh perspective on the hilarious antics of the iconic characters. Directed by Rajkumar Santoshi, 'Andaz Apna Apna' quickly became a fan favourite after its release on November 4, 1994, and over time, it has achieved cult status, solidifying its place as one of the most loved comedies in Indian cinema.



Jacqueline Fernandez poses for her social media. (Instagram)

'Spider-Man 4' titled as 'Brand New Day', set to hit theatres in 2026

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

Sony Pictures has revealed the title of the highly anticipated fourth installment of the Spider-Man franchise, starring Tom Holland.

The film, titled 'Spider-Man: Brand New Day', is set to release in theaters on July 31, 2026.

The makers announced the same on their official social media handles.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, the announcement was first made at CinemaCon on Monday, where director Destin Daniel Cretton took the stage to express his excitement about helming the project.

Cretton, who previously directed Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings, revealed that he has been a lifelong fan of the character and is drawn to Peter Parker's "humor" and "messy humanity."

Tom Holland appeared in a video segment, thanking fans for their support and teasing that Spider-Man: Brand New Day is "a fresh start."



The title, 'Spider-Man: Brand New Day', references a 2008 comic book storyline that takes place after a universe-altering event that causes everyone to forget who Spider-Man is.

Cretton echoed this sentiment, calling the movie "a ride that we haven't really seen before," as quoted by The Hollywood Reporter.

The title, 'Spider-Man: Brand New Day', references a 2008 comic book storyline that takes place after a universe-altering event that causes everyone to forget who Spider-Man is.

This plot point is fitting, given the ending of 'Spider-Man: No Way Home',

which saw the world forgetting Peter Parker's identity.

'Spider-Man: Brand New Day' is written by Erik Sommers and Chris McKenna, who previously penned 'Spider-Man: No Way Home.'

The film is part of Sony's ongoing partnership with Disney, which allows the character to be part of the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

'Jewel Thief: The Heist Begins' poster out

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Bollywood star Saif Ali Khan's fans are eagerly waiting for the release of his new film, 'Jewel Thief: The Heist Begins'.

On Tuesday, a new poster of his character from the film was unveiled. The poster shows Saif giving an intense look, with a stunning diamond shadow created around his eye.

Sharing the poster, Netflix India captioned it, "The world is on his trail. But he's ahead of the game. Watch Jewel Thief, out 25 April, only on Netflix."

The film boasts an ensemble cast, including Jaideep Ahlawat, Kunal



Bollywood star Saif Ali Khan's fans are eagerly waiting for the release of his new film, 'Jewel Thief: The Heist Begins'.

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 power-

BRAIN PICKING



Sometimes you don't have to say anything. Silence speaks it all.

— DISHA PATANI
(Indian Actress)

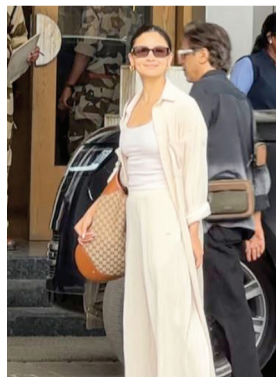
Alia all smiles as she poses for shutterbugs at Mumbai airport

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Keeping it comfy yet stylish, actor Alia Bhatt caught the attention of her fans with her latest airport look.

Before entering the airport on Tuesday afternoon, Alia greeted the shutterbugs and briefly posed for the pictures.

She was all smiles as she



Sargun Mehta, Ammy Virk's 'Saunkan Saunkanay 2' to be released this May

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

Actors Sargun Mehta, Ammy Virk and Nimrat Khaira are reuniting for 'Saunkan Saunkanay 2'

Directed by Smeep Kang and written by Amberdeep Singh, Saunkan Saunkanay 2 promises to take the hilarity and drama to the next level. The film is slated for a theatrical release on May 30, 2025, as per a press note.

Sharing the film's promo, producer Ravie Dubey on Instagram wrote, "Dreamiyatas Next Jatt de ghar shanti di umeed na karo... #SaunkanSaunkanay2 aa reha hai bahut jaldi. Teaser out soon"

The sequel is backed by leading production houses



Naad Studios and Dreamiyata Entertainment, led by Jatin Sethi along with Ravie Dubey and Sargun Mehta.

The film went on floors last year. Sharing the update, producer Ravie Dubey, who is also Sargun's husband, took to Instagram and wrote, "Saunkan saunkanay 2 Filming begins .. Shukr Shukr"

He also shared a picture of the clapper board. 'Saunkan Saunkanay 2' can be seen written on it. Saunkan Saunkanay 2 is a happily married couple who yearn to have a child after eight years of marriage.

waved at the paps who were stationed outside the airport.

The 'Raazi' star looked pretty in a fitted white inner top that she layered with a long beige shrug featuring a collar design and wide-leg trousers. She also gave a sporty touch to her look with white sneakers.

She accessorized the co-ord set with a luxurious

hangbag.

Last month, the 'Jigra' actress had a pre-birthday celebration amidst the media. The event, held ahead of the big day, was made even more memorable by her husband, Ranbir Kapoor, who joined her in the celebrations.

Amid the celebration, Ranbir confirmed that the second installment of their

film Brahmastra is very much in the pipeline.

"Brahmastra 2 is something that Ayan has been nurturing as a dream for a very long time--the entire story of Brahmastra. As you guys know, he's currently working on War 2, and once the film releases, he's going to start pre-production of Brahmastra 2. It's definitely happening.

'Shin Chan: Our Dinosaur Diary' to be released in India

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

There's great news for the fans of 'Shin Chan'. The beloved franchise's latest film 'Shin Chan: Our Dinosaur Diary' is all set to be released in India.

The movie will hit the theatres on May 9, 2025.

Directed by Shinobu Sasaki, Our Dinosaur Diary transports audiences to "Dino's Island," a futuristic theme park in Tokyo where dinosaurs have been brought



back to life. What starts as an exciting summer quickly turns into chaos when Shin-

nosuke and his family take in a baby dinosaur named Nana. As a sinister force hunts Nana for its hidden secret, Shinnosuke, his loyal dog Shiro, and the Kasukabe Guard must embark on a thrilling mission to protect their new friend--while rampaging dinosaurs wreak havoc across Tokyo and Kasukabe, as per a press note. Speaking about the Indian release, Director Shinobu Sasaki shared, "The Shin Chan movie, which has a history of over 30 years, is finally being released in theaters in India!"

FLAVOURFUL NAVRATRI DELIGHTS: SABUDANA POHA & MIRCHI VADA

TDG NETWORK

Navratri is a time of devotion, fasting, and indulging in sattvik cuisine that is both nourishing and delicious. While fasting foods are often associated with simplicity, they can also be packed with flavors and textures that make them truly special.

Two such delightful vrat-friendly dishes are Sabudana Poha with Beetroot & Coconut Salad and Mirchi Vada, both crafted to bring taste, tradition, and nutrition to your fasting menu.

Sabudana Poha with beetroot and coconut salad
(Sabudana tempered with mustard seed and curry leaves seasoned with senda namak (varat/ fast salt))

Ingredients:
Sabu dana : 50 gms
Chopped Green Chilli :1/2 tsp
Chopped Ginger : 1/2 tsp
Chopped Coriander :1/2 tsp
Mustard Seed :1tsp
Curry Leaves :1 tsp
Chopped Tomatoes 20 gms
Salt (senda namak /varat namak) : as per taste
Haldi :1/2 tsp



Cashewnut (04 pcs) :30 gms
Raisin: 30gms
Oil: 50ml
For Beet root and coconut salad :
Blanched beetroot cubes :100 gms
Lemon juice (optional) : 1 tsp
Sena Namak (Varat namak) : as per taste
Garted Fresh Cocunut : 20 gms
Method of Cooking :
@ Soak down the sabu-

dana in water and keepit aside for half and hour approximately after that drain off the excess water .
@ In the mean time in a Kadai heat some oil add mustard seed once starts crackling ,add curry leaves , chopped ginger , chopped green chillies and sauté them for a minute.
@ Now add chopped tomatoes and cook for 02-03 minutes after that add the drained soaked sabudana to it.

@ Now add nuts and raisins,gratted coconut senda namak and haldi to the above sabudana mix .
@ Mix them well and cook over low flame until sabudana is done .
@ Garnish with cashenuts raisins , slit green chilli .
@ Ready to serve and best goes with coconut chutney .
@ For the beetroot cocunut salad mix the above mentioned ingredients together and topped with

Grated Coconut .
Mirchi Vada (kuttu flour batter coated, stuffed Bhaji Mirchi)
Ingredients :
Bhaji /Achari Mirch : 05 pcs
For the Stuffing :
Chopped Green Chilli :1/2 tsp
Chopped Ginger : 1/2 tsp
Chopped Coriander :1/2 tsp



Cumin seed :1tsp
Fennel :1 tsp
Boiled Mashed Potatoes : 150 gms
Salt (senda namak /varat namak) : as per taste
Haldi :1/2 tsp (optional)
Cashewnut (04 pcs) :30 gms
Raisin: 30gms
Kasoori Methi :1 tsp
Oil: 50ml
For the Batter:
Kuttu Flour :200 gms
Water :150ml (approx)
For Deep Frying:
Refined oil : 350-400ml.

Method of Cooking :
@ Slit down the chillies and remove the seed from inside and keep it aside.
@ Now for preparing the stuffing in a pan take oil heat it then add cumin seeds, fennel seeds once starts crackling add chopped green chilli, ginger, raisins, cashewnuts and sauté them .
@ Now add boiled mashed potatoes to the above and cook for 5 minutes .Finally we add salt, haldi and kasoori methi and mix tem well. Finally

remove from the flame and keep it aside to cool down.
@ Now we make a semi thick consistency batter from kuttu flour and water .
@ stuff the potato mix in the slit green chillies / achari mirch , dipped them into the batter and deep fry them to perfection .
@ Best served with imli gud ki chutney (saunth) and mint chutney (made with mint , coriander , green chilli, lemon , senda namak)

Cooling drinks to stay energized during Navratri fasting

TDG NETWORK

Navratri fasting is a spiritual and detoxifying journey, but staying hydrated and energized is crucial during these nine days. While traditional fasting foods provide nutrition, refreshing beverages can help maintain stamina and prevent fatigue. Here are some cooling drinks to keep you refreshed and active throughout the festival.

1. Coconut Water - Nature's Energy Drink

Coconut water is a natural electrolyte-rich drink that helps keep dehydration at bay. It replenishes lost minerals, prevents fatigue, and provides an instant energy boost. Since it is low in calories and high in potassium, it is an excellent choice for Navratri fasting.

2. Buttermilk (Chas) - The Ultimate Cooling Agent

Buttermilk is a probiotic drink that aids digestion, keeps the body cool, and prevents bloating. Adding roasted cumin powder and rock salt enhances its taste and digestive properties. Since dairy is allowed in Navratri fasting, chas serves as an excellent hydrating option.

3. Sabudana Sherbet - A Power-Packed Refreshment

Sabudana (tapioca pearls) is a fasting staple, and when blended into a sherbet with lemon, honey, and chilled water, it makes for a cooling and energy-boosting drink. Rich in carbohydrates,



this drink provides sustained energy throughout the day.

4. Lemon Mint Cooler - A Detoxifying Beverage

Lemon water infused with mint leaves is a refreshing drink that aids digestion and keeps acidity in check, which is common during fasting. Adding honey or rock salt enhances its taste while providing essential minerals.

5. Almond & Dates Milkshake - A Protein-Rich Energizer

A milkshake made with almonds, dates, and saffron is a nutritious option for fasting days. Almonds provide protein and

healthy fats, while dates are rich in natural sugars that keep you energized for long hours. Using chilled milk enhances its cooling effect.

6. Kesar-Pista Thandai - A Festive Delight

A Navratri-friendly version of thandai, made with milk, saffron, fennel seeds, and cardamom, is a delicious and cooling drink. It provides strength and keeps the body cool while adding a festive touch to your fasting menu.

Blending yogurt with fruits like banana, apple, or berries makes for a creamy, nutritious, and cooling smoothie. It



keeps hunger pangs at bay and ensures slow energy release throughout the day.

7. Fruit & Yogurt Smoothies - A Power Breakfast Option

Blending yogurt with fruits like banana, apple, or berries makes for a creamy, nutritious, and cooling smoothie. It keeps hunger pangs at bay and ensures slow energy release throughout the day.

8. Cucumber & Mint Detox Water - Stay Hydrated

Infusing water with cucumber slices, mint leaves, and a dash of lemon is an excellent way

to stay hydrated while detoxifying the body. It helps flush out toxins and prevents bloating, making it perfect for fasting days.

9. Herbal Infusions - A Warm yet Cooling Remedy

Drinking herbal teas made from chamomile, fennel, or cardamom helps soothe the digestive system while keeping the body cool. A lukewarm infusion of these herbs can be sipped throughout the day to maintain hydration.

Conclusion
During Navratri fasting, keeping yourself energized and hydrated is just as important as choosing the right foods. These refreshing cooling drinks not only prevent dehydration but also ensure you stay active and focused during your spiritual journey. Incorporating these beverages into your fasting routine will help you stay refreshed, healthy, and full of festive spirit.

The Infused Kettle: A Journey Through India's Tea Culture

TDG NETWORK

The Infused Kettle masterfully blends tradition with innovation, offering a tea experience that is both nostalgic and refreshing. Their thoughtfully curated infusions pay homage to India's diverse tea culture while introducing unique flavors that elevate the drinking experience.

Each blend reflects the essence of India's rich heritage—be it the saffron-laced warmth of Kashmiri Kahwa, the bold kick of Bombay Cutting Chai, or the soothing notes of Tulsi Mulethi. The attention to detail in sourcing premium ingredients ensures that every sip is aromatic, flavorful, and nourishing.

What sets The Infused Kettle apart is its ability to

Each blend reflects the essence of India's rich heritage—be it the saffron-laced warmth of Kashmiri Kahwa, the bold kick of Bombay Cutting Chai, or the soothing notes of Tulsi Mulethi. The attention to detail in sourcing premium ingredients ensures that every sip is aromatic, flavorful, and nourishing.

balance authenticity with creativity. Their blends retain the traditional essence of Indian teas while incorporating global elements, making them both familiar and exciting. The packaging is elegant, preserving freshness and enhancing the overall experience.

Beyond just a beverage,

The Infused Kettle delivers an immersive journey—one that connects people through stories, flavors, and the simple joy of a well-brewed cup. Whether you seek comfort, rejuvenation, or an exploration of India's tea legacy, these infusions promise to satisfy both the heart and the palate.



HOW SKILL-BASED LEARNING IS RESHAPING CAREER PATHS ACROSS INDUSTRIES



SUPRIYA PATTANAYAK

The New Education Policy 2023 has incorporated a holistic and integrated approach towards education where the focus is on multi-disciplinary learning, promoting critical and creative thinking with emphasis on skill development through Action Learning. Integrating it with building a comfort with technology and digital resources, a future ready workforce can take the nation to greater heights. There is an increased emphasis on the fact that higher education institutions need to target exponential growth to build a workforce that is future ready and can leverage technology, to lay the right foundation.

Skill-integrated higher education is the primary requirement for developing a workforce that is well-prepared for the industry. It is crucial to amalgamate diverse curriculums and models that prioritize sustainable livelihoods, leading to en-



hanced employability and the spark of entrepreneurship. The current need calls for an urgent focus on experiential and practical learning, which can bring about a significant transformation. In fact the government is also actively promoting the creation of an industry-ready workforce through various means, such as the implementation of National Occupational Standards (NOS) and the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) in universities.

The students can also learn on the job through B.Voc degrees offered by very selected universities

of the country. Here, students learn while on their job as the industries have a tie up with the university to create a course structure that is a good mix of theory and practice. By the time the students pass out from the university they are equipped with multiple certificates by NSQF, opening better job prospects for them as they have better industry exposure. Such exposures are always better than one to four weeks internship that gives a myopic view of the industry instead of hands on training that can be attained at Action Learning Labs.

Another area of focus

should be to make the entire system of education multidimensional and interdisciplinary so that it supports skill development process in the country. Such a system of education will help the students realise their true potential and prevent them from facing the Shakespearean dilemma. This can be done through more tie-ups with industries and by setting up Action Labs in the campus to provide exposure to the students about the working of the industry.

Over the years, Centurion University has established more than 50 such action labs or manufactur-

ing units that are dedicated to various industries, and ensure that the students are ready for Industry 5.0. In addition to adopting a multidisciplinary approach, we foster a research culture aimed at addressing real-world challenges. The curriculum is inherently future-oriented, with a focus on sustainability. A curriculum model that integrates theoretical knowledge with practical experiences is crucial in higher education for developing a workforce ready for the industry. We have been enhancing employability and promoting entrepreneurship through various manufacturing

units, such as apparel, furniture, paper and chalk, transformers, and e-vehicles, among other sectors. Moreover, we have prioritized product design and development domains, resulting in the registration of several patents and the incubation of startup ventures.



In today's time we do have options when it comes to finding the right university and course that can hone a student's skills. In the post-liberalised era human capital has assumed greater significance in the context of economic and social development. India is passing through a phase of transformation from being primarily agrarian economy to a more pro-industrial one requiring skilled and

well-trained workforce. For creating an industry-ready workforce India needs to focus on improving learning outcomes of education at different levels. Hitherto education has been examination oriented and hence emerged to be sector where obtaining higher percentage of marks is more important than the actual and effective learning.

In today's time skill-based education steered by Action Labs is not just important for students with low scores or school or college dropouts, but for toppers too, who wish to be armed with the best of skills and become employable immediately after college. Today there are lots of options avail-

able for multidisciplinary domain specializations with a practical based curriculum. Ultimately this fosters employment, employability and most importantly seeps the passion for entrepreneurship and students truly become industry ready immediately after completing their education. With this awareness as more and more students select a course aligned with their passion, aptitude, and interests, and subsequently refine their skills at the university, they will discover the path to success, and will succeed in whatever industry they choose.

The author is the Vice Chancellor at Centurion University, Odisha.

Closing the AI skill gap with industry-aligned learning



TDG NETWORK

Artificial Intelligence is no longer a futuristic concept—it is transforming industries in real time. From automating jobs to revolutionizing healthcare, finance, and manufacturing, AI is reshaping the way we work and innovate. Generative AI alone is projected to add \$2.6 trillion to \$4.4 trillion annually to the global economy, with industries like banking and retail expected to see a combined impact of over \$1 trillion each year. The impact is equally profound in India, where AI is expected to contribute approximately \$500 billion to the nation's GDP by 2025. Yet, while businesses rapidly integrate AI, education systems struggle to keep pace, leaving a widening gap between industry demands and workforce readiness.

India, home to one of the world's fastest-growing digital economies, stands at a defining moment. The country's vision for Viksit

With AI expected to automate up to 70% of current work activities, the need for future-proof education has never been more urgent.

Bharat 2047 emphasizes technological leadership and innovation, but this ambition depends on creating a highly skilled, AI-ready workforce. With AI expected to automate up to 70% of current work activities, the need for future-proof education has never been more urgent. However, traditional classroom-based learning is failing to equip students with the practical AI expertise required in an increasingly automated world. Without a fundamental shift toward AI-driven, industry-aligned education, India risks falling behind in the global AI race.

Recognizing this urgency, Galgotias University has positioned itself at the fore-

front of AI education. In a first for India, the university has launched an AI-powered Active Learning Block in collaboration with Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. This state-of-the-art facility moves beyond conventional teaching methods, emphasizing hands-on experiential learning, an approach designed to make students active participants in their AI education rather than passive learners.

The AI Knowledge Centre, situated at the heart of Active Learning Block serves as a hub for AI research, industry collaboration, and skill development. With AI-driven classrooms, real-world problem-solving, and

industry-aligned curricula, the university is bridging the gap between academia and the rapidly evolving demands of the job market.

"AI is a game changer not just in industry but in how we teach and learn. It is not enough for students to know AI, they must be able to apply it, innovate with it, and stay ahead in a world where AI will define the future. As India accelerates its Digital India mission to build a tech-driven economy and works towards the aim of Viksit Bharat 2047, AI education is no longer optional, it is imperative. Our universities must go beyond traditional learning to create not just job ready graduates but industry disruptors and innovators who will drive this transformation. By integrating AI driven hands-on learning, we are not just preparing students for the future, we are empowering them to shape it," says Dr. Dhruv Galgotia, CEO, Galgotias University.

This shift towards AI-integrated education aligns

with a global trend where leading universities are rethinking their learning models. With the push from India's National Education Policy (NEP) for more interdisciplinary, skill-based learning, institutions like Galgotias have the opportunity to shape the future of education - dynamic, tech-driven, and aligned with industry demands.

As AI continues to disrupt industries, the role of higher education in nation-building and economic growth cannot be overstated. Institutions that embrace AI-led learning will produce graduates who are not just employable but also contributors to India's global leadership in technology and innovation. With its AI-powered Active Learning Block, Galgotias University is setting a benchmark for AI education in India, proving that the future of learning must evolve alongside the future of work, driven by AI, innovation, and a vision for a Viksit Bharat.

How to Choose the Right College and Course for Your Career

TDG NETWORK

Choosing the right college and course is a crucial decision that shapes your future career and personal growth. With thousands of options available, making the right choice can feel overwhelming. Here's a step-by-step guide to help you make an informed decision.

1. Identify Your Interests and Career Goals

Start by understanding your strengths, passions, and long-term career aspirations. If you enjoy problem-solving and logical thinking, engineering or computer science might be a good fit. If creativity excites you, consider design, media, or fine arts. Research different career paths and the qualifications needed for them.

2. Research the Best Courses for Your Career

Once you have clarity about your field of interest, explore courses that align with your career goals. Check the course curriculum, specializations, and practical learning opportunities like internships and projects. Compare different colleges based on the quality of their programs.

3. Evaluate the College's

Reputation and Accreditation

A college's reputation plays a significant role in job placements and higher education opportunities. Look for institutions recognized by government bodies like UGC, AICTE, or NAAC in India. International accreditation adds value if you plan to study or work abroad.

4. Consider Faculty and Infrastructure

Experienced faculty and good infrastructure enhance the learning experience. Check faculty qualifications, industry exposure, and student reviews. Facilities like well-equipped labs, libraries, research centers, and industry collaborations are essential for practical learning.

5. Placement and Internship Opportunities

A strong placement record is a key factor in choosing a college. Research the placement percentage, top recruiters, average salary packages, and alumni success stories. A college with good industry connections can provide valuable internships, increasing your employability.

6. Location and Campus Life

The location of the college affects your lifestyle and opportunities. Cities with strong industry presence offer better internships and networking possibilities. Consider factors like hostel facilities, extracurricular activities, student clubs, and cultural diversity for overall development.

7. Compare Costs and Scholarships

Higher education can be expensive, so compare tuition fees, accommodation costs, and additional expenses. Look for scholarship options, education loans, or financial aid programs that can ease the burden.

8. Seek Guidance and Attend Counselling Sessions

Talk to career counselors, teachers, alumni, or industry professionals for insights. Attend college fairs, webinars, and open house sessions to get a feel for the campus and its culture.

Choosing the right college and course requires thorough research and self-reflection. Prioritize your interests, career goals, and practical aspects like reputation, placements, and finances. A well-informed decision will set the foundation for a successful career.



PBKS CRUISE TO DOMINANT 8-WICKET WIN OVER LSG



Punjab Kings' Lockie Ferguson celebrates the wicket of Lucknow Super Giants' Aiden Markram during their Indian Premier League 2025 match, at Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium, in Lucknow on Tuesday. (ANI)



Punjab Kings' Glenn Maxwell and teammates celebrate the wicket of Lucknow Super Giants' captain Rishabh Pant during their Indian Premier League 2025 match, at Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium, in Lucknow on Tuesday. (ANI)

AGENCIES
LUCKNOW

Punjab Kings (PBKS) registered a comprehensive 8-wicket victory over Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) in their first home match of the Indian Premier League (IPL) at Ekana Stadium on Tuesday. Chasing a target of 172, PBKS comfortably reached 177/2 in just 16.2 overs, courtesy of stellar performances from Prabhsimran Singh and Shreyas Iyer. Opting to bowl first after winning the toss, Punjab's bowlers restricted LSG to 171/7. In response, PBKS opens Prabhsimran Singh (69 off 34) and Priyansh Arya set the foundation for the chase. Prabhsimran played an aggressive knock, hitting boundaries all around the park, while Shreyas Iyer (51*) ensured

the chase was completed in quick time. LSG's bowlers struggled to create pressure, with Digvesh Rathi managing to pick up both wickets. Shreyas Iyer sealed the match with a six, bringing up his fifty and guiding PBKS to an emphatic win. Batting first, LSG suffered an early collapse, losing three wickets within the first five overs. Arshdeep Singh removed Mitchell Marsh for a golden duck, while Lockie Ferguson's pace dismissed Aiden Markram (28 off 18). Skipper Rishabh Pant (2) also fell cheaply, putting LSG in deep trouble at 36/3. Nicholas Pooran (44 off 30) and Ayush Badoni (41 off 33) attempted to rebuild the innings, but timely strikes from Marco Jansen and Lockie Ferguson prevented them from accelerating. A

late cameo from Abdul Samad (27 off 12) took LSG to 171/7. Arshdeep Singh was the standout bowler for PBKS, finishing with figures of 3/27, while Marco Jansen (2/32) and Lockie Ferguson (1/23) provided crucial breakthroughs. Their disciplined performance ensured that LSG could never break free and post a massive total. With this victory, PBKS continued their strong start to the IPL season, showcasing an all-round performance. Their aggressive batting and disciplined bowling made them dominant against LSG. PBKS will now look to maintain their momentum in the upcoming matches, while LSG will have to regroup and reassess their strategies to bounce back in the tournament.

Arshdeep, Jansen & Ferguson star as PBKS restrict LSG to 171/7

AGENCIES
LUCKNOW

Top-class spells from Arshdeep Singh, Marco Jansen and Lockie Ferguson restricted Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) to a solid 171/7 in their first home Indian Premier League (IPL) match against Punjab Kings (PBKS) at Ekana Stadium in Lucknow on Tuesday.



Being put to bat first, LSG was reeling at 35/3, but fighting knocks from Nicholas Pooran (44) and Ayush Badoni (41) and a fiery cameo by Abdul Samad (27) gave LSG something to fight for. Arshdeep was the top bowler with three wickets.

After PBKS won the toss and opted to bowl first, LSG was off to a poor start as a slower delivery from Arshdeep Singh removed an in-form Mitchell Marsh on a golden duck, leaving LSG at 1/1 in 0.4 overs.

In the third over, Aiden Markram broke the shackles for LSG, hitting Arshdeep for three boundaries in all parts of the ground. He continued his carnage with a four and a six over deep backward point against Lockie Ferguson, but an inswinging delivery crashed into his stumps. Markram was gone for a well-made 28 in 18 balls (with four boundaries and a six). LSG was 32/2 in 3.5 overs.

A poor pull attempt meant that skipper Rishabh Pant did not survive for long either, as a catch by Yuzi Chahal at short fine leg on a Glenn Maxwell delivery sent him back for just two. LSG was 35/3 in 4.5 overs.

The pair of Nichola Pooran and Ayush Badoni took LSG to 39/3 at the end of the powerplay in six overs, making it a disappointing start in front of home fans in Lucknow. Pooran collected a couple of boundaries against Maxwell and a six against Marcus Stoinis. LSG had their 50-runs up in 7.1 overs. In the 10th over, Pooran smoked Chahal for two fours and sixes, collecting 15 runs to end the first 10 overs at 76/3, with him (33*) and Badoni (11*) unbeaten.

two sixes. LSG was 89/4 in 11.3 overs.

LSG reached their 100-runs in 13 overs, with a six by Ayush Badoni over extra deep cover. His partnership with David Miller (19 in 18 balls, with three fours) was a short-lived one as the South African was caught by Prabhsimran Singh on a Marco Jansen delivery after collecting some boundaries against spinners. LSG was 119/5 in 15.5 overs.

In the 18th over, Badoni and Abdul Samad looted runs against Arshdeep, bringing the 150-run mark in 17.4 overs. The duo hit three fours and a six, getting a total of 20 runs. However, Jansen gave away just eight runs in the penultimate over.

Badoni went high, but got caught by Maxwell for 41 in 33 balls, with a four and three sixes. LSG was 166/6 in 19.2 overs. Samad's cameo was also finished by a catch from Priyansh Arya for 27 in 12 balls (with two fours and two sixes). LSG was 169/7 in 19.4 overs.

Erling Haaland ruled out in FA Cup matches

AGENCIES
BOURNEMOUTH

Manchester City suffered a big blow on Monday with top scorer Erling Haaland facing time on the sidelines. Haaland suffered an ankle injury which kept him on the sidelines. The 24-year-old Norwegian was hurt in Sunday's 2-1 FA Cup quarter-final victory over Bournemouth.



"The hope is that Erling will be fit in time to play a further role in the rest of this season, including this summer's FIFA Club World Cup," added a club statement.

Having levelled the tie with his 30th goal of the season, Haaland was then hurt in a collision with Bournemouth midfielder Lewis Cook. The collision came in the second half of the match, and although he initially attempted to carry on, the pain was clear. Haaland was replaced soon after, causing alarm among supporters and club officials.

Manchester City's doctors evaluated him on the pitch before they took him in for more tests. Considering his value to the team, the club is going slowly with his rehabilitation. The timing of the injury is especially worrying with City facing a series of pivotal games in the coming weeks.

"The hope is that Erling will be fit in time to play a further role in the rest of this season, including this summer's FIFA Club World Cup," added a club statement.

"Erling had preliminary tests in Manchester on Monday morning and will now undergo specialist consultation to establish the full extent of the injury. Assessment is still ongoing to determine a full prognosis."

Manchester City currently sit fifth in the Premier League and are battling to qualify for the Champions League next term. Losing Haaland halfway through the season would be a massive blow to Pep Guardiola's side. Manchester City counts on Erling Haaland for his goal-returning capabilities to provide them the threat in front of Goal while attacking.

Pep Guardiola's side meet Leicester and Manchester United this week. These two games might decide City's chances of Champions League qualification. They host Crystal Palace and visit Everton before their FA Cup semi against Nottingham Forest at Wembley on April 26.

Without Haaland, City will have to look elsewhere for goals. City's primary goal scoring options will likely be Omar Marmoush and Jeremy Doku to begin with. Supporters will be expecting a speedy return for their talismanic striker as City seeks to end the season on a high.

Djokovic leads roll call of heroes to attend Laureus World Sports Awards



AGENCIES
MADRID

A host of world-class sporting stars are set to descend upon Madrid for the 2025 Laureus World Sports Awards later this month, including 24-time grand slam tennis champion and current Laureus World Sportsman of the Year Novak Djokovic.

This is the 25th anniversary of the 'athletes' awards', the most prestigious honours event on the sporting calendar. It is also the second year in succession that the Awards have been held in Madrid, with the iconic Palacio de Cibeles staging the event on Monday, April 21.

Five-time Laureus World Sportsman of the Year, Novak Djokovic said: "It is ex-

citig to be back in Madrid again to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Laureus World Sports Awards. I have cherished memories of picking up my fifth Laureus in Madrid last year and am privileged to be able to attend again. The Awards give us athletes the rare opportunity to not only meet up and share our experiences but to celebrate the mission of Laureus - given to us by Nelson Mandela 25 years ago - to use sport to change the world."

Since receiving the 2024 Laureus World Sportsman of the Year Award - his fifth Laureus Statuette - Novak Djokovic won a gold medal at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, writing his name into the Golden Slam history books.

Indian Arrows Women Juniors battle-ready for IWL 2

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The Indian Arrows Women Juniors will participate in the 2024-25 Indian Women's League 2 under Swedish head coach Joakim Andersson. Drawn in Group B, they will face Pudhuvai Unicorns in their first match at the Padukone-Draivid Centre for Sports Excellence Phase 2 in Bengaluru, on Wednesday. All matches of the IWL 2 are being streamed live on the Indian Football YouTube Channel.

"The idea is to give these players good training opportunities and game experience," said Alex-



andersson, who has been training the girls at The Sports School in Bengaluru.

"We had good intensive preparations and I got to know the players well. We also played a good practice game against one of the boys' youth teams."

With an average age of just around 15 years, the Indian Arrows Women Juniors will gain significant exposure from playing in a senior tournament with teams across the country.

Arjun Maini to drive for team HRT Ford Performance for DTM season 2025

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The official test day for the new DTM season will take place at the Motorsport Arena Oschersleben on Wednesday. Haupt Racing Team enters two Ford Mustang GT3s in the top-class sprint series for the first time this year. The cockpits for Ford's factory-supported DTM comeback after 36 years will be occupied by India's Arjun Maini and Switzerland's Fabio Scherer.



HRT Ford Performance starts the new season with two Ford Mustang GT3s DTM-experienced line-up with Arjun Maini and Fabio Scherer at the wheels.

Haupt Racing Team will start its fifth DTM season at the Motorsport Arena Oschersleben on the week-

end of April 25 to April 27. As part of the joint development program with Ford Performance, the team from Drees will be fielding two Ford Mustang GT3s for the first time this year. The US manufacturer's last works entry in the DTM was in 1989 with the Ford Sierra Cosworth RS500. The HRT Ford Performance line-up consists of Ford Performance Factory Driver Arjun Maini

and Fabio Scherer, who also completes the squad of official Ford Performance GT3 Junior Drivers. Maini and Scherer can look back on a combined experience of 82 DTM races.

Arjun Maini has been competing successfully for HRT in various racing series since 2022 and achieved three podium finishes and one pole position in the DTM with the team last season.